

## Selected Readings in Western Ethics\*

*\*Note that this syllabus has been adapted from a syllabus by Qu Hongmei, who originally taught this course.*

Fall 2020 – 10:00-11:40 a.m. Thursday  
Third Teaching Building, Room 203

### **Instructor:**

Nicholas Rimell  
Kuang Yaming Building 440  
nrime11@jlu.edu.cn  
Office Hours: 12:00-1:30 p.m. Thursday

### **Assignments and Grading Policies:**

In order to pass the course you must attend the discussion sections, contribute to the discussions, and complete all of the written work. There will be one reading report due on Thursday, Oct. 22, and a paper of more than 1000 words due on Thursday, Dec.3.

The final score is divided into three parts:

5%: Weekly in-class participation

20%: Presentation

5%: Reading report

25%: Term paper in English

45%: Final written examination (You are permitted to bring prepared material into the classroom, but you may not use computers, phones, or tablets.)

### **Classroom Policies and Related Notes:**

**Screen-free classroom.** I want the majority of your class time to be spent listening, thinking, asking questions, and offering comments. I do not want the majority of your time spent attempting to type up everything I say. Consequently, I prefer that laptops and other electronic devices not be used during class. If you have a reason why you need to use such a device, please see me.

**Preparation.** Please come to class each week with the reading and handouts for the week's class, plus the previous two weeks' classes. Please also bring the syllabus with you.

**Accommodations.** I hope this course has been designed so that everyone can succeed. I also appreciate that there are multiple ways to learn. I would welcome students to discuss with me their learning styles and how we can make sure that they are represented in our course. In addition, I encourage students to speak with me if they are having difficulties understanding or participation because of language issues. It is important to me that every student in the class is able to understand my lectures, my questions, my policies, etc. But it is up to you to communicate with me if you are having difficulty understanding.

**My email and meeting policy.** I am happy to answer short questions over email, and I am also happy to discuss more involved questions in person (either in my office hours or, if you can't make

my office hours, at some other time we arrange ahead of time). Please email me at least **two business days in advance** of when you would like a response, and if you wish to meet with me in person (and cannot make my office hours) please email me at least **four business days in advance** of when, at the latest, you would like to meet. (This includes, especially, the days leading up to deadlines.)

#### References:

1. Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* (ed. by Roger Crisp, Cambridge University Press, 2000 ).
2. Kant, Immanuel: *Practical Philosophy* (ed. by Mary Gregor, Cambridge University Press, 1996).
3. MacIntyre, Alasdair: *A Short History of Ethics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1998).
4. Denise, White, & Peterfreund (eds.): *Great Traditions in Ethics* (Beijing University Press, 2002).
5. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>
6. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://www.iep.utm.edu/>
7. Plato: *Five Dialogues*, Second Edition (translated by G.M.A. Grube, ed. by John M. Cooper, Hackett, 2009)
8. Mill, John Stuart: *Utilitarianism*, Second Edition. (ed. by George Sher, Hackett, 2002)
9. Shafer-Landau, Russ: *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

## Contents

1. Introduction (Aug. 27)
2. Reading and Presentation in Moral Philosophy (Sep. 3)
3. Writing in Moral Philosophy (Sep. 10)
4. Metaethics, Part I (Sep. 17)
5. Metaethics, Part II (Sep. 24)
6. Plato: *Crito* (Sep. 27)
7. Epicurus: The Pleasant Life (Oct. 8)
8. Marx: History and Humanism (Oct. 15)
9. Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* (Oct. 22)
10. Alasdair MacIntyre: *After Virtue* (Oct. 29)
11. Jeremy Bentham: Classical Utilitarianism ( Nov. 5)
12. Peter Singer: Preferential Utilitarianism (Nov. 12)
13. Paper-Writing Workshop (Nov. 19)
14. Immanuel Kant: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (Nov. 26)
15. John Rawls: *A Theory of Justice* (Dec. 3)
16. Final Discussion and Review (Dec. 10)