

# ETHICS

FALL 2025

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## INSTRUCTOR

Daniel John Sportiello, Ph.D.  
Welder Library 103  
[dsportiello@umary.edu](mailto:dsportiello@umary.edu)  
701-355-8109

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## OFFICE HOURS

By Appointment

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of morality and its relation to human happiness. It articulates the philosophical foundations of a teleological ethics of virtue, such as that of Aristotle or Aquinas; it compares this ethical theory with at least one rival, such as consequentialism or deontology, and applies each to some of life's most serious ethical questions. PHI 308 students are required to complete additional work for the course. A student may not receive credit for both PHI 208 and 308.

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## COURSE OUTCOMES

This course asks you to do all of these:

- Articulate the relationship between morality and a flourishing human life.
- Articulate the philosophical foundations of a virtue-based teleological ethical theory, as found in Aristotle or Aquinas.
- Articulate the philosophical foundations of at least one rival to this theory, such as consequentialism.
- Apply these ethical theories to some of life's most serious ethical questions.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these ethical theories.

Note that, to measure your attainment of these outcomes, you must do certain assessments.

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## ASSESSMENTS

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on fifteen quizzes, on five tests, on a paper, and on five exams—and, for that matter, by your attendance:

- Fifteen quizzes will determine fifteen percent of your final grade. You must submit each quiz on Canvas prior to the start of the relevant class.
- Five tests will determine forty percent of your final grade. You must submit each test on Canvas prior to the end of the relevant day.

- A paper will determine fifteen percent of your final grade. You must submit this paper on Canvas prior to the end of the relevant day.
- Five exams will determine twenty-five percent of your final grade. You must submit each exam on Canvas prior to the end of the relevant day.
- Attendance will determine five percent of your final grade. When your absence is excused, it will be counted as an attendance.

Note that, if you fail to do an assessment by the time that it is due—for any reason—then you may receive a grade of zero on that assessment. Because of this, you should not wait until the last minute to do any assessment! Note also that, to do well in these assessments, you must do certain readings.

## READINGS

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These readings are available at the bookstore—though you are free to buy them elsewhere:

- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Edited and translated by Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-0226026756.
- Saint Thomas Aquinas. *Treatise on Law*. Edited and translated by Richard J. Regan. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000. ISBN: 978-0872205482.
- Immanuel Kant. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Revised edition. Edited and translated by Mary Gregor and Jens Timmerman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-1107401068.
- John Stuart Mill. *Utilitarianism*. Second edition. Edited by George Sher. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001. ISBN: 978-0872206052.
- Friedrich Nietzsche. *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Edited and translated by Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swenson. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998. ISBN: 978-0872202832.

Any other readings are available on Canvas.

## BENEDICTINE VALUES

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All six of our [Benedictine Values](#) are implicated in this course. At its heart, though, is Hospitality—that is, a sort of vulnerability to the ideas of others.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Because discussion plays a crucial role in this course, it is crucial that you not only attend class but also listen attentively and contribute seriously to that discussion—not occasionally but every time that we meet. You should, in other words, be present at and participating in every class—unless, of course, you provide an official university excuse.

I reserve the right to drop you from the course should you miss ten classes without an official university excuse. This is in accord with the excessive absence policy, which is available for review [online](#).

#### TECHNOLOGY POLICY

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Though laptops, tablets, and smartphones are profoundly useful, they are also profoundly distracting—not only to you but also to others. Therefore, you may not use laptops, tablets, and smartphones in class unless, at your request, I have given you permission to do so.

#### ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

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It should go without saying that academic dishonesty of any sort is wrong. Worse than that, though, academic dishonesty reveals a serious confusion regarding the reasons that one is in a course in philosophy—or, for that matter, at a university—in the first place. Such dishonesty is occasion for as much pity as anger.

Presenting the work of another as your own is academically dishonest. Whenever you copy the words of another, therefore, you must place those words within quotation marks and cite their source. (This goes for the words of any artificial intelligence, by the way!)

As a deterrent, let me promise that I will prosecute every instance of academic dishonesty. But do not misinterpret this promise: if you feel that you do not understand something well enough to explain it in your own words—whether in this course or in any other—then come to me for help. We will work together to overcome whatever difficulty stands in your way.

#### COURSE INFORMATION

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This course, PHI 308 08/09, meets for fifteen weeks on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:00 AM/12:30 PM in Welder Library XXXXX. It is worth three credits, is required for the core curriculum, and is graded according to the usual scale. (Note that there won't be any rounding.)

