



# PHIL 120 Intro to Ethics



*Instructor:* Professor Josh DiPaolo

Spring 2024

*Student Drop-In Hours:* Tu/Th 2:20-3:20pm, W ZOOM 9-10am & By Appointment

*Email:* [jdipaolo@fullerton.edu](mailto:jdipaolo@fullerton.edu)

*My Office:* Humanities (H) 311-C

*Class:* Tu/Th 11:30-12:45 & 1-2:15 LH304

*Tech Support:* Student Help Desk (657) 278-8888 or [StudentITHelpDesk@fullerton.edu](mailto:StudentITHelpDesk@fullerton.edu)

## **Course Description**

Should we take down confederate monuments? Is eating meat ethical? Should people lose their jobs and be shamed for making hurtful jokes on social media? When does a punishment fit the crime? Is it ethical to prevent your children from overcoming a disability? Should schools and neighborhoods be integrated to alleviate the costs of racism and diminish the harms of racial segregation? In this class, we will address these and many other ethical questions.

**Note about Philosophy:** Philosophy classes differ from other kinds of classes. You will be a **truth-seeker** in this class, **not a mere information consumer**: you will try to answer the questions raised in the course through reason and argument, rather than just learning what others have thought. This means I expect you to play an **active** role in class discussions.

**Learning Objectives:** In this course, you will:

- Search for complexity and plausibility where you expect simplicity and implausibility.
- Question arguments for conclusions with which you agree.
- Develop a disposition for finding the philosophical in the familiar.
- Uncover philosophical questions about your own discipline.
- Experience the social side of philosophical inquiry.
- Develop important intellectual virtues (e.g., humility and honesty).
- Learn what philosophers have said about some important philosophical problems.

**Texts:** All readings will be freely available on Canvas. Please bring hard or digital copies to class.

## **GE Requirement**

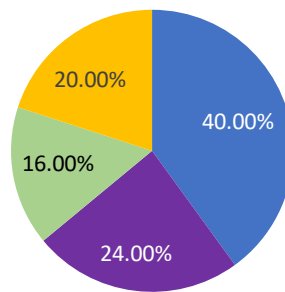
This course satisfies the **C.2 Introduction to Humanities** GE Requirement. To earn GE credit for this course, you must earn a grade of **D or higher**.

Students taking courses in subarea C.2 shall:

- a. Cultivate their intellectual reasoning skills, expand their capacity for creative imagination, develop their reasonable moral sensibilities, and increase their capacity for sensitive engagement through studying great works of human imagination and reason (which are to be primarily, although not exclusively, written texts and literature).
- b. Understand how the humanities have contributed to the development of culture, including the comparative study of the humanities in diverse cultures.
- c. Understand how the humanities have sought to provide answers to complex problems facing humanity, including the relationship of the self to culture and the natural world, the nature of moral and legal obligations, and the meaning and purpose of human existence.

## Grading Policy

---



■ Exams: 40%   ■ Reading Quizzes: 24%   ■ Philosophy in Life: 16%   ■ Presentation Discussion: 20%

---

Exams (x2)	200 points
Reading Quizzes (x10)	120 points
Philosophy in Life Post (x2)	80 points
Presentation Discussion	100 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>500 points</b>

A+	98-100%	490-500 Points
A	92-97%	460-489 Points
A-	90-91%	450-459 Points
B+	88-89%	440-449 Points
B	82-87%	410-439 Points
B-	80-81%	400-409 Points
C+	78-79%	390-399 Points
C	72-77%	360-389 Points
C-	70-71%	350-359 Points
D+	68-69%	340-349 Points
D	62-67%	310-339 Points
D-	60-61%	300-309 Points
F	0-59%	0-299 Points

### **Grade Changers**

**Attendance:** If you miss 3 or more classes, your final grade will be reduced by one letter grade.

**Participation:** 25 points will be deducted from your final grade if you do not regularly participate or if you are distracting in class.

## Assignment Descriptions

---

**Attendance:** Attendance is required because you won't do well in this course if you don't attend. If you have 3 or more unexcused absences, your final grade will be reduced by one letter grade. Absences due to sickness are excused. We do not want students coming to class if you are unwell. Just be honest. I will trust you. To find out what you missed when you miss class, come to office hours or ask a classmate.

**Exams:** You will take two exams. Exams test your understanding of course content, not your opinion. They assess your grasp of the readings and in-class discussions, provide you with more opportunities to reflect on the course material, and allow you to demonstrate what you've learned.

**Reading Quizzes:** There are only 10 philosophical readings assigned in this class. On average, that's less than one reading per week. Reading these few texts is required. We will discuss important points from the readings in class. To learn and be prepared for class, you'll need to understand these articles. To help you keep up with the readings, there will be 10 reading quizzes—one for each assigned reading. These will be short 4-5 question quizzes. You will take them on Canvas during class. So please bring a device (e.g., tablet, smart phone, or laptop) that will allow you to access the quiz during class. Quizzes will be password protected; you will only be given the password if you are in class.

