**Philosophy 107B - Kant’s Moral Theory**

**Tuesdays and Fridays, 3:30–4:50**

**Prof. Kate Moran** (kmoran@brandeis.edu)

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 2–4PM, Mandel 111

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**Course Overview**

This course focuses on Immanuel Kant’s moral philosophy, which he took to include both ethics and legal philosophy. The first few weeks of the course will be devoted to understanding his foundational ethical arguments in the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. After that, we will focus on specific topics in Kant’s moral philosophy. Your major project in this class is a term paper on a topic of your choosing.

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**Learning Goals**

*Content* – By the end of the semester, you should have a clear understanding of the foundational claims and arguments in Kant’s moral philosophy, how these compare to other moral theories, and how these foundational claims inform specific moral questions.

*Skills* – This course should help you develop skills in reading and analyzing texts, hearing and analyzing arguments, organizing ideas in writing and speech, and devising and developing a written argument.

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**Expectations**

*Attendance is essential to your success in this course.* In past semesters there has been a direct correlation between students’ attendance and their course grade.

Students are expected to come to class having done the reading carefully and, at a minimum, ready to ask well-formulated questions about the text in class.

Students should *always have the required readings for that class session with them in class*. It is typical for students in philosophy seminars to annotate their readings with comments and questions before class and during class discussion.

Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).
EVALUATION & ASSIGNMENTS

Ten weekly reflections (30%)
Each Tuesday before class, you will fill out an online form that asks you to reflect on the reading (usually a specific passage from the reading) and the class lecture/discussion from the previous week. You will also have an opportunity to tell me what points are still unclear or difficult for you. Reflections begin on January 29, after the add/drop deadline. There will be 11 reflections, and your lowest grade will be dropped.

Short Paper – Due February 26 (15%)
A 3-4 page paper in which you will be asked to sketch one of Kant’s arguments from the Groundwork in your own words.

Report on Presentation (15%)
The philosophy department is hosting two events this spring: a mini-conference on forgiveness (April 13) and the eastern division meetings of the North American Kant Society (May 4–5). I would like you to attend at least one of these events and write a report on one of the presentations. (The topics for the class meetings preceding these events will give you background and context for the presentations.) I will post schedules for the events as they become available. I will also post a template for this report to LATTE as the events approach. If you are unable to attend either of these events, I will provide an alternate assignment. Due last day of class.

Final Paper Consultation (10%)
A meeting with me before the Passover break to discuss ideas for your final paper. You should come to this meeting with notes about what topic(s) you find interesting or especially puzzling. I will help you narrow down your topic and give you advice about secondary readings.

Final Paper - Due May 10 (30%)
A 6-8 page paper on a topic of your own choosing. The paper should consult at least one secondary source.

Graduate Students: your final grade will reflect the short paper (15%), a meeting with me (10%), and a term paper of 15-20 pages, due May 10. (75%)
TEXTS


(2) *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Hackett)


COMMUNICATION

Please make sure that you check the email associated with your LATTE registration on a regular basis. This is how I will send messages about the class, including any messages about late starts or canceled classes.

DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see Prof. Moran immediately.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Never represent work or ideas that are not your own as your own. Always use proper citation techniques, even when you are not quoting another author directly. **All instances of suspected academic dishonesty will be forwarded immediately to the Director of Academic Integrity.**
Course Schedule

This is a rough estimate of our schedule.

Readings for each class meeting will be posted to the course website as we go along.

January 15: Course Introduction

January 17–February 14: The Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals

February 19 & 21: February Break

February 26 & 28: Why Does the Moral Law Apply to Me? The 'Fact of Reason'

March 5 & 7: Can Good People Be Happy? The 'Highest Good' Argument

March 12 & 14: Moral Motivation: Respect and Sympathy

March 19 & 21: Is Morality too Demanding?

March 26 & 28: Ethics vs. Right

April 2 & 4: Poverty, Charity and Restitution

April 9 & 11: Gratitude and Forgiveness

April 13: Philosophy Department Mini-Conference: Forgiveness

April 16 & 19: Sex and Marriage

April 22 & 25: Passover Break

April 30 & May 2: Lying to Yourself

May 4 & 5: Eastern North American Kant Society at Brandeis