In this course we are going to think systematically and carefully about the big ethical questions: How should I live? What is the right thing for me to do? What do others need to do so that I can be who I should be? In particular, we’ll be studying the formal, systematic attempts have been made to organize what we know about how we ought to live or what we ought to do. A great many moral philosophers have had a great deal to say about these things, and you will be introduced to some of their more important ideas. And to give the course depth as well as breadth, we will pay particular attention to Kant’s moral theory, since it’s not only widely influential in our own day, but really interesting.

This class offers you the opportunity to refine a skill you have been developing since you were a young child: that of moral reflection. You will learn how to argue effectively for your own views and how, with the help of your classmates, to be critical of your own opinions. This can be done only with practice, which is why the course is oriented around discussion. You will be expected to take an active role in these discussions, but if you are to derive any benefit from them, you MUST DO THE READING. Otherwise you waste your classmates’ time and your own. You must also, of course, do the writing! On the theory that you can’t do good, careful philosophy without writing out your ideas so that you can weigh them and refine them, you’ll be asked to write a 1-page reflection paper every week, and both the midterm and final are in essay form. But don’t be frightened. I’ll show you how to do this writing in a way that makes the reading more fun.

Required texts for the course are Tom L. Beauchamp, *Philosophical Ethics*, 3d edition; and Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton. You will also read three chapters of my forthcoming textbook, *The Elements of Feminist Ethics*, which I will distribute to you via e-mail.

Grades for students taking the course without the honors option will be figured as follows: midterm essay (30 %), weekly 1-page reflection papers (30 %, after I drop the lowest grade), final essay (40 %). Honors students are graded on: midterm essay (20 %), weekly 1-page reflection papers (20 %, after I drop the lowest grade), a 20-minute presentation of one day’s reading with a criticism to start class discussion (20 %), final essay (40 %).

Ordinary forms of politeness will be observed: you are expected to come to class prepared, to arrive on time, not to slip out early, to let me know via e-mail if you need to be somewhere else, to turn off your cell phones and pagers, and so on. I have professional conflicts that take me out of town on three of the days when the class is scheduled to meet, for which I apologize. On these days there will be no class, so you can use the time to read ahead or to work on your final paper.
Course Schedule

T 7 Jan.
Th 9 Jan.   Beauchamp, ch. 1
T 14 Jan.  Beauchamp, ch. 2
Th 16 Jan.  Beauchamp, ch. 3
T 21 Jan.  Beauchamp, ch. 3
Th 23 Jan.  Beauchamp, ch. 4
T 28 Jan.  Beauchamp, ch. 4
Th 30 Jan.  Beauchamp, ch. 5
T 4 Feb.   Beauchamp, ch. 5
Th 6 Feb.  Kant, ch. 1 (pp. 61-73)
T 11 Feb.  Kant, ch. 2 (pp. 74-113)
Th 13 Feb.  Kant, ch. 3 (pp. 114-131)
T 18 Feb.  Beauchamp, ch. 6
Th 20 Feb.  Beauchamp, ch. 6
T 25 Feb.  MIDTERM PAPER DUE. Beauchamp, ch. 7
Th 27 Feb.  CLASS DOES NOT MEET
T 4 Mar.  SPRING BREAK
Th 6 Mar.  SPRING BREAK
T 11 Mar.  Beauchamp, ch. 7
Th 13 Mar.  Nelson, ch. 1
T 18 Mar.  Nelson, ch. 4
Th 20 Mar.  Nelson, ch. 5
T 25 Mar.       Beauchamp, ch. 8
Th 27 Mar. CLASS DOES NOT MEET
T 1 Apr.        Beauchamp, ch. 8
Th 3 Apr.       Beauchamp, ch. 9
T 8 Apr.        Beauchamp, ch. 9
Th 10 Apr.      Beauchamp, ch. 10
T 25 Apr.       Beauchamp, ch. 10
Th 24 Apr. CLASS DOES NOT MEET
M 28 Apr. Final paper due in my office by 5:00 pm