

**PHIL 100: Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy:
Plato, Nietzsche, and Feminist Ethics**

Fall 2020

Meetings: MWF 1:00pm-1:50pm, Hailstones Hall Room 1 (Hybrid)

Instructor: Andrew Evans

Email: evansa19@xavier.edu

Office Hours: By appointment, video chat and phone calls are an option

Course Description:

This class will serve as an introduction to Western philosophy, with a particular emphasis on ethical theories. The class is broken up into three different sections. The first section will primarily deal with Plato's most famous work the *Republic*. This section will also involve some discussion of Socrates and Christian Ethics. The second section will be focus on Friedrich Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Nietzsche rejects both Plato and Christianity, so this section is a response to the first. The last section can be seen as a possible third option and will focus on Feminist Ethics. Feminist Ethics is a response to traditional, and traditionally male-dominated, ways of thinking about morality and focuses on our natural inclinations to care for those we love. Hopefully this class will spur you to think about morality and goodness in new and interesting ways.

Learning Goals:

When you finish the semester, you should be able to...

- Give a brief and accurate description of ethical theories from Plato, Nietzsche, and feminist ethicists.
- Explain how the different theories in relate to real world issues.
- Summarize a philosopher's argument, accurately, clearly, and succinctly.
- Argue for your own philosophical claim, supporting your argument with *reasons*.

Required Books:

The Republic of Plato, Allan Bloom

ISBN-13: 9780465094080

DIGITAL ISBN-13: 9780465094097

ISBN-10: 0465094082

On the Genealogy of Morality, Friedrich Nietzsche

ISBN-13: 9780872202832

DIGITAL ISBN-13: 9781603845861

ISBN-10: 0872202836

Grade Scale:

A 465-500	B 415-434	C 365-384	D 300-334
A- 450-464	B- 400-414	C- 350-364	F 0-299

B+ 435-449	C+ 385-399	D+ 335-349
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Point Distribution:

Plato Paper	65 points
Nietzsche Paper	65 points
Feminist Ethics Paper	65 points
Revision of Plato Paper	65 points
Summary and Question Assignments (SAQAs)	240 points (20 points each)
Total	500 points

COVID Considerations:

Obviously, this will be a strange semester. None of us (teachers and students) know yet how to do all of this, so it will be a learning experience for all of us. With that in mind, I will be as flexible as is reasonable, and I am open to suggestions throughout the semester.

Due to the COVID restrictions, **you will only attend class in person once per week. You will attend class via Zoom twice per week.** I have divided you up into **three groups that determine what day you will attend class in person: a Monday group, a Wednesday group, and a Friday group.** You can see what group you are in on Canvas.

When you do attend class in person (on your designated day), wear a mask, social distance, and follow all other COVID related policies from the University and public health officials. **Do not come to class if you are sick. Do not come to class if you have been in contact with someone who is sick.** If you miss class because of sickness or because you were around a sick person, you will not be penalized since there is no attendance grade.

If you are a totally online student, that is okay. Just let me know that you won't be attending on your designated in person days, and then you can just attend via Zoom on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. If you prefer to be totally online, that is also okay, just let me know. You can then attend via Zoom on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

[See the University "Return to Campus" guide here for information about COVID policies](#)

Attendance and Participation:

You will not be graded on attendance. Attendance is recommended and encouraged, but health and safety come first. I understand that this is a strange time, and sometimes you might have to miss class. If you are missing a lot of class talk to me and we will figure out a way for you to get caught up.

Do not come to class if you are sick. Do not come to class if you have been in contact with someone who is sick. If you miss class because of sickness or because you were around a sick person, you will not be penalized since there is no attendance grade.

There is also no participation grade, but participation, like attendance, is encouraged. Philosophy classes work a lot better when we can all take part and have a conversation about the topics. If you are having trouble participating, let me know.

Plato, Nietzsche, and Feminist Ethics Papers:

There are three short papers for the class. One on each of the main topics of the class. The papers will involve you reconstructing arguments of philosophers, summarizing what philosophers are saying, making some claim, and supporting your claim with reasons. More information about the papers will be made available as the semester progresses. All papers will be turned in on Canvas.

Revision of Plato Paper:

At the end of the semester, you will revise the Plato Paper based on the comments I gave you. This revision will count for as many points as any of the other papers, so it is very important you substantially revise based on my comments. You will also add a section to the Plato Paper in which you will reflect on how Plato relates to Nietzsche and Feminist Ethics. The revision will be turned in on Canvas.

