

Phil 100: 001

Professor Jordan Daniels

Office: Bowden 116

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-2 and by appointment

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Freedom, Morality, and the Good Life Syllabus

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is an introduction to different perspectives and important issues within the scope of ethics, morality and the question of the good life, while paying particular attention to the notion of *freedom*.

We will start by posing with the ancients these key questions: What is the good? What is the nature of human beings? How might we reach for the good as both individuals and political communities? We will discuss Plato and Aristotle's answers to these questions, alongside how they bear on contemporary ethical questions via Martin Luther King, Jr. We will then follow these questions to Immanuel Kant's attempt to locate moral value in our ability our rational nature and our ability to act out of duty, against our particular inclinations—alongside Rae Langton's exploration of the lived limitations of such an account. We will compare Kant's deontological ethics, which focus on the rightness or wrongness of each individual act and explicitly not on the consequences of the act, Nietzsche's critical account of the values animating morality, paying particular attention to how he connects these values to particular historical moments. The course then turns more explicitly to take stock of questions about *freedom*. Is freedom a problem? Why? What is freedom's relation to the good, and to reason? Where is freedom found?

Through exegetical exercises, group work, a weekly blog, and two papers, we will discover what it means to read and write philosophically while pursuing these questions. This class should function as an introduction to philosophical questions and methods more broadly.

Required Texts:

Four Texts on Socrates: Plato's "Euthyphro," "Apology of Socrates," "Crito," and Aristophanes' "Clouds" trans. West and West, (Cornell University Press) ISBN-13: 978-0801485749

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy) ISBN-13: 978-1107401068

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo* (Vintage) ISBN-13: 978-0679724629

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (University of Chicago Press, Second Edition) ISBN-13: 978-0226025988

It is crucial that you purchase these translations (and editions), and the additional texts will be available through Course Reserves. You must bring the text to class.

Course Requirements:

- 1. One Page Responses:** You will be asked to write three responses--no more than one page, single spaced--that are due on the days noted on the syllabus. The assignments will be provided in class. The purpose of these responses is for you to practice a method of close, exegetical reading and interpretation of the texts. There is one optional response on Arendt (11/20) that can replace the grade of a prior response. The one page responses are graded according accuracy (4 points), organization (4 points), and depth (4 points).
- 2. Short Paper:** A short paper, between 3-4 pages, will be due on October 9th. It will be graded according to accuracy (4 points), organization (4 points), and depth (4 points). You will also be required to substantially revise your short paper, and you are encouraged to meet with me to discuss your revision.
- 3. Final Paper:** A final paper of 5-7 pages will be due online (via email) at the end of the term by 11:59 pm on Wednesday, December 10th, 2014. The final paper may build on the ideas present in your shorter papers, but it must be a distinct piece of writing. Prompts will be provided, but we can discuss if you have your own questions. This will be graded according to accuracy (3 points), organization (3 points), depth (3 points), and argument (3 points). We will discuss more in class.
- 4. Blackboard:** Your participation in Blackboard discussions is required. A separate sheet detailing your Blackboard participation will be provided.
- 5. Participation:** Courteous and active engagement in class discussion is a big part of this course, although active participation may take different forms for each student, such as active listening, participation in class discussion, attending office hours, etc. Students will be asked to participate in group work, either completing handout assignments or answering textual/interpretive questions and presenting the group's findings to the class. In group work, please be conscientious about facilitating the input of each member.
- 6. Attendance:** If you miss three classes (unexcused), your grade will be partially docked: from A to A-, B- to C+, etc.

Grades:

- 3 One Page Responses: 20%
- Short Paper: 15%
- Short Paper Revision: 10%
- Final Paper: 30%
- Blackboard: 10%
- Participation, Preparation, Attendance: 15%

Students with Disabilities: Emory University complies with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are in need of a classroom accommodation, please make an

appointment with me to discuss this as soon as possible. All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

Technology in the Classroom: You are not allowed to use any electronic instrument during class, unless it is to accommodate a certified disability. Students who use their phones or laptops during class will be marked absent for the day.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from regular text as indented extracts. **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.**

Late Papers: Late papers will not be accepted, unless we have come to a prior agreement. A late paper is one turned in after the class session on the date it is due. For the sake of fairness, extensions will only be given for reasons of illness, academic conflict (too many exams and papers being due on a given day), or unusual circumstances. You must speak to me well before the due date to secure an extension.

Reading Schedule:

Week One: Introductions

- August 26: Opening Day
- August 28: Dostoevsky, "The Grand Inquisitor," *The Brothers Karamazov*, and Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"

Week Two

- August 31: Plato's *Apology*
- September 2: Plato's *Apology*; Group Work
- September 4: Plato's *Crito* One page response due

Week Three

- September 7: Labor Day
- September 9: Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
- September 11: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I

Week Four

- September 14: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I
- September 16: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II
- September 18: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II

Week Five

- September 21: Kant, *Groundwork*, Preface and Section I
- September 23: Kant, *Groundwork*, Preface and Section I

- September 25: Kant, *Groundwork*, Preface and Section I

Week Six

- September 28: Kant, *Groundwork*, Section II
- September 30: Kant, *Groundwork*, Section II; Group Work: CI Handout
- October 2: Langton, "Duty and Desolation" One page response due

Week Seven

- October 5: Philosophical writing workshop
- October 7: *High Noon*
- October 9: *High Noon* Short Paper I due

Week Eight

- October 12: no class, Fall break
- October 14: Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, Preface and First Essay
- October 16: Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, Preface and First Essay

Week Nine

- October 19: Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay
- October 21: Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay; Group Work
- October 23: Nietzsche, "The Free Spirit" One page response due

Week Ten

- October 26: Nietzsche, "The Free Spirit"
- October 28: Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" redux
- October 30: Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?"

Week Eleven

- November 2: Arendt, "What is freedom?"
- November 4: Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Prologue and Ch. I
- November 6: Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Prologue and Ch. I

Short Paper Revision due

Week Twelve

- November 9: Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Ch. II
- November 11: Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Ch. II; Group Work
- November 13: Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Ch. III

Week Thirteen

- November 16: Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Ch. V
- November 18: Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Ch. V
- November 20: Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Ch. V

Optional one page response due

Week Fourteen

- November 23: Adorno, "The Culture Industry"

- November 25: Thanksgiving
- November 27: Thanksgiving

Week Fifteen

- November 30: Adorno, "The Culture Industry"
- December 2: *Network*
- December 4: *Network*

Week Sixteen:

- December 7: Adorno, "The Culture Industry"

December 10th: **Final Paper due by 11:59 pm.** Submit electronically.