

## PHIL 222: Ethics

**Class Time:** Tu/Th 1:20–2:50 P.M.

**Class Location:** TBD

**Instructor:** Chris Rahlwes

**Email:** [crahlwes@smith.edu](mailto:crahlwes@smith.edu)

**How to reach me:** *Please drop by my open office hours (TBD) or email me to make an online appointment. Always include PHIL 222 in the subject of your email for a quicker response. I will respond within 48 hours Monday–Friday.*



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### Course Description:

This course introduces the principal theoretical frameworks in ethics in several of the world's philosophical traditions. We will start in China studying Confucius' account of community virtue ethics and then move to the Greco-Roman Perihepatic, Stoic, and Epicurean accounts of individual virtue ethics. From here, we look at the moral psychology developed by Buddhists and contrast this with David Hume's account. We then enter a dialectic between Hume, Immanuel Kant, and Arthur Schopenhauer, in which we see the appropriation of Buddhism by Schopenhauer. We move this dialectic to John Stuart Mill, whose account shares key elements with Mozi's response to Confucianism. We finish the course by turning to the meta-ethic concern of moral skepticism.

### Course Goals:

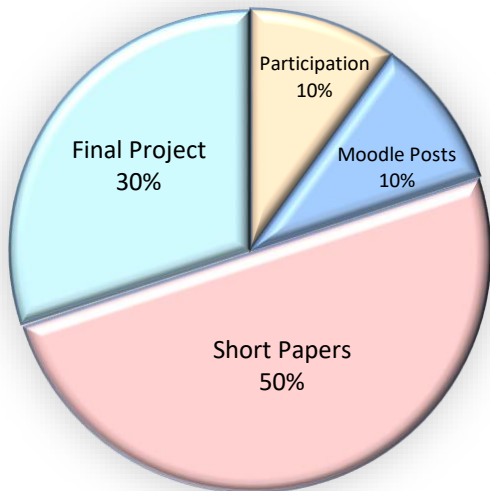
**By the successful completion of this course, you will be able to:**

1. Develop different ways to think about our ethical lives.
  2. Assess how the different perspectives from the world's philosophical traditions can be useful in cultivating ourselves as ethical agents and in approaching moral decisions.
  3. Evaluate and analyze arguments made by the philosophers we study.
  4. Engage in interpretive debates surrounding issues in the texts covered.
  5. Develop a podcast episode that applies the ethical frameworks we have studied to a contemporary issue shown in a journalistic article.
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## Means of Evaluation

- **Participation (10%).** Participation will be measured through active class engagement as well as workshops.
- **Moodle Posts (10%).** You are expected to read all assigned material before the class and to post a brief (approx. 100–150 word) response to the readings at least once per week, and to read other’s posts (a response to another post counts as well!). Moodle posts will be graded on a Done/Not-Done basis, and cannot be done late (forums close Friday noon).
- **Short Papers (50%). 2 (5–7 paged) papers** that either (i) explain a key moral philosophical principle/ philosopher’s position or (ii) argues for an ethical/moral position. Your grad is determined by the accuracy of your explanations and if your argument is compelling. You are allowed up to two revisions per paper.
- **Final Project (30%).** The final project will be a group project (2-3 per group) to contribute a 15-minute podcast framed by a 1,000 word journalistic article on a significant moral problem in the contemporary world, exploring how people think about that problem, and which ethical frameworks are brought to bear, implicitly or explicitly in thinking through that problem—writing or production aimed at the general public, to be placed on a joint class website.

### Weighted Grade



### Letter Grade Cutoffs:

Grade	Percentage
A	93%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	73%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	63%
D-	60%
F	Below 60%

Note: These are cut-off points: *decimals will not be rounded up.* Temporary grades: N (no basis for grade), I (incomplete grade), X (final assessment absence)

## Required Materials

### Required Texts (available in Grécourt Bookstore)

- Angle, *Growing Moral: A Confucian Guide to Life*
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (trans. Ostwald)
- Confucius, *Analects* (Slingerland trans.)
- Hume, *Enquiry into the Principles of Morals*
- Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (trans. Wood)
- Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*
- Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (trans. Grube)
- Mengzi, *Mengzi* with selections from commentaries (trans. Van Norden)
- Mill, *Utilitarianism*
- Mozi, *Basic Writings* (Watson trans.)
- Śāntideva, *Bodhicāryāvātāra* (trans. Wallace and Wallace)
- Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality* (trans. Payne)
- Xunzi, *Xunzi* (trans. Hutton)

### Further Required Resources

- Additional readings will be available on Moodle.
- You will need to bring material to write, take notes, and access the internet during class.
- You will need a word processor (such as [Google Docs](#) or [Microsoft Word](#)), a pdf reader (such as [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)), and a web browser.

