Philosophy 22 - Introduction to Ethical Theory
Instructor: Andrew Flynn

Course Description: This course will introduce you to major ethical theories by considering the question: “Why be moral?” We’ll read very influential works by three philosophers who continue to influence how we think about morality: Aristotle, Kant, and Mill. We’ll try to understand how these thinkers answer that question in different ways. Then, we’ll consider some skeptical alternatives. Assignments will consist of two short papers and a final exam.

Week I
Class 1 - Introduction: Why Be Moral?
Background Reading: Plato’s Republic, Book One

Class 2 - Aristotle (What’s Good For Humans?)
Reading: Nichomachean Ethics, Books I and II

Week II
Class 3 - Aristotle (What’s a Moral Virtue?)
Reading: Nichomachean Ethics, Books III and IV

Class 4 - Aristotle (Case Studies in the Point of Morality: Justice or Friendship)
Reading: Nichomachean Ethics, Book V or Books VIII and IX (TBD)
Background Reading: Gavin Lawrence, “Aristotle on the Ideal Life”

Paper 1 Due

Week III
Class 5 - Kant (What’s Good for Rational Agents?)
Reading: Groundwork, Section I

Class 6 - Kant (What’s Duty?)
Reading: Groundwork, Section II

Week IV
Class 7 - Kant (Case Studies in the Point of Morality: Gluttony and Beneficence)
Reading: Excerpts from the Metaphysics of Morals

Class 8 - Mill (What’s Good for Conscious Beings?)
Reading: Utilitarianism, Chapters 1-3

Week V
Class 9 - Mill (Case Study in the Point of Morality: Justice)
Readings: Utilitarianism, Chapters 4-5

Paper 2 Due

Class 10 - Why Be Moral?… Revisited
Readings: Philippa Foot, Natural Goodness, Chapters 6-7
Nietzsche, Excerpts from *The Genealogy of Morals*

**Week VI**
Class 11 - Morality Critics I: Obscured Perspectives
Tommie Shelby, Excerpts from *Dark Ghettos*

Class 12 - Morality Critics II: Against Traditional Theory
Readings: Bernard Williams, “Persons, Character, and Morality”
Susan Wolf, “Moral Saints”

**Final Exam TBD**

**Course Requirements**
Attendance (20%)  
Paper 1 - 1000 words (20%)  
Paper 2 - 1500 words (30%)  
Final Exam (30%)

**Academic Misconduct:**
Students are expected to know and to follow the university's guidelines for academic honesty. Academic misconduct can occur in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to) cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism. When in doubt about whether some academic practice is acceptable, ask your TA or the instructor for assistance. Always err on the side of avoiding misconduct. Any suspected violation of university policy regarding academic conduct will be reported directly to the Office of the Dean of Students. (This is a course policy, and it is not subject to revision by your TA.) In other words, there are no exceptions.

**Academic Accommodation:**
Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) [formerly the Office for Students with Disabilities or OSD] at (310)825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations.