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PHIL 300.01: Systematic Ethics

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Systematic Ethics

I. Goals

The goal of the course is to give philosophy majors a knowledge of the main systems of western ethics, of their historical origins, and of some of the criticisms that have been raised against them.

II. Texts

Plato, Apology.

Plato, Crito.

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics.

Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals.

Kant, "On the Proverb: That May be True in Theory, But is of No Practical Use."

Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman.

Hegel, The Philosophy of Right.

Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto.

Mill, On Liberty.

Mill, Utilitarianism.

Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra.

III. Requirements

(A) Classroom Participation (30% of course grade)

It will be your obligation to show through participation in the classroom discussions and, if called upon, through a ten-minute summary of the preceding class meeting that you are keeping up with the readings and are in command of the material presented in class. It will be my obligation to make everyone feel welcome and encouraged to participate.

(B) Three In-Class Examinations (each accounting for 10% of the course grade)

(1) February 21

(2) April 4

(3) Week of May 13 (Final Week)

(C) Term Paper (40% of course grade)

1. Intent

The major tasks are three. (1) You have to take on a limited but significant issue of ethics. (2) You have to bring some of the important systems and perspectives developed in class to bear on the issue. (3) You have to forge (1) and (2) into an argument that bears the imprint of your convictions.