SATURDAY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM: FALL 2017
THE RIGHT THING TO DO: AN INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Instructor: Sofia Huerter
Email: huerts@uw.edu

Course Description

This course, "The Right Thing to Do," is designed for students with little or no background in ethics. It provides an introductory examination of the five major positions in normative ethical theory, each of which offers distinct criteria for determining what is right and what is wrong. These include virtue ethics, social contract theory, Kantianism, utilitarianism, and care ethics.

Essential Questions

What are the standards of right and wrong?
How ought we to live?
What are our moral obligations?
Who (or what) has value and why?

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will have a better understanding of:
* the major ethical theories in Western philosophical ethics
* the difference between prescriptive and descriptive claims
* the standards of justification employed by academic philosophers when defending their moral views
* how to engage with ethical questions by offering reasons in favor of your beliefs, rather than simply asserting your agreement or disagreement with a particular moral conclusion
* how to assess the morality of your own and others' actions
* how to develop your own moral beliefs in relation to others

Instructional Strategies

This course will utilize several instructional strategies including power-point presentations, games, film clips, and individual and group-based exercises designed to prompt students' thinking. The predominant classroom activity, however, will be discussion. Because there is no homework, any assigned material will be read aloud in class, after which students will be asked to share their questions, opinions, and criticisms of the reading. During a class

discussion, students will be expected to engage in philosophical reflection of their own and others' arguments. This will require students to think critically, creatively, and charitably.

Student Assessment

This class is designed to push students to express themselves openly and to amend their moral views in response to new arguments and ideas. To determine whether students are meeting this learning objective, I will ask students to complete a self-assessment at the end of each class. There, they will have the opportunity to respond to the day's material, to evaluate the quality of their class participation, and to voice any comments or questions that they were not able to share during the class period. I will then respond to each student's self-assessment with my own comments regarding their progress in the class. This form of collaborative evaluation, which is based on trust, mutual respect, and honesty, is intended to encourage students to both self-regulate and reflect earnestly on their engagement in class activities.

Resources and Materials

- Notebook
- Writing Utensils
- Markers and/or Colored Pencils

*All other material will be provided by the instructor

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic(s)	In-Class Activities
Week 1	Getting to Know You	• Introductions • Classroom Norms
Week 2	The Challenge of Cultural Relativism	• Overview of James Rachels' "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" • Thinking Prompt: Heroes and Villains
Week 3	Virtue and the Good Life	• Overview of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics • Thinking Prompt: Draw Your Thoughts
Week 4	Hobbes and the State of Nature	• Classroom Game: The Prisoner's Dilemma • Crash Course Philosophy Video: Contractarianism
Week 5	Kant and the Categorical Imperative	• Thinking Prompt: No Matter the Consequences • Video: Kant's Axe
Week 6	Utilitarianism	• Reading: Tom Gengler's summary of Mill's *Utilitarianism* • The Trolley Problem
Week 7	Ethics of Care	• Thinking Prompt: Who Cares? • Overview of Care Ethics • Video: "Winnie the Pooh and a Day for Eeyore"
Week 8	Looking Back	• Wrap-Up Discussion • Goodbye Party