



Philosophy Syllabus

Introduction to Ethics, PHIL 2306-11341

Summer I 2014 (3 Credit Hours)

HCC – Northwest College

Spring Branch Campus, Room 319

M-F 10:00 – 12:00

Instructor: Nathan D. Smith, PhD

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713-718-7258

Office hours: Monday – Thursday, by
appointment

Course Description:

Classical and contemporary theories concerning the good life, human conduct in society, and moral and ethical standards (Texas ACGM). A philosophical reflection of the basic principles of the moral life, including the nature of goodness, happiness, duty, and freedom as they apply to individual right, business, medicine, and community well being (HCC Course Catalog).

Fulfills – unless otherwise noted – the HCC CORE Humanities Area credit. May fulfill Ethics requirement for various academic and professional four-year college majors and Philosophy AA-degree Plan. **Students who are in doubt about their enrollment in this course should immediately see an HCC academic counselor who can review his or her AA-degree plan.**

Course Goals:

This course provides a practical, community-minded introduction to questions of character and human excellence in a multi-cultural, global environment. Traditional and contemporary views concerning the nature of goodness, happiness, duty, and freedom serve as points of departure for this largely thematic inquiry into right conduct and ways of thinking that leads to that conduct. Particular emphasis is placed on the scope and problems of sound reasoning and decision-making and may include correlative inquiries into current social, workforce, and professional moral issues.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. **Recall and Identify** the major thinkers, schools, core philosophical questions, terms and concepts found in the history of ethics cross-culturally construed, from ancient times to the contemporary world.
2. **Interpret and Explain** core ethical questions and concepts in terms that illustrate a comprehensive understanding of each.
3. **Apply** core ethical questions and concepts to contemporary issues and personal experience.
4. **Compare and Contrast** related core ethical questions and concepts, and the correlative thinkers and schools with which they are commonly associated, and with professional codes.
5. **Justify** a sound philosophical position on a topic, or topics of contemporary human interest in the area of ethics, including its relation to freedom and human rights, that **Integrates** and **Logically Demonstrates** a **Synthesis** in thought.

Learning Objectives:

- 1.1 **Acquire** a broad familiarity with the names of major thinkers, the schools they represent, geographical location, and historical periods.
- 1.2 **Learn** historically significant questions of ethics, definitions of special terms, and concepts of ethics and ethical decision-making.
- 2.1 **Cultivate** reading comprehension of writings specific to ethics and cultivation of character.
- 2.2 **Distinguish** various approaches to ethics, including conceptual analysis and practical bases for ethical decision-making.
- 3.1 **Articulate** the relevance of ethics and questioning about ethics to everyday life.
- 3.2 **Consider** how ethics may or may not apply to differing ways of thinking and cultural influences.
- 4.1 **Inventory, Summarize, and Assess** correlative questions, concepts, and schools of thought found in the history of ethics, both personal and professional.
- 5.1 **Create and cultivate** alternative ethical positions on presented course content.
- 5.2 **Develop coherent arguments** for chosen positions, bringing to bear the rules of logic, written expression and disciplined thinking.
- 5.3 **Critique** chosen positions and adequately **Defend** against possible objections, both theoretical and applied.

Notice About Online Learning Management Software:

This is a *web-enhanced* lecture course that uses *Eagle Online*. The *Eagle Online* logon page is:

<https://hccs1.mrooms3.net/login/index.php>

Your Eagle Online ID is now the same as your HCC User ID which is used for Online Registration (for example: W0034567). If you don't know your HCC User ID, you can [retrieve it here](#). The default Eagle Online password for first-time users is: "distance". This password is independent of your Online Registration password or Blackboard Vista password. You will be required to change your password when you first log in.

IMPORTANT: Eagle Online works best with the latest version of Mozilla Firefox. Download is free, [here](#).

Required Texts:

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by M. Otswald. Macmillan Publishing, 1962. (ISBN: 0-02-389530-6)

Bentham, Jeremy and Mill, John Stuart. 2003. *Classical Utilitarianism*, edited by J. Troyer. Hackett Publishing. (ISBN: 0-87220-649-1)

Kant, Immanuel. 1993. *Grounding for the Metaphysic of Morals*, translated by James W. Ellington. Hackett Publishing, 3rd Edition. (ISBN: 0521626951)

Plato. 2002. *Five Dialogues*. Hackett Publishing, 2nd Edition. (ISBN 0-87220-633-5)

Course Calendar:

June 2 – Syllabus, What should we do? Considering moral dilemmas

June 3 – Moral Dilemmas and moral reasoning

June 4 – Moral Reasoning

Moral Dilemmas assignment due

June 5 – Moral Reasoning

June 6 – No Class:

Complete "Moral Reasoning" assignment; familiarize yourself with "Basic Concepts in Ethics" and prepare to select groups

June 9 – Introduction to Group project (how to work in groups)

Moral Reasoning assignment due

June 10 – Ethical Foundations, Plato, *Euthyphro*

June 11 – Plato, *Crito*

June 12 – Plato, *Meno*

June 13 – Work on group project in class / define objectives, distribute workload, set schedule

June 16 – Work in groups to prepare for presentations

June 17 – Virtue ethics – Group 1

Readings for Virtues Ethics:

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. I, Ch. 1-5 and 7-13; Bk. II; Bk. III, Ch. 1-5; Bk. VI

Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach"