#### STATEMENT ON WORKLOAD

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Since this is a three semester-credit undergraduate-level course lasting fifteen weeks, students can expect to spend a minimum of three hours a week instructional time and another six hours a week studying outside of instructional time.

#### STATEMENT ON EXCUSED ABSENCES

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The University has a policy on excused absences related to sponsored or sanctioned activities and events. The policy is available for review [online](#). Students participating in such activities and events are expected to review this policy and comply with it. As long as appropriate prior notification is given according to this policy, students and faculty reach a mutual agreement concerning make-up work, and students complete the work in question, faculty shall not penalize a student for missing a class or exam when they were granted an excused absence from the university. Any questions concerning the policy may be referred to

the course instructor who may refer the question to the athletic director, the student activities director, or academic affairs for an answer.

#### STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

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Students are expected to read the University of Mary's [Academic Honor Code and Honor System](#) and abide by all the standards of conduct and requirements contained therein. When a student is in doubt about whether or not an action might constitute an Academic Honor Code violation, he or she should request clarification from the instructor *before* the action in question is undertaken.

#### STATEMENT ON REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

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The University of Mary, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and in the spirit of our mission, offers support for disabled students who provide the required documentation. Students with disabilities who need accommodations should apply to the [Office of Student Accessibility Services](#). For further information, contact Dr. Lynn Dodge, coordinator of Student Accessibility Services, in the Student Success Center. You can reach her at 701-355-8264 or [ljdodge@umary.edu](mailto:ljdodge@umary.edu).

#### COURSE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

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Students should communicate any questions or concerns relating to this course to the following individuals in the order listed below. To learn more about the University of Mary's process for responding to academic concerns, students should read its policy, which is available for review [online](#).

Dan Sportiello, Associate Professor of Philosophy > Hannah Venable, Chair of the Philosophy Program > James Peliska, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences

1	Tuesday	September 2	Introduction		
	Thursday	September 4	Virtue Ethics		
2	Tuesday	September 9	Virtue Ethics	<i>Ethics</i> , § 1	Quiz 1
	Thursday	September 11	Virtue Ethics	<i>Ethics</i> , § 2	Quiz 2
3	Tuesday	September 16	Virtue Ethics	<i>Ethics</i> , §§ 7.1–3	Quiz 3
	Thursday	September 18	Virtue Ethics		Test 1
4	Tuesday	September 23	Consequentialism		Exam 1
	Thursday	September 25	Consequentialism	<i>Utilitarianism</i> , §§ 1–2	Quiz 4
5	Tuesday	September 30	Consequentialism	<i>Utilitarianism</i> , §§ 3–4	Quiz 5
	Thursday	October 2	Consequentialism	<i>Utilitarianism</i> , § 5	Quiz 6
6	Tuesday	October 7	Consequentialism		
	Thursday	October 9	Consequentialism		Test 2
7	Tuesday	October 14	Deontology		Exam 2
	Thursday	October 16	Catching Up		
8	Tuesday	October 21	Deontology	<i>Groundwork</i> , § 1	Quiz 7
	Thursday	October 23	Deontology	<i>Groundwork</i> , § 2	Quiz 8
9	Tuesday	October 28	Deontology	<i>Groundwork</i> , § 3	Quiz 9
	Thursday	October 30	Deontology		
10	Tuesday	November 4	Deontology		Test 3
	Thursday	November 6	Existentialism		Exam 3
11	Tuesday	November 11	Existentialism	<i>Genealogy</i> , § 1	Quiz 10
	Thursday	November 13	Existentialism	<i>Genealogy</i> , § 2	Quiz 11
12	Tuesday	November 18	Existentialism	<i>Genealogy</i> , § 3	Quiz 12
	Thursday	November 20	Existentialism		Test 4

13	Tuesday	November 25	Natural Law		Exam 4
	Thursday	November 27	No Class		
14	Tuesday	December 2	Natural Law	<i>Treatise</i> , §§ 90–92	Quiz 13
	Thursday	December 4	Natural Law	<i>Treatise</i> , §§ 93–94	Quiz 14
15	Tuesday	December 9	Natural Law	<i>Treatise</i> , §§ 95–97	Quiz 15
	Thursday	December 11	Natural Law		Test 5
16	Tuesday	December 16	No Class		Exam 5
	Thursday	December 18	No Class		Paper