Syllabus

Name of the course: Ethics
Lecturer: Ferenc Huoranszki
Number of credits and number of ECTS credits: 3; ECTS: 6
Semester: 2022, Winter,
Course level: mandatory for first year BA students on the PPE program
Pre-requisites: none
Teaching format: Lectures and seminars

Description: Ethics is the branch of philosophy which inquires how we should live. Most of the times when we act, we pursue some goals and follow certain rules or expectations. Ethics investigates which aims are worth pursuing and which norms ought to be observed when we decide how to act. Our first topic will be the connection between morality and agents' self-interest. In the second part, we shall discuss the nature of moral obligations and how they can guide our decisions and action. In the last part of the course, we shall investigate the vexing problem of how we should response to the wrongdoing of others.

Learning outcomes: Students attending this course are expected to familiarize themselves with the most important concepts and problems of normative ethics. Further, they are expected to learn how to reconstruct and analyze philosophical problems related to moral issues and how to assess the validity and strength of various arguments about them. During their studies, students must also acquire certain communication skills such as the ability to formulate arguments concisely and accessibly and to give short critical comments. Finally, they will learn how problems in ethics are connected to various other issues both in and outside philosophy.

Topics (week by week):

1. Introduction: moral inquiry and its history

I. Morality and self-interest
   2. Morality and self-interest
   3. Egoism and rationality
   4. Types of normativity

II. Ethical theories
   5. Contractarianism
   6. Consequentialism
   7. Deontology

III. Rights, duties, and desert
   8. Desert and punishment
   9. Responsibility and moral luck
   10. Moral dilemmas
   11. Partiality and impartiality

12. Summary

Weekly readings:

**Assignments**: Class attendance is mandatory. Students are required to read carefully the texts assigned to each consecutive week. Study questions shall be raised during the introductory talk for each session. Possible answers to those questions and arguments supporting them shall be discussed during the seminar. The topics to be discussed are partitioned into three major groups. The discussion of the first and the second part will be followed by a brief in-class mid-term examination where students must answer concisely 8 questions related to philosophical issues raised in the relevant texts and lectures. In the last week, there will be another in-class end-term examination. Students will receive 5 comprehensive questions, each related to different issues that we have discussed during the course. They must choose and answer two out of these five questions. The length of the answers is not predetermined, but ideally, it should be between 600 and 800 words for each chosen question.

**Assessment**: Students’ performance shall be evaluated on the grounds of their examination results. The mid-term examinations’ contribution to the final grade shall be 40 percent. The contribution of the final examination to the final grade shall be 60 percent. Excellent class participation can contribute up to plus one grade to the final grade (e.g. from B to B+ etc.).

**Grading criteria**: The purpose of the exams is to testify that students have familiarized themselves with the most important concepts and problems of philosophical ethics. At this early stage, no originality is required (though it is always appreciated). The main expectations for good performance in the exams are familiarity with the technical vocabulary, correct understanding of the issues under consideration and a sufficient level of argumentative rigor.