

PHILO 104 Introduction to Ethics:

Professor Fernando Zapata – Spring 2016

This course is intended as an introduction to moral philosophy, or, ethics. Ethics is the area of philosophy that is concerned with right and wrong conduct, and the principles and values by which we act, and justify and judge our actions. What is the good, or, what goods comprise “the good life,” for human beings? Which actions are morally obligatory, prohibited, or permissible, and upon what grounds? Normative ethical theories (virtue or aretaic theories, deontological theories, and consequentialist theories) systematically contend with such questions. These theories provide criteria to evaluate and guide what we ought to do when confronted with everyday moral conflicts and dilemmas. The first objective of this course is to familiarize students with several classical works in Western moral philosophy, and the distinctions between virtue-, duty or rule-, and consequence-based ethical theories. The second objective of this course is to prepare students to assess and offer cogent arguments pertinent to ethical issues.