



**JOHN FELICE
ROME CENTER**

PHIL 181: Ethics

John Felice Rome Center

Summer 2026

Dr. Francesco Mariani

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Mon. & Wed. | 2:00 - 5:20

Office Hours: Mon. 5:20 - 6:20

(by appointment)

Course Description

The course aims to provide an overview of ethics in the history of Western philosophy from ancient Greece to the contemporary world. In this historical and ideal trajectory from the ancient world to the present day, in particular, the course aims to outline some of the most important and influential paradigms of ethics. By studying philosophers such as Socrates, Kant and Nietzsche, we will be able to appreciate the diversity of approach and interpretation of ethics, as well as the elements of continuity and discontinuity among them. In this way we will be in a position to re-examine the complexity of the different solutions to the fundamental questions of ethics. The course will examine the problem of equality, peace, different notions of justice and other concepts that are at the heart of ethics. The course is divided into two blocks. The first part of the semester is dedicated to three fundamental paradigms of ethics: ancient Greek ethics, Kantian ethics, and Utilitarian ethics. The second part of the semester is divided into two thematic sections: the first thematic section focuses on the crisis of modern ethics through (I) Nietzsche's reconstruction of the origin of ethics and his criticism of Western culture and civilization; and (II) Freud's diagnosis of the crisis and discontents of human beings in society. The second thematic section is dedicated to two important proposals for renewing the ethical discourse on justice in the second half of the 20th century. The final part of the semester will also be an opportunity to re-examine some of the most pressing ethical, bioethical and ethical-political problems of today's society

Learning Outcomes

This course enables the student to

- (a) appreciate the profound issues involved in social relations, such as dignity and diversity
- (b) engage in dialogue with great philosophers, paying close attention to their meaning, their reasons, their concerns, their vision
- (c) examine the way different philosophically defended views challenge each other and see how they also challenge unexamined presuppositions in our own culture
- (d) include their own reflections into the dialogue
- (e) recognize reasons supporting a view, identify unexamined presuppositions, appreciate astute insights, expose vulnerabilities in established positions.
- (f) recognize the need for ethical judgment
- (g) distinguish alternative courses of action.
- (h) articulate the relevant ethical values, principles, rights, and virtues from the point of view of each stakeholder
- (i) formulate and support an ethical judgment
- (j) compare and contrast ethical theories and evaluate them in terms of strengths and weaknesses.



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Required Texts/Materials

Sofocles, *Antigone* (available online)

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (available online)

Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (available online)

Assigned and supplementary readings posted on Sakai;

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student. Any lateness or leaving class early will impact the final course grade.

Attendance is mandatory at every class meeting for each course. Absence due to sickness or injury needs to be corroborated by a doctor's note. Students late to class twice will be credited with one absence in accordance with the JFRC's Attendance policy. Three (3) absences will result in an automatic failure (F). Travel does not constitute reason to miss class.

Assessment Components

• Midterm Exam (in-class test)	35 %
• Final Exam (in-class test)	35 %
• Participation	15 %
• Presentation	15 %

Grading

94-100: A

90-93: A-

87-89: B+

84-86: B

80-83: B-

77-79: C+

74-76: C

70-73: C-

67-69: D+

60-66: D

59 or lower: F

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty (use of AI included) are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.



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Assignments and Final Examination Policy

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. All students must sit for their final examinations on the day scheduled. No exams are to be given on another day or at another time without express consent from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Travel plans or other personal commitments may not interfere with already scheduled finals.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

Title IX

The Rome Center follows Loyola's [Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, Retaliation](#) and will comply with those as indicated and instructed.

DEI

In line with Loyola's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, students are expected to embrace and contribute to a learning environment that is open, welcoming, and aims for mutual understanding. As members of the JFRC community, we strive to create a safe and inclusive environment that encourages the expression of diverse opinions. Both students and faculty have a responsibility to convey respect when interacting with others and to honor the dignity of all community members.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic(s)	Text/Assignment
Mon. 5/18	Introduction. Ancient Ethics: Antigone	Sofocles, <i>Antigone</i> (full text); Nussbaum, <i>The Fragility of Goodness</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 5/20	Socrates: Ethical intellectualism	Plato, <i>The Apology of Socrates</i> (full text) Foucault, <i>Discourse and Truth</i> (excerpts)
Mon. 5/25	Kant	<i>CPR</i> , <i>Groundwork</i> (Ch. 1, first half)
Wed. 5/27	Kant and Utilitarian Ethics	<i>Groundwork</i> (Ch. 1, second half) Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> (excerpts)
Mon. 6/1	Midterm Exam	



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Wed. 6/3	Nietzsche	<i>Genealogy, Twilight of the Idols (excerpts)</i>
Mon. 6/8	Freud	<i>Thoughts on War, Civilization and its Discontents (excerpts)</i>
Wed. 6/10	Rawls	<i>A Theory of Justice (excerpts)</i>
Mon. 6/15	Student presentations	
Wed. 6/17	Final Exam	