



**Duke Talent Identification Program
Summer Studies Program 2018
Ethics and the Little White Lie**

Site: West Campus

Term: TERM 2

Instructor: Cody Turner

TA: Nik Kennelly

Course Description:

Explore common ethical theories to gain an understanding of the philosophical issues and concepts of moral reasoning. As D. H. Lawrence wrote, "Ethics and equity and the principles of justice do not change with the calendar." But how do we know what those principles are? What makes an action right or wrong? Are "white lies" ever justified? Ethical dilemmas confront us every day and the decisions we make refine the ethical lens with which we interpret ourselves and the world. Consider these questions and the ethics implicit in modern media to analyze how those media might influence societal standards.

Required Texts: (provided to students by Duke TIP)

- *Lying* by Sam Harris
- *Ethics in the Real World* by Peter Singer
- *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* By Michael J. Sandel

Course Objectives:

- To develop the ability to write, speak, and think with philosophical clarity and precision.
- To compare and contrast popular ethical theories and examine pressing ethical issues
- To think critically about the nature and ethics of lying
- To gain knowledge about the history of ethical thought in Western Philosophy

Assignments and Evaluation:

There will be two written exams, one at the end of each of the first two weeks during class time.

Each exam will consist of short answer and long answer questions (that directly relate to the content covered that week). Students will also be asked to keep a journal and write down their thoughts about various readings, films, questions, and concepts a couple of times a week.

These two written components, in conjunction with participation and individual and group projects, will comprise the final evaluation rubric. There are many opportunities for students to earn participation credit. For example, students can ask questions during class, contribute to group projects, activities and discussions, and/or volunteer to share their journal musings so as to stimulate discussion.

Day by Day Itinerary:

Note: Presentation of course material will involve a combination of small and large group discussions, lecturing, educational video watching, independent reading and journaling, group activities, and various solo and team projects.

Course Outline: Week One

Monday: Overview of Course/What is Philosophy and what is Ethics?

Morning:

- Introduction and class expectations
- Establish class community guidelines
- Discussion and Journal Writing: What is Philosophy?
- Video Showing ('What is Philosophy? Crash Course philosophy #1): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A_CAKYt3GY

Afternoon:

- Introduction to Ethics Lecture
- Peter Singer, 'Does Anything Matter?'
- *Justice* (Sandel) Chapter 1
- Objectivism versus Cultural Relativism
- Divine Command Theory and Euthyphro's Dilemma

Evening Study:

- Journal Writing: Is morality objective? If not, why? If so, is it objective in the same way that science is?

Tuesday: Nihilism, Absurdism, Existentialism/Utilitarianism

Morning:

- Journal Sharing Opportunity
- *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche's Nihilism
- Camus' Absurdism
- Sartre's Existentialism

Afternoon:

- Hedonism versus Desire Satisfaction Theories
- *Justice* (Sandel) Chapter 2
- Jeremy Bentham, 'The Principle of Utility'
- Smart, 'Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism'
- Robert Nozick, 'The Experience Machine'

Evening Study:

- Experience Machine Group Activity

Wednesday: Kantian Ethics

Morning:

- Kant, 'The Categorical Imperative'
- Video Showing ('Kant and Categorical Imperatives: Crash Course Philosophy #35): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8blys6JoEDw>

Afternoon:

- *Justice* (Sandel) Chapter 5
- *Project #1: Utilitarianism, Kantianism, or Nihilism in Pop Culture* (Individual presentations)

Evening Study:

- Read: *Ethics in the Real World*, 'Is it Ok to Cheat at Football?'
- Journal Writing: Do you think it is ever morally permissible to cheat? What would Kant say about the morality of cheating?

Thursday: Virtue Ethics/Natural Law Theory

Morning:

- Journal Sharing Opportunity
- *Justice* (Sandel) Chapter 8
- Aristotle, 'Nichomachean Ethics' (excerpts)

Afternoon:

- C.E. Harris, 'The Ethics of Natural Law'
- Social Contract Theory: Locke versus Hobbes

Evening Study:

- Group Discussion: The concept of virtue and the golden mean

Friday: EXAM ONE

Morning:

- Review of Week 1

Afternoon:

- Exam 1

Saturday: Movie Showing

Morning:

- Watch: '(Dis)Honesty: The Truth About Lies' (CNBC Documentary)
- Journal Writing: Reflections on Documentary