June 18 – Virtue ethics – Group 1

June 19 – Transition day

June 20 – Kantian ethics – Group 2

Readings for Kantian ethics:

Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface, Section I, Section II, and Section III (first two sub-headings, pg. 49-50)

Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns"

Korsgaard, "The Right to Lie: On Dealing with Evil"

June 23 – Kantian ethics – Group 2

Paper 1 due

June 24 – Utilitarianism – Group 3

Utilitarianism readings:

Bentham, *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Chapter I and IV (pg. 8-12, 19-22)

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, pg. 95-147

June 25 – Utilitarianism – Group 3

June 26 – Transition day

June 27 – Other moral theories – Group 4

Other moral theories readings:

Ross, "The Basis of Objective Judgments in Ethics"

Dancy, "Ethical Particularism and Morally Relevant Properties"

Held, "Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory"

June 30 – Other moral theories – Group 4

Paper 2 due

July 1 – Review for final exam

July 3 – **Final Exam**

Grading Components and Weights:

Short Written Assignments (x 2) 50 points each – There will be two short written assignments at the beginning of the course. These assignments will be explained in detail in class. **Preparing for SLOs 1, 2, 3, and 4**

Group Project, 200 points – After the first week of the course, you will select a group based on your interest in one of the topics/units covered in the course. Your group will be responsible for presenting material from the readings. The group will also provide students with a study guide that summarizes the main concepts, arguments, and criticisms for the unit as well as identifying the primary thinkers and works.

Papers (x2) 100 points each – You will write two papers for this course. Each paper will be 2-3 pgs in length (body only, standard borders and font). The first paper covers the topic you have prepared in your group project. The second paper is on any other topic from the course. What you decide to pursue in these topics is entirely up to you. **Preparing for SLOs 1, 2, and 3.**

Final Exam, 200 points – A review for the final exam will be posted at the beginning of the course and should be consulted as you work on the various units. The exam will take place in class with a blue book. You will define philosophical terms and concepts central to ethics; explain core concepts and arguments from assigned readings; apply ethical concepts to personal experience and contemporary issues; evaluate arguments and positions in ethics; compare, contrast, and critique ethical theories and arguments; and justify a position on ethical issues. **Assessing SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5**

Grading Policy:

All grades will be calculated according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 700. The term grade legend follows:

A = 90% to 100% (630 to 700 point)

B = 80% to 89.9% (560 to 729 points)

C = 70% to 79.9% (490 to 559 points)

D = 60% to 69.9% (420 to 489 points)

F = 0% to 59.9% (000 to 419 points)

Late policy: Late work will be accepted with penalty, unless I have receive a valid excuse or the student has arranged for late submission *prior to the deadline*. I will deduct 10% of the grade for the first day and 10% every week it is late after that.

!! Philosophy Tutoring is available at <http://hccs.askonline.net/>

Please use it if you need it !!

Make-up Policy:

Students are responsible for materials covered in-class and online during their absences, and it is the student's responsibility to contact and consult with the instructor for make-up assignments. In addition, any student who is absent on posted exam dates should be prepared to schedule the make-up of missed examinations on the first day of returning to class. Make-up examinations are taken by appointment at the campus Testing Center. This scheduling cannot occur during class time. Any other assignments not turned in on time (due to absences) must also be either turned in, or scheduled for late submission on the first day of returning to class. Finally, there will be no extension of due dates and/or make-ups for Online Requirements. Except for a medical excuse or documented family or personal emergency, there is no exemption from these rules.

Academic Honesty:

The pressure to earn high grades and belief that *a good end can justify any means whatsoever* leads many students to try cutting corners by resorting to less than honest methods. Do yourself a favor by avoiding that trap. The HCC *Student Handbook* lists cheating, plagiarism, and collusion as scholastic dishonesty. It defines *plagiarism* as "the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit." It defines *collusion* as "the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work for credit." Work submitted for this course that is determined to be the result of either cheating, plagiarism, or collusion will earn a "0" for that assignment; two instances of cheating,

plagiarism, or collusion will result in an automatic "F." Probation or dismissal from HCC and ALL its several colleges may also result. *See Student Handbook.*

Attendance and Withdrawal Policy:

HCC Students are expected to attend class regularly. A daily record of absences will be maintained throughout the semester. NOTE: It is the responsibility of the student to drop, or officially withdraw from this course. Your instructor will withdraw a student if and only if provided a written request from that student. Additionally, system-wide rules affect withdrawals:

- (1)** Students who repeat a course for a third, or more times, may face a significant tuition/fee increase at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities.
- (2)** The Texas Legislature passed a law limiting new students (those starting college in Fall 2007) to no more than six total course withdrawals throughout their academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree. There may be future penalties imposed.
- (3)** No student may withdraw from a course following the set "last date to withdraw", which for Summer I 2014 on June 23 at 4:30 PM. After that date and time, a student can only be given a grade earned, or an "I" for incomplete. Incompletes must be made up by the end of the following long semester, after which they will automatically change to a grade of "F". Students receiving an "I" for a course are ineligible for graduation until the "I" has been removed from a student's transcript.

Students with Disabilities:

To visit the ADA Web site, log on to www.hccs.edu, click Future students, scroll down the page and click on the words Disability Information.

For questions, please contact Donna Price at 713.718.5165 or the Disability Counselor at Northwest College, Mahnaz Kolaini at 713.718.5422.