Summary and Question Assignments (SAQAs):

You will need to turn in twelve Summary and Question Assignments (SAQAs). The due dates and topics for SAQAs are listed on the schedule below. A SAQA is an opportunity for you to demonstrate that you have done the reading, grappled with it, and came up with some further questions. For each SAQA you will write a summary of the relevant reading. The summary must be at least 200 words long. Then, you will come up with two questions you have about the reading. SAQAs will be turned in on Canvas, and are due by 1:00pm on the days they are due. The summaries will be graded based on accuracy and completeness. The questions will be graded based on whether or not they are related to the reading.

Late Work Policy:

If you turn in a Summary and Question Assignment (SAQA) late, then it will be docked 20%. A late SAQA can only be turned in until the next one is due. So, for example, if SAQA 1 is due Monday and SAQA 2 is due Friday, if you turn SAQA 1 in by Friday at 1:00pm, it will be accepted but docked 20%. In general, you cannot turn it in after that. If there is some reason you were not able to turn a SAQA in on time (e.g. illness, an emergency, some other extenuating circumstance), talk with me and we will figure something out.

Late papers can be turned in up to one week after the due date and will be penalized 20%. After one week, late papers will, in general, not be accepted. If you have an emergency of some kind (for example a health crisis) or some extenuating circumstance that prevents you from turning your work in on time, then please discuss this with me and we will come to a solution.

Academic Honesty:

Do not plagiarize or cheat in any way. Follow the University's policy on academic honesty, which is linked below. If I discover that you have broken the University's policies on academic misconduct, I am required to report it. Punishments range from failing the assignment to expulsion from the University.

[See the University policy on academic honesty here](#)

Inclusion:

No discrimination will be tolerated in terms of age, race, national origin, ancestry, political affiliation, disability status, medical condition, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, or other forms of difference. Please let me know via email if there are any inclusion-related considerations that I should be aware of (e.g. pronouns).

Resources:

Learning Assistance Center

The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provides support services to facilitate learning. The LAC has two main purposes: tutoring and disability services. The tutoring services include subject specific tutoring, drop-in sessions, study skills assistance, and Supplemental Instruction (SI). For students with documented disabilities, services include accommodations such as extended time on exams, reduced distraction testing environment, note-taking assistance, and assistive technology. Services are provided in a positive and encouraging environment, which promotes appreciation for diversity and cura personalis. Students can contact the LAC at 745-3280 to set up an appointment. The LAC is located in the Conaton Learning Commons room 514.

[See the Academic Support page here](#)

Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should notify the course instructor and contact Cassandra Jones in the Learning Assistance Center at 745-3280 or e-mail jonesc20@xavier.edu to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

[See the Disability Services page here](#)

Mental Health Resources--Undergraduate

Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. McGrath Counseling Services (located in the McGrath Health and Wellness Center) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. McGrath Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists, social workers and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out by calling (513) 745-3022.

[See the Counseling Services page here](#)

[See the Health and Counseling Services page here](#)

Writing Center

The [Writing Center](#) offers free one-on-one tutoring on writing assignments for all Xavier students. Students can contact the Center at 745-2875 to set up an appointment. The Writing Center is located in the Conaton Learning Commons room 400.

[See the Writing Center page here](#)

Technology, Canvas, and Zoom:

You will need access to the internet for this class because I will make some readings available online, assignments will be turned in online, and you will be attending some of the class meetings online. If you have trouble getting connected to the internet, please let me know. We will be using Canvas for the class. Please regularly check the Canvas page. Also, change your settings so that you get Canvas notifications and emails. In order to attend meetings remotely, we will be using Zoom.

Communication:

The best way to communicate with me is email. My email address is: evansa19@xavier.edu. I am usually able to respond to an email within 48 hours. Please feel free to email me with any questions or concerns you have. I am also available to meet by video chat or telephone. If you email me, we can arrange an appointment.

Sensitive Topics:

At times, we may be talking, reading, or watching videos about some sensitive topics that may lead to discomfort or distress. If a particular topic is especially controversial or potential triggering, I will do my best to warn you. If at any point you feel as though a topic is problematic or bothering you in any way, please contact me. Also, feel free to leave the classroom (in person or remotely) at any time if a topic or discussion is bothering you.