## Course Policies:

### Submission of Late Work

If you are unable to submit the papers on Moodle by the schedule due date, extensions can be granted by request. Participation cannot be made up. Moodle posts cannot be made up, but the lowest two will be dropped.

### Cheating & Plagiarism

This course expects you will act in accordance with [the Academic Honor Code](#) at Smith. Cases of academic misconduct will be reported via [Conduct & Ethics Reporting](#). Reach out to me if you have doubts about what counts as plagiarism or cheating.

### Accessibility & Equity

If you have difficulty accessing the course or its materials based on a disability or pregnancy, please [contact the Office of Disability Services](#). If there are other issues that make the course inaccessible, please reach out to me via [email](#).

### Mutual Respect

Differing opinions and arguments are encouraged in this course but must be engaged in a respectful manner. Do not mock someone for their opinion or use slurs. You should never feel embarrassed or ashamed about your opinion, concern, or question. We all come to this class in different ways, and we should feel comfortable in sharing our thoughts, ideas, and opinions.

### Recording & Copyright

My lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression and I've recorded them prior or during my lecture to ensure that I obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in my class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. I will inform you as to whether you are authorized to record my lectures at the beginning of each semester. If you are so authorized to record my lectures, you may not copy this recording or any other material, provide copies of either to anyone else, or make a commercial use of them without prior permission from me. Violation of this policy may result in a disciplinary action by the Student Conduct Board and may violate Massachusetts "two-party consent" recording law.

### Attendance & Participation

Per Smith's policy, students are expected to attend all classes. Attending class is important as it enables you to ask question and engage the material. Further, class participation is 10% of your grade. Reach out to me in cases where you are unable to attend the class.

### COVID & Illness

We will follow [Smith's Covid-19 policy](#). If you do become sick (COVID or otherwise), please do not come to class. Contact me via [email](#) and I will work with you to catch you up on the material and assignments.

## Tentative Schedule (Subject to Change)

	Date	Topic/Readings	Assignments
Week 1	1/26	Introduction to the Course	
<b>Module 1: The Confucian Tradition</b>			
Week 2	1/31	<b>The Analects</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Analects</i>: Introduction, Ch 1–5</li> </ul>	Moodle Post Due
	2/2	<b>Mozi &amp; Mengzi</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Mozi</i>: Intro., 19–34, 41–52, 65–80, and 113–120.</li> <li><i>Mengzi</i>: Intro, 1A, 2A, 3A, 3B</li> </ul>	
Week 3	2/7	<b>Xunzi</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Xunzi</i>: 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 11, 12, 18, 24, 28, 38, 48</li> </ul>	Moodle Post Due
	2/9	<b>The Daoist Critique</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Daodejing</i>: 2, 3, 5, 9, 11, 12, 18, 24, 28, 38, 48</li> <li>Angle, <i>Growing Moral</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Module 2: Aristotle</b>			
Week 4	2/14	<b>Happiness</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>, Book I</li> </ul>	Moodle Post Due
	2/16	<b>Virtue</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>NE</i>, Book II–IV</li> </ul>	
Week 5	2/21	<b>Other Dimension of Happiness</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>NE</i>, Book VI &amp; VII</li> </ul>	Moodle Post Due
	2/23	<b>Rally Day!</b>	
Week 6	2/8	<b>Friendship</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>NE</i>, Book VIII &amp; IX</li> </ul>	Moodle Post Due