**Philosophy in Life Posts:** To help you get in the habit of approaching your life philosophically, you will complete two “philosophy in life” posts in the discussion forums on Canvas. For these assignments, you will write about connections between your life and what you’ve learned or thought about in this course. You will also read and comment on some of your peers’ posts.

**Presentation Discussions:** During the last weeks of the semester, you will tackle traditional ethical issues. You will be split into 10-12 groups. Each group will read 2-3 assigned articles on a relevant ethical issue, and the groups will teach the class the arguments for and against the relevant positions on their presentation date. As our “experts,” the groups will briefly discuss the issue amongst themselves in front of the class. Then the discussion will open up to the rest of the class. **Attendance is mandatory during these class periods.**

**Participation:** Participating in class benefits you and others. We often learn while we attempt to express our thoughts. And since you have a unique perspective, everyone else in the class learns when you share that perspective. Here are **some ways to participate:**

1. Ask questions about the readings or lectures.
2. Answer questions when asked.
3. Contribute your perspective to a discussion.
4. Raise objections to arguments.
5. Mention a relevant life experience at an appropriate time.
6. Discuss course material with me outside of class.
7. Participate during small group activities.
8. Complete in-class writing assignments.

**Extra Credit Assignments:** You will have the opportunity to complete two extra credit assignments this semester to improve your grade.

#### **Philosophy Symposium Extra Credit Assignment**

- On 4/18 and 4/19 the philosophy department will host its 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Symposium on the topic of AI and Robot Ethics. For extra credit, you may attend one of the sessions, and write a two paragraph response. The first paragraph should summarize the speaker’s ideas and arguments. The second paragraph should state your own thoughts on those ideas and arguments.
- **Due 4/24 10pm on Canvas**

#### **Choose Your Own Adventure Extra Credit Assignment**

For additional extra credit points, you may complete **one** of these assignments:

- **Agree with the Conclusion, Disagree with the Argument:** One lesson I want you to learn about is that there are bad arguments for true conclusions. So even if we agree with an argument’s conclusion, we must still scrutinize the argument. For this assignment, you will talk with likeminded people about some belief you share. You will ask these people why they think this belief is true. Once you hear an argument you disagree with, you’ll explain that argument in writing and explain why you think the argument is flawed even though you think the conclusion is true.
- **Your Culture and Your Beliefs:** What is some philosophical, political, or moral belief you have that differs from your parents? What made you think differently? What is some philosophical belief you have that is the same as your parents? Do you believe it just because they raised you to believe it or for some other reason? Answer these questions in detail.
- **Philosophy in Art:** Find a passage in a poem, novel, play, song, or some visual piece of art that relates to course material. Provide the passage, a link to the song, a picture of the visual art, etc., and explain how it relates to the course. Submitting your own art as part of this assignment is welcome!
- **Change of Mind:** During this course, you may change your mind about some course-relevant issue. Explain the issue, describe your previous opinion and why you used to think it, and then explain what you now think and why your opinion changed. When appropriate, be sure to explain an argument, theory, or reading that caused you to change your mind.
- **Due 5/9 10pm on Canvas**

**Late Work:** I generally accept late work, on a case by case basis. If you need extra time, just ask and be honest about the reason. I tend to be very understanding!

---

### Communication

---

**Student Drop-In** I will be available in my office H-311C and on Zoom for questions and discussion during the times listed above. No appointment is necessary during these times. I welcome you to drop in! If you'd like to meet with at a different time, you should **ABSOLUTELY ABSOLUTELY** feel free to set an appointment with me. **I want to help you succeed!** Just email me. If it helps, you can use this script:

*"Hi Josh,  
I'm in your [CLASS NAME & TIME]. I'd like to schedule an appointment with you outside of your scheduled office hours. Do any of these times work for you [LIST THREE DIFFERENT TIMES YOU CAN MEET]?  
Thanks,  
[NAME]"*

**Virtual Office Hours** By appointment, we can setup virtual office hours. If we do, simply click the Virtual Office Hours button on Canvas to enter our meeting.

**Contact** Outside of office hours, you can reach me at my email address. I will usually respond within 24 hours. Feel free to get back in touch if I don't. **If you have a question about the course, please check the syllabus before emailing.**

**You** I expect you to regularly check your email and Canvas for announcements.

**Ask a Question** On Canvas, there will be two "Ask a Question" discussion boards: (1) "Ask Josh a Question" and (2) "Ask Peers a Question." I will regularly check (1) and rarely check (2). You should check both often. Questions on these boards should be general. Think: "Could someone else benefit from knowing the answer to this question?" If Yes, post; if No, maybe just email me. **If you have a question about the course, please check these boards before emailing.**

**Accommodations** I will do my very best to help students with disabilities, special needs, or learning challenges succeed in this course. Students with disabilities who need accommodations, access to technology, or information about emergency building/campus evacuation processes should contact Disability Support Services. Services are available to students with a wide range of disabilities and conditions.  
Phone: (657) 278-3112 Website: [www.fullerton.edu/dss](http://www.fullerton.edu/dss)

**Good Impression** Education is a **professional environment**. One day you may want a letter of recommendation from me. You may want your peers to recommend you for some professional position. Behave accordingly and make a good impression!

---

### Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

---

**Statement** Please only submit work that is your own. Doing otherwise is one of the worst mistakes you can make in your academic career. When students plagiarize in my classes, they receive a score of 0 points on the assignment and I refer them to the Dean of Students' office.

## Plagiarism

The university defines ‘plagiarism’ as “the unacknowledged and inappropriate use of the ideas or wording of another writer” and instructs me to include the following info on my syllabus:

If plagiarism is found in your work, you will be subject to prosecution to the fullest extent of university code, which will result in a failure of the assignment and will probably result in your failure of the course. Confirmation of plagiarism precludes you from being eligible to repeat the course under the university’s course repeat and grade forgiveness policy. For complete details regarding the university’s policies about plagiarism and other forms of cheating, see

<http://www.fullerton.edu/integrity/student/AcademicIntegrityResources.asp>

[http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/publications\\_policies\\_resolutions/ups/UPS%20300/UPS%20300.021.pdf](http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/publications_policies_resolutions/ups/UPS%20300/UPS%20300.021.pdf)

## ChatGPT

Not a **single word** you produce in this class should be written or generated by any AI. You will be tempted to use AI. You may think: “I can get away with this. He won’t catch me.” You may be right. But if you’re wrong and I do catch it, I will seek the strictest penalty for violating Academic Honesty. (And I have caught *many* students using AI.) I *hate* having to include a policy like this. But I also *hate* the idea of students not learning how to think and write in their college classes. So that’s why I have this policy.

### Emergencies

To be prepared for classroom emergencies, please visit: <http://prepare.fullerton.edu>

### COVID-19 Protocols

Follow all the rules: be vaccinated when you’re supposed to; wear a mask when you’re supposed to; stay home when you’re supposed to.

## Tentative Schedule

### Week 1 Course Introduction

Tu 1/23 NO CLASS

Th 1/25 Syllabus & Introductions

### Week 2 Course Introduction

Tu 1/30 Syllabus & Introductions

Th 2/1 Introducing Ethics/Start logic lecture & logic video

### Week 3 Logic, Morality, Removing Monuments

Tu 2/6 Logic lecture & logic video

Th 2/8 Removing Monuments: Brainstorming (No Reading)

### Week 4 Removing Monuments

Tu 2/13 Timmerman “A Case for Removing Confederate Monuments”

Th 2/15 Demetriou “Ashes of Our Fathers: Racist Monuments and the Tribal Right”

**Assignments:** Reading Quiz 2/13; 2/15

### Week 5 Animal Ethics

Tu 2/20 Animals: Brainstorming (No Reading)

Th 2/22 Norcross “Puppies, Pigs, and People”

**Assignment:** Reading Quiz 2/22

### Week 6 Punishment

Tu 2/27 Punishment: Brainstorming + Ronson “How One Stupid Tweet Blew up J. Sacco’s Life”

Th 2/29 Primoratz “Justifying Legal Punishment”

**Assignments:** Reading Quiz 2/27; 2/29

**Week 7 Punishment**

Tu 3/5 Nathanson “An Eye for an Eye?”

Th 3/7 NO CLASS

**Assignments:** Reading Quiz 3/5

Philosophy in Life Post Due 3/7 by 10pm

Philosophy in Life 2 Comments Due 3/8 by 10pm

**Week 8 Exam Review & Exam 1**

Tu 3/12 Review

Th 3/14 Exam 1

**Week 9 Presentation Prep & Disability**

Tu 3/19 Presentation Prep

Th 3/21 Disability: Brainstorming (No Reading)

Optional Reading: Mundy “A World of their Own”

**Week 10 Disability**

Tu 3/26 Jackson “The Mere Difference View”

Th 3/28 Jackson “The Bad Difference View”

**Assignments:** Reading Quiz 3/26; 3/28

**SPRING BREAK**

Tu 4/2 NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

Th 4/4 NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

**Week 11 Integration**

Tu 4/9 Integration: Brainstorming

Th 4/11 NO CLASS: Listen *Nice White Parents* Podcast: “The Book of Statuses”

**Week 12 Disability & Integration**

Tu 4/16 Anderson “Why Integration Remains an Imperative”

Th 4/18 Shelby “Integration, Inequality, and Imperatives of Justice” (Sections: VII-VIII)

**Assignments:** Reading Quiz 4/16; 4/18

**Week 13 Presentations**

Tu 4/23 Presentations (2)

Th 4/25 Presentations (2)

**Assignment:** Optional Philosophy Symposium Extra Credit Due 4/24 by 10pm

**Week 14 Presentations**

Tu 4/30 Presentations (3)

Th 5/2 Presentations (3)

**Assignments:** Philosophy in Life Post Due 5/2 by 10pm

Philosophy in Life 2 Comments Due 5/3 by 10pm

**Week 15 Presentations, Exam Review, Extra Credit Assignment**

Tu 5/7 Presentations (3)

Th 5/9 Review

**Assignment:** Optional Extra Credit Due 5/9 by 10pm

**Week 16 FINALS WEEK**

Section 20290 (1pm class): 5/14 1-2:50pm

Section 18169 (11:30am class): 5/16 11-12:50pm