

HUM 1540: Ethics

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Course Description

The course will explore ethical theories in the context of contemporary moral problems. Topics may include abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment and torture.

Required Texts

Simon Blackburn *Being Good: A Short Introduction to Ethics* (Oxford, 2003) 176pp \$9.95 ISBN: 0192853775

Peter Singer *Applied Ethics (Oxford Readings in Philosophy)* (Oxford, 1986) 192pp \$38.00 ISBN: 0198750676

Recommended Text

Mary Midgley *Can't We Make Moral Judgements?* (St. Martin's, 1993) 189pp \$16.95 ISBN: 0312087268

Grading

As usual, 90%+ = A; 80–89% = B; 70–79% = C; 60–69% = D; 0–59% = F.

1. First Midterm Exam (Sixth Week);
2. Second Midterm Exam (Eleventh Week);
3. Final Exam (**Time TBA**)—the date of this exam has already been fixed and **cannot** be changed;
4. Contribution to the class (including quiz grades & class presentation);

will each contribute one quarter to the overall grade.

Course Regulations

- Any form of academic dishonesty will result in **a grade of F for the course**. You are responsible for knowing all Florida Tech policies on academic dishonesty (see www.fit.edu/current/plagiarism.pdf).
- All cell phones (including text messaging), personal stereos, &c to be switched off during classes and exams.

Course Outline

1 WEEK 1: Introduction

READ: Blackburn, Introduction.

2 WEEKS 2–6: Moral doubt

READ: Blackburn, Part 1: Seven threats to ethics;
Singer, Jonathan Glover 'It makes no difference whether or not I do it'.

(**Supplemental:** Midgley, Chp 1–5.)

3 WEEKS 7–9: Life and death

READ: Blackburn, Chp 8–9;
Singer, David Hume 'Of suicide';
Singer, Thomas Nagel 'Death';
Singer, J. Rachels 'Active and passive euthanasia'.

4 WEEKS 9–10: Utilitarianism

READ: Blackburn, Chp 10–12;
Singer, John Stuart Mill 'Speech in favour of capital punishment';
Singer, John Harris 'The survival lottery'.
(**Supplemental:** **Singer**, Derik Parfit 'Overpopulation and the quality of life')

5 WEEKS 11–12: Rights

READ: Blackburn, Chp 13–15;
Blackburn, Appendix: 'United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights')

6 WEEKS 13–15: Foundations and Hard Problems

READ: Blackburn, Part 3: Foundations;
Singer, Judith J. Thomson 'A defence of abortion';
Singer, Michael Tooley 'Abortion and infanticide'.
(**Supplemental:** **Handout** Extracts from Ronald Dworkin *Life's Dominion*)