Schedule:

Date	Required Readings and Assignment Due Dates
<u>Monday Aug 17</u>	<u>Introductions and Syllabus</u>
<u>Wednesday Aug 19</u>	Syllabus and Philosophy: What and Why?
<u>Friday Aug 21</u>	Philosophy: What and Why?
<u>Monday Aug 24</u>	What is Ethics?
<u>Wednesday Aug 26</u>	Plato, <i>Apology</i> <u>Due by 1:00pm: Apology SAQA</u>
<u>Friday Aug 28</u>	Plato, <i>Apology</i>
<u>Monday Aug 31</u>	Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book I
<u>Wednesday Sept 2</u>	Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book I <u>Due by 1:00pm: Republic Books I-II SAQA</u>

<u>Friday Sept 4</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book II</u>
<u>Monday Sept 7</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book II</u>
<u>Wednesday Sept 9</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book IV</u> <u>Due by 1:00pm: Republic Book IV SAQA</u>
<u>Friday Sept 11</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book IV</u>
<u>Monday Sept 14</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book IV</u>
<u>Wednesday Sept 16</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book VII</u>
<u>Friday Sept 18</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book VII</u> <u>Due by 1:00pm: Republic Book VII SAQA</u>
<u>Monday Sept 21</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book VII</u>
<u>Wednesday Sept 23</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book VIII</u>
<u>Friday Sept 25</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book VIII</u>
<u>Monday Sept 28</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book IX</u> <u>Due by 1:00pm: Republic Books VIII-IX SAQA</u>
<u>Wednesday Sept 30</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book IX</u>
<u>Friday Oct 2</u>	<u>Plato, <i>Republic</i> Overview</u>
<u>Monday Oct 5</u>	<u>Philosophical Writing</u>
<u>Wednesday Oct 7</u>	<u>CLASS TOTALLY ONLINE: Outline Workshop in Break Out Rooms with Peers</u>
<u>Friday Oct 9</u>	<u>Holy Bible, Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)</u> <u>Due by 1:00pm: Sermon on the Mount SAQA</u> <u>Due by 11:59pm: Plato Paper</u>
<u>Monday Oct 12</u>	<u>Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> Preface</u> <u>Due by 1:00pm: Genealogy Preface SAQA</u>
<u>Wednesday Oct 14</u>	<u>Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> First Essay Sections 1-10</u>
<u>Friday Oct 16</u>	<u>Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> First Essay Sections 11-17</u> <u>Due by 1:00pm: Genealogy First Essay SAQA</u>
<u>Monday Oct 19</u>	<u>Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> Second Essay Sections 1-7</u>
<u>Wednesday Oct 21</u>	<u>No class—Academic Holiday</u>
<u>Friday Oct 23</u>	<u>Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> Second Essay Sections 8-15; Break Out Rooms with Peers</u> <u>Due by 1:00pm: Genealogy Second Essay SAQA</u>
<u>Monday Oct 26</u>	<u>Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> Second Essay Sections 16-25</u>
<u>Wednesday Oct 28</u>	<u>Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> Third Essay Sections 1-14</u>
<u>Friday Oct 30</u>	<u>Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> Third Essay Sections 15-28</u>
<u>Monday Nov 2</u>	<u>Carol Gilligan, “Moral Orientation and Moral Development”</u> <u>Due by 1:00pm: Gilligan SAQA</u>
<u>Wednesday Nov 4</u>	<u>Carol Gilligan, “Moral Orientation and Moral Development”</u>
<u>Friday Nov 6</u>	<u>Cheshire Calhoun, “Justice, Care, Gender Bias”</u> <u>Due by 11:59pm: Nietzsche Paper</u>

<u>Monday Nov 9</u>	<u>Stephanie Collins, “Care Ethics: The Four Key Claims”; Break Out Rooms with Peers</u> <u>Due by 1:00pm: Collins SAQA</u>
<u>Wednesday Nov 11</u>	<u>Nel Noddings, “An Ethic of Caring”</u>
<u>Friday Nov 13</u>	<u>Nel Noddings, “An Ethic of Caring”</u>
<u>Monday Nov 16</u>	<u>Nel Noddings, “Caring, Social Policy, and Homelessness”</u>
<u>Wednesday Nov 18</u>	<u>Nel Noddings, “Caring, Social Policy, and Homelessness”</u> <u>Due by 1:00pm: Noddings SAQA</u>
<u>Friday Nov 20</u>	<u>Feminist Ethics Overview</u>
<u>Monday Nov 23</u>	<u>Class Overview</u>
<u>Finals Week</u>	<u>Due by Dec 4 at 11:59pm: Feminist Ethics Paper</u> <u>Due by Dec 4 at 11:59pm: Revision of Plato Paper</u>

Sample Assignment

Ethics as an Introduction to Philosophy: Plato, Nietzsche, and Feminist Ethics Plato Paper Prompt

What is it to live a good life? Plato certainly had some ideas about how to answer this question. The goal of this paper is to describe what Plato thinks the “good life” is, and then talk about whether you agree, or disagree, and why.

