

UCOR 2040-01: Ethics and Moral Philosophy (Winter 2021)

Instructor: Marc A. Cohen, Ph.D.

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Office hours: via Zoom, by appointment

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Summary

This course will cover central themes in theoretical ethics, including utilitarian (cost-benefit), Kantian, and social contract approaches, and also the application of these approaches to practical questions (including economic activity).

The readings, material presented in class, and written assignments are designed to match the following course objectives:

- Understanding a set of frameworks/theoretical approaches to ethics and applying those approaches to concrete problems/examples;
- Refining our sense of argument with respect to these claims and issues;
- Beginning to think critically (or thinking more critically) about our own responsibilities as persons, as citizens, and as economic agents (as workers, managers and consumers).

One central theme in this course is that philosophy is about noticing, in this context noticing that we are surrounded by ethical/social claims (even in the space of business and economic activity). This conception of philosophy as noticing is suggested in Ludwig Wittgenstein's comment, "Philosophy is not a theory but an activity" (*Tractatus*, 4.112).

The course content is closely integrated with the other two honors courses offered this quarter, and at two points we will meet in Prof. Dean Peterson's course with him involved.

Please see the Canvas page for more detail and the learning objectives.

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Course materials

- There are two texts for this course, James Rachels's *Elements of Moral Philosophy* and John Rawls's *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*.
- All other readings are available on the internet, through the Library's electronic databases, or on this Canvas site. Some will be provided in a course pack.

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Assignments/ readings

- See the separate Module pages on the Canvas site for readings.
- Graded work for this course consists of the following (please see the details on Canvas):
2 short papers (each 20% of the final grade); two presentations (together 20% of the final

grade); maintaining a course notebook (20% of the final grade); and the oral exam (20% of the final grade).

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Course policies / Academic resources

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Zoom Meeting Etiquette (for the Honors program)

The value of an Honors seminar derives greatly from the richness of the conversations within it. True conversations depend on true community, the willingness of all participants to come together to learn, discuss, and share ideas and perceptions. You cannot have a substantive conversation or participate in a learning community anonymously. For this reason, the Honors program expects everyone to have their cameras turned on during synchronous Zoom sessions and their microphones either live or muted, depending on the instructor's preference or on whether the ambient noise of one's surroundings might prove distracting to others. If you would prefer that your peers and your professor do not see your immediate surroundings, feel free to employ a virtual background. If special circumstances prohibit you from activating your camera on a particular day, let your professor know before class. Also, if you have connection problems during a session and/or must step away for a few moments and need to turn off your camera momentarily, that is fine. Your professor will *not* call you out for doing so. But the default Zoom posture should be cameras on, mind alert, and body prepared to engage in conversation.

Re. Academic Honesty:

- Seattle University is committed to the principle that academic honesty and integrity are important values in the educational process. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense against the academic community. Acts of academic dishonesty will be addressed according to the Seattle University Academic Honesty Policy. The University's policies and procedures with respect to academic honesty are available on the registrar's web site, here: <https://www2.seattleu.edu/registrar/academic-policies/>
- All quoted or paraphrased material, or borrowed ideas, must be cited or noted as such in written papers. This includes online material. "Unintentional" plagiarism is still plagiarism. Consequences of ignoring this standard rule of scholarship are very serious. Also, presenting work from other students as your own is a serious breach of academic honesty. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me, talk to your academic advisor, or see the University's policy—which can be found at the address above.
- Also, requests for grade changes will only be accepted in writing.

Academic Resources

- Library and Learning Commons (<http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/>) (This includes: Learning Assistance Programs, Research [Library] Services, Writing Center, Math Lab)
- Academic Integrity Tutorial (found on Canvas and SU Online)

Academic Policies on Registrar website

(<https://www.seattleu.edu/redhawk-axis/academic-policies/>)

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Grading Grievance Policy
- Professional Conduct Policy (only for those professional programs to which it applies)

Notice for Students Concerning Disabilities

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an 'invisible disability' such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff located in Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.

Office of Institutional Equity

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. This prohibition includes sexual misconduct, which encompasses sexual harassment and sexual violence. Seattle U remains committed to providing a safe and equitable learning, living, and working environment. Seattle U offers emergency, medical, and other support resources, as well as assistance with safety and support measures, to community members who have experienced or been impacted by sexual misconduct.

Seattle U requires all faculty and staff to notify the University's Title IX Coordinator if they become aware of any incident of sexual misconduct experienced by a student.

For more information, please visit <https://www.seattleu.edu/equity/>. If you have any questions or concerns, you may also directly contact the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Equity (email: oiie@seattleu.edu; phone: 206.296.2824).