*Please note that this syllabus should be regarded only as a general guide to the course and is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

PHIL 151001, Introduction to Ethics, 3 Credits  
Boston College Summer Session 2018  
Summer Session 2, June 26 - August 2, 2018  
Tuesdays & Thursdays from 6:00-9:15PM  

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Boston College Mission Statement  
Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous
development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

**Course Description**

What does it mean to be good, virtuous, or just? To what extent are we responsible or not responsible for our actions? How have our ethical values been established by society in the past? On what basis should our ethical values be established in the future? What are reasonable moral expectations we can have of other people? These are a few of the issues that will be discussed as students are introduced to some of the main schools of ethical thought in the Western philosophical tradition. We will examine works by Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Kant, Nietzsche, Rawls, and Martin Luther King, Jr. We will also use a few works of literature to reflect on ethical ideas raised in the course.

**Textbooks (Required); For Readings Please See Course Schedule Below**

Plato, *Plato: Republic*, trans. Grube, 2nd ed.(Hackett) 9780872201361; will also be made available online;
Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, trans. Meineck & Woodruff (Hackett), 9780872204928;
St. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Chadwick, Reissued (Oxford) 9780199537822;
Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Clark and Swensen (Hackett), 9780872202832;
Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed (Beknap Press), 97806740000780; will also be made available online;
Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from the Birmingham Jail" available online;

**Canvas**
Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) at Boston College, designed to help faculty and students share ideas, collaborate on assignments, discuss course readings and materials, submit assignments, and much more - all online. As a Boston College student, you should familiarize yourself with this important tool. For more information and training resources for using Canvas, click here.

**Course Objectives**

1. Each student is expected to understand with a fair degree of subtlety the ethical ideas of the various philosophers; this understanding will be demonstrated through a student's class discussion and written work.
2. Each student is expected to evaluate with a fair degree of subtlety the ethical ideas of the various philosophers; this understanding will be demonstrated through a student's class discussion and written work.
3. Each student is expected to consider the degree to which the ethical ideas they encounter in their readings have relevance to the way they are living their lives.
4. Each student is expected to learn the civil art of conversing respectfully with each other, whether they are agreeing or disagreeing with the views of other students.
5. Each student is expected to improve their skills in expressing philosophical ideas, both orally and in writing.

**Grading**

1. There will be four in-class quizzes = 25 % of the overall grade;
2. There will be a midterm essay exam = 25% of the overall grade.
3. There will be a formal paper (four pages in length) = 25% of the overall grade;
4. There will be a final essay exam = 25% of the overall grade.
5. Class attendance is required and will be monitored. More than one absence will affect your overall grade for the course unless there are special circumstances;
6. Class preparedness and class participation are required. These will be used to raise or lower your overall grade for the course by up to five points. If,
however, unusual circumstances warrant it, your overall grade for the course can be adjusted by more than five points;
7. There will be optional extra credit opportunities.

The undergraduate grading system for Summer Session is as follows:

A (4.00), A- (3.67)
B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67)
C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67)
D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67)
F (.00)

All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Transcripts are available through the Office of Student Services.

**Deadlines and Late Work**
Deadlines will need to be adhered to especially so that you are prepared for all class discussions and do not fall behind in your work. If your formal paper is handed in late, the grade on your paper will be lowered.

**Course Assignments**
The amount of time that it will take you to prepare all the new readings, to review the readings once they have been covered in class, to prepare for the quizzes, to the write the paper, to prepare for the mid-term exam, and to prepare for the final exam will vary from student to student. In general, I would expect that the weekly hours needed to complete the work for the course will be in the range of 8 to 10. However, this is only an estimate and will depend on each individual.

**Course Schedule**

Week 1:
Tuesday June 26, (1) Plato's *Meno* (70a-81e); (2) Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* Selections from Books 2 & 3
Thursday June 28, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* Selections from Books 3-5

Week 2:
Tuesday July 3, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* Selections Books 3-5
Thursday July 5, Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*

Week 3:
Tuesday July 10, Plato's *Republic*, Selections from Books 2, 4, 9, & 10
Thursday July 12, Plato's *Republic*, Selections from Books 2, 4, 9, & 10

Week 4:
Tuesday July 17, Midterm Exam
Thursday July 19, (1) Augustine's *Confessions*, Selections from Books 7 & 8; (2) Kant's *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, First Section

Week 5:

Week 6:
Tuesday July 31, (1) Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Selections; (2) Plato’s *Apology*; (3) Martin Luther King Jr. "Letter from the Birmingham Jail"
Thursday August 2, Final Exam

Written Work
Summer Session students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed and submitted in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA or CLA style per your instructor’s requirements. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation and spelling. For writing support, please contact the Connors Family Learning
Attendance
Students are expected to attend every class session. This is especially important in this course because a considerable part of the learning takes place in the classroom through the discussions we will be having with each other in every class. The general policy on missed classes is as follows: you may have one excused or unexcused absence without it affecting your overall grade (although it is strongly suggested that you avoid missing even one class since it is essential to your understanding of the material). Nevertheless, I expect, should you miss a class, that out of courtesy to me you would email me about your absence. More than one missed class will begin to affect your overall average. If you miss three or more classes, I will have to take this up with the associate dean of the college and discuss what might be the proper response to take under those conditions including the possibility that you consider withdrawing from the class.

Consistent with BC’s commitment to creating a learning environment that is respectful of persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing their academic status. Students are responsible for reviewing course syllabi as soon as possible, and for communicating with the instructor promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. Students are responsible for completing all class requirements for days missed due to conflicts with religious holidays.

Accommodation and Accessibility
Boston College is committed to providing accommodations to students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities. Specific documentation from the appropriate office is required for students seeking accommodation in Summer Session courses. Advanced notice and formal registration with the appropriate office is required to facilitate this process. There are two
separate offices at BC that coordinate services for students with disabilities:

- **The Connors Family Learning Center (CFLC)** coordinates services for students with LD and ADHD.
- **The Disabilities Services Office (DSO)** coordinates services for all other disabilities.

Find out more about BC’s commitment to accessibility at [www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility](http://www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility).

**Scholarship and Academic Integrity**
Students in Summer Session courses must produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to cite references is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on exams or assignments, or submitting the same material or substantially similar material to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work. Please see the [Boston College policy on academic integrity](http://www.bc.edu) for more information.