<b>Module 3: Stoic and Epicurean Ethics</b>			
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>3/2</b>	<b>Marcus Aurelius</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Meditations</i>, 1–5</li> </ul>	<b>Paper 1 Due</b>
<b>Module 4: Buddhist Ethics</b>			
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>3/7</b>	<b>Participant Observation and Interview Workshop</b>	<b>Moodle Post Due</b>
	<b>3/9</b>	<b>Moral Phenomenology &amp; Brahmavihāras</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buddhaghosa, <i>Visudhimagga</i>, excerpts</li> <li>Garfield, <i>Buddhist Ethics</i>, 2,3,9</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>3/14</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK!</b>	
	<b>3/16</b>		
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>3/21</b>	<b>Śāntideva and the Bodhisattva Path</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Bodhicāryāvātāra</i> I–III</li> </ul>	<b>Moodle Post Due</b>
	<b>3/23</b>	<b>Śāntideva and the Bodhisattva Path</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Bodhicāryāvātāra</i> V–VI, VIII</li> </ul>	
<b>Module 5: Hume's Ethics</b>			
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>3/28</b>	<b>Moral Psychology</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Enquiry</i> 1–5</li> </ul>	<b>Moodle Post Due</b>
	<b>3-30</b>	<b>Moral Psychology</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Enquiry</i> 6–9</li> </ul>	
<b>Module 6: Kant's Deontology</b>			
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>4/4</b>	<b>The Idea of Morality</b> <u>Required Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Groundwork</i> 1</li> </ul>	<b>Moodle Post Due</b> <b>Paper 2 Due</b>
	<b>4/6</b>	<b>We Video Workshop</b> (Bring laptop and headphones)	

Week 12	4/11	<b>Categorical Imperative</b> <u>Required Reading</u> • <i>Groundwork 2</i>	Moodle Post Due
	4/13	<b>Practical Reason</b> <u>Required Reading</u> • <i>Groundwork 3</i>	
<b>Module 7: Schopenhauer's Critique of Kant and Appropriation of Buddhism</b>			
Week 13	4/18	<b>The Critique of Kant</b> <u>Required Reading</u> • <i>On the Basis of Morality xxx</i>	Moodle Post Due
	4/20	<b>The Moral Incentive and its Basis</b> <u>Required Reading</u> • <i>On the Basis of Morality xxx</i>	
<b>Module 8: Mill's Utilitarianism</b>			
Week 14	4/25	<b>The Principle of Utility</b> <u>Required Reading</u> • <i>Utilitarianism I–III</i>	Moodle Post Due
	4/2	<b>The Principle of Utility</b> <u>Required Reading</u> • <i>Utilitarianism IV–V</i>	
<b>Module 9: Moral Skepticism</b>			
Week 15	5/2	<b>Can We be Realists?</b> <u>Required Reading</u> • Mackie, <i>Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong</i> 1–3, 5	Moodle Post Due
	5/4	<b>What about Kant and Mill?</b> <u>Required Reading</u> • Mackie, <i>Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong</i> 6–7	
Finals	5/8	Final Project Due	
	5/10	Final Project Viewing	



## Resources Available to All Students:

College is a challenging time in your life.

Here is a list of resources that can help you navigate your experience as a student at the Smith College. It is important to remember that you are not alone, and these resources are there for you when you need help to achieve your academic goals.

[Jacobson Centre for Writing, Teaching & Learning](#)

[Academic Advising](#)

[Office of Disability Services](#)

[Common Goods Resource Center](#)

[Office of Student Affairs](#)

[Information Technology Services](#)

[Counseling Services](#)

[The Office of Disability Services](#)

[Title IX Office](#) – if you are experiencing gender-based violence or discrimination.

[Center of Health and Wellness](#) – if you are sick or injured and need medical care.

[Clinical Consultation Services](#)

[Families with Children](#)

[Trans & Gender Nonconforming Resources](#)

[Cultural Spaces](#)

[Asian Students Association](#)

[The Black Students' Alliance](#)

[Smith College Chinese Students Association](#)

[South Asian Organization of Smith College](#)

[International Students Organization](#)

[Korean Students Association](#)

[Multi-ethnic Interracial Smith College](#)

[Vietnamese Students Association](#)

[Smith African and Caribbean Students' Association](#) (temporally inactive)

[Indigenous Smith Students Alliance](#) (temporally inactive)

[Center for Religious & Spiritual Life](#)

[Additional Student Organizations & Groups](#)