The paper should be written in five sections:

Section 1: This will be an introduction. It is important in the introduction to state what your **thesis** is. For this paper your thesis will be something like, “I agree with Plato that the good life is X, for reasons Y and Z” or “I disagree with Plato that the good life is X, for reasons A and B.” In the introduction you should also provide a **“roadmap”** for the rest of the paper. Explain to your reader the main point of each of the next four sections.

Section 2: In this section you will explain what you think Plato’s view of the good life is. **If someone asked you, “What does Plato think it means to live a good life?” what would you say?** There are different ways you can accurately answer this question. One way to go is to talk about the life of the philosopher. If you go down this route you should discuss the Allegory of the Cave and the Theory of the Forms in detail and how they relate to the good life. Another way to answer the question is to talk about being a just person. If you go down that route you should talk about the different parts of the soul in detail and what it means to be a just, moderate, courageous, and wise person. There are other routes you could go down as well, but these seem to be the most obvious to me. I will let you choose how you want to answer the question though, since there are multiple ways to answer it correctly.

Section 3: Here you will answer these questions: **Do you agree with Plato’s view of the good life as you have presented it? Why or why not?** This is where you are arguing for your thesis. Make sure to **state your thesis clearly**: “I agree with Plato that the good life is X, for reasons Y and Z” or “I disagree with Plato that the good life is X, for reasons A and B” or something similar. But

whatever your thesis is you have to **support your claim with *plausible reasons***. It is not enough to simply state what your opinion is. It is also not enough to tell the reader how you came to your opinion. The goal is to convince the reader that your thesis is correct. So, you have to support your claim with plausible reasons that would help to convince the reader that your claim is correct.

Section 4: In this section, try to imagine someone who disagrees with your thesis. Come up with one objection that they might give to argue against your thesis. What would someone that disagrees with you say as a counter argument to your argument in Section 3? The goal here is to come up with a ***plausible objection***. If the objection is obviously wrong, not relevant, or does not make sense, then it is not a plausible objection. Once you have given an objection, respond to the objection. What could you say to defend your thesis? This must be a ***plausible response***. If the response is obviously wrong, not relevant, or doesn't make sense, then it is not a plausible response.

Section 5: This is the conclusion. This section should simply be a brief rundown of what you accomplished in this paper, and a restatement of your thesis.

The paper should be **1200-1500 words long, double spaced, size 12 font**. If you are having trouble reaching the minimum page requirement, go back and make sure that you did everything I am asking for in each section.

When you are talking about a certain part of the *Republic* cite it this way (Republic 123a). Every time you use ideas from the *Republic*, you need to cite it, not just when you use a direct quote. If you are quoting directly from the *Republic* you need to use quotations makers and cite it. Otherwise it is plagiarism. You should paraphrase as much as possible and avoid using a lot of quotations. When you paraphrase you need to cite the part of the *Republic* that you are using. You do not need a bibliography. If you have any questions about citation or plagiarism it is better to talk with me before the due date.

The paper is due **October 9th at 11:59pm**. It should be turned in as a Word or Pages document on Canvas. If you turn the paper in late it will be docked 20%. After one week past the due date, you will not be able to turn the paper in. Of course, exceptions can be made if there is some emergency, illness, or some other extenuating circumstance. If you are not able to turn the paper in on time, talk to me about it and we will come to some solution. The paper is worth **65 points**.

Rubric

A range paper: At least 1200 words long. It is written clearly and concisely. It follows the outline above and each section is complete. There is very little inaccurate information, and Plato's views are discussed mostly accurately. The thesis is stated clearly. Plausible reasons are given to support the thesis. A plausible objection is given as well as a plausible response to the objection. The reading is cited properly.

B range paper: It has many of the features described in the A range paper, but is missing a few. Here are some potential issues: this paper might have more inaccuracies, be slightly too short, be a little difficult to understand, not cite the reading correctly, not state the thesis clearly, not give enough reasons to support the thesis, give implausible reasons, not give an objection or response, or the objection and response are not plausible. Overall though it is still a good paper that follows the outline above mostly completely.

C range paper: It has some of the features of the A range paper, but not others. There are important features missing. Here are some potential issues: it might be difficult to understand, contain a fair amount of inaccurate information, not be long enough, not contain a clear thesis, contain very few reasons supporting the thesis, contain implausible reasons, contain no objection or response, or the objection and response are implausible.

D range paper: It meets almost none of the requirements. It might have some accurate information, or be somewhat clearly written. There likely is no thesis given. It likely does not contain reasons for the claims it makes. It likely does not contain an objection or response. Overall, the assignment does not have most of the features of the A range paper, and is likely difficult to understand.

F range paper: It is likely much too short, has very little to do with the prompt, and is difficult to understand.