Course Outline: Week Two

Monday: The Ethics of Lying

Morning:

- Sam Harris, *Lying* (What is a lie?, Lies of Omission and Lies of Commission, White Lies)
- Harry Frankfurt, *On Bullshit* (excerpts)

Afternoon:

- Sam Harris, *Lying* (Lies in Extremis, Mental Accounting)
- How Utilitarians, Virtue Theorists, and Kantians view the Ethics of Lying
- Dan Ariely, *Predictably Irrational* (Formulate questions for Dan)

Evening Study:

- Group Activity: Honesty about Lying

Tuesday: The Ethics of Lying

Morning:

- Group Reading and Discussion: Sam Harris, *Lying* ('A Conversation with Ronald A. Howard' and 'A Conversation with Readers')
- Conspiracy Theories
- Richard Rorty, Epistemic Relativism
- Dan Ariely's Video Response to questions posed by students

Afternoon:

- *Project #2*: Big lies and conspiracy theories (individual presentations)

Evening Study:

- Mock Debate: Deceptionism vs. Non-Deceptionism

Wednesday: Personhood (Abortion and AI)

Morning:

- John Noonan, 'An Almost Absolute Value in History'
- Mary Anne Warren, 'On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion'
- Judith Thomson, 'A Defense of Abortion'
- Peter Singer, 'The Real Abortion Tragedy'

Afternoon:

- Nick Bostrom, *Superintelligence*
- John Searle, 'The Chinese Room'
- The Turing test, the Singularity and AI Consciousness
- Peter Singer, 'Rights for Robots?'

Evening Study:

- Independent Reading or Journal Writing: Can AI's be people?

Thursday: Distributive Justice

Morning:

- *Justice* (Sandel) Chapter 3
- Robert Nozick, Libertarianism

Afternoon:

- *Justice* (Sandel) Chapter 6
- John Rawls, Moderate Egalitarianism

Evening Study:

- Independent Reading: Open Ended

Friday: *Minority Report*, Antinatalism, and Military Ethics

Morning:

- Watch: *Minority Report*
- 1 on 1 meetings with students

Afternoon:

- Group Activity: The Ethics of *Minority Report*
- David Benatar, Antinatalism: Better to have never been?
- Peter Singer, 'Should this be the last generation?'

- Military Ethics: The ethical dilemma of AI super soldiers

Saturday: EXAM TWO

Morning:

- Exam 2

Course Outline: Week Three

Monday: Immigration and Drugs

Morning:

- Michael Huemer, 'Is there a right to immigrate?'

Afternoon:

- Stephen Macedo, 'The moral dilemma of US immigration policy'
- The Ethics of Drugs

Evening Study:

- Mock debate: Macedo versus Huemer

Tuesday: Torture, Capital Punishment, and Group Projects

Morning:

- David Luban on the ethics of Torture
- Types of Justice: Retribution, Prevention, Rehabilitation
- Louis Pojman on Capital Punishment

Afternoon:

- *Project # 3*: Group research and presentations on particular ethical topic (4 groups; topics included Environmental Ethics, Guns, Cloning, and Euthanasia)

Evening Study:

- Independent Reading: *Justice* by Sandel

Wednesday: Animal Ethics and the Gamer's Dilemma

Morning:

- Watch: *Blackfish*
- Peter Singer: 'A case for veganism', 'Europe's Ethical Eggs', 'If Fish could scream'
- Tom Regan, 'The Case for animal rights'
- Mary Anne Warren, 'Difficulties with the strong animal rights position'

Afternoon:

- Alastair Norcross, 'Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating meat and marginal cases'
- Morgan Luck, 'The Gamer's Dilemma'

Evening Study:

- Group Reading and Discussion: Animal Rights activity

Thursday: Museum Field Trip/Genetic Enhancement/Lying in Medicine and Business

Morning:

- Lecture on genetic enhancement
- Field trip to Nasher Museum of Art

Afternoon:

- Project #4: Pick a piece of art from the museum that involves an ethical dilemma and write about it
- Lying in Medicine and Business

Evening Study:

- Journal Writing: Reflections on course

Friday: Moral Saints, Overpopulation, and the Ethics of Social Media

Morning:

- Susan Wolf, 'Moral Saints'
- Derek Parfit, Overpopulation
- Watch: Black Mirror (Nosedive)

Afternoon:

- Wrap up and Last Things
- 1 on 1 meetings with students

Saturday: Parent Conferences