



# Introduction to Ethics Syllabus

Introduction to Ethics, PHIL 2306-13718  
Fall 2018 16-week course (3 Credit Hours)  
Houston Community College  
HCC Online  
<http://www.hccs.edu/online/>

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## 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 the **HCC CORE Curriculum Foundational Areas: *Language, Philosophy, and Culture*** OR *Component Area Option*. 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 broad, historical, and thematic overview of Ethics. It examines issues surrounding the basis for notions of 'right' and 'good', theories that define what sorts of actions one ought to do, and practical situations that compel an ethical response. The course will introduce students to basic questions of ethics, prominent ethical theories, and practical case studies in applied ethics. This is a reading and writing intensive course that will also include a group project, focusing on Core Learning Objectives of: *Critical Thinking, Communication, Social Responsibility, and Teamwork*.

**Philosophy Program Learning Outcomes:** The HCC Philosophy Program promotes the following learning outcomes for all courses in the program. In philosophy courses, students will...

1. Demonstrate an understanding of arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy.
2. Analyze and critique philosophical texts in ways that demonstrate an awareness of argument structure and the evaluation of philosophical claims.
3. Present logically persuasive arguments orally and in writing that are relevant to philosophical issues covered in course material.
4. Evaluate personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world in terms of the philosophical issues raised in course material.

**Introduction to Ethics, Course Learning Outcomes:** Students in this course will be expected to achieve proficiency in the following learning outcomes.

1. Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts.
2. Define and appropriately use important terms such as relativism, virtue, duty, rights, utilitarianism, natural law, egoism, altruism, autonomy, and care ethics.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of major arguments and problems in ethics.
4. Present and discuss well-reasoned ethical positions in writing.
5. Apply ethical concepts and principles to address moral concerns.
6. Apply course material to various aspects of life.
7. Discuss ways of living responsibly in a world where people have diverse ethical beliefs.

**Introduction to Ethics, Course Learning Objectives:** This course will accomplish its learning outcomes by focusing on the following course objectives.

**1.1 Read** canonical texts and contemporary articles in the philosophical tradition of ethics.

**1.2 Analyze, discuss, and critique** philosophical texts and ethical questions through open annotation exercises, papers, and discussion forums.

**1.3 Analyze and critique** philosophical texts and practical ethical questions in papers and tests.

**2.1 Learn** basic philosophical vocabulary, major arguments, and positions in philosophical ethics.

**2.2 Recognize** key concepts in regular quizzes.

**2.3 Demonstrate understanding** of key arguments and claims made by philosophers studied in the course through papers and assignments.

**3 Present** logically persuasive arguments in papers and tests.

**4.1 Engage** in critical thinking through discussion forums, papers, and tests.

**4.2 Demonstrate** critical thinking skills in all written work.

**5.1 Consider** the impacts of philosophical ideas on personal and social responsibility in papers and discussion forums.

**5.2 Apply** philosophical concepts discussed in the course to personal and contemporary issues, demonstrating a concern for social and personal responsibility in written work.

### **Notice About Online Learning Management Software:**

This is a fully online, distance learning course that uses *Eagle Online/Canvas* learning management system. The *Eagle Online* logon page is:

<https://eagleonline.hccs.edu>

Your Eagle Online ID is now the same as your HCC User ID which is used for Online Registration (for example: W0034567). The Eagle Online password is the same as your universal password for email or logging into lab computers. If you have difficulty logging into the class, please follow the help links on the login page or contact the help desk at HCC Online.

### **Required Readings:**

(All readings will be provided in electronic form in the Eagle Online shell.)

*Course Notes and Handbook*, including selections from classic texts in the history of philosophy and professor notes on basic concepts in ethics.

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* (selections). translated by W. D. Ross, available at:

<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.1.i.html>

Boghossian, Paul. "The Maze of Moral Relativism," *The New York Times*, "The Philosopher's Stone," Op-Ed, July 24, 2011. Permalink to library resource:

<https://advance.lexis.com/api/permalink/1829805b-7c5c-4f9e-9140-b5f775a48f3a/?context=1516831>

Dancy, Jonathan, "Moral Particularism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL =

<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/moral-particularism/>

Held, Virginia. "Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 50 (1990), pg. 321-44. Permalink to library resource: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2108046>

Kant, Immanuel. "Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals," Ch. 1 and 2, translated by J. Bennett, *Early Modern Texts*, <http://earlymoderntexts.com/authors/kant>

Mill, John Stuart. *Utilitarianism* (selections). London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1879. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/11224>

Ross, W. D. "The Basis of Objective Judgments in Ethics," *International Journal of Ethics*, 37: 2 (1927), pg. 113-27. Permalink to library resource: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2377758>

### **Recommended Readings:**

Korsgaard, Christine. "The Right to Lie: Dealing with Evil," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 15: 4 (1986), pg. 235-49. Permalink to library resource: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2265252>

Nussbaum, Martha. "Non-relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach," preprint, The World Institute for Development Economics Research, 1987. [PDF in course]

Singer, Peter. "The Singer Solution to World Poverty." *New York Times Magazine*, Sep 05, 1999, pp. 60-6, 60:1. *ProQuest*, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/215501119?accountid=7036>.

### **Course Calendar:**

#### **Class Check-in Assignments**

*Completion of these assignments is necessary in order for you to be counted as present and attending the course by the "Official Day of Record" on 9/10*

### **Unit 1: Foundational Ethical Questions**

Readings: Course Notes and Handbook

**Moral dilemmas assignment due** – 9/4

**Annotation exercise, Boghossian, "The Maze of Moral Relativism"** – 9/9

**Plato reflection assignment due** – 9/16

**Quiz 1** – 9/16

**Moral realism discussion forum** – closed 9/23

**Moral reasoning assignment due** – 9/23

## **Unit 2, Virtues Ethics:**

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, selections Bk. I, Ch. 1-5 and 7-10, 13; Bk. II; Bk. III, Ch. 1-5; Bk. VI, Ch. 1, 2, and 13.

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

**Quiz 2** – 10/7

## **Unit 3, Kantian Ethics:**

Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface, Section I and Section II

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

**Quiz 3** – 10/21

**Essay** – 10/24

## **Unit 4, Utilitarianism:**

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, selections

Recommended: Singer, "The Singer Solution to World Poverty"

**Quiz 4** – 11/11

## **Unit 5, Other Moral Theories:**

Held, "Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory"

Ross, "The Basis of Objective Judgments in Ethics"

Dancy, "Moral Particularism"

**Project proposal** – 11/14

**Quiz 5** – 12/2

**Personal Project Assignment** – 12/5

## **Unit 6, Case Studies Project**

**Group discussion forum** – 12/7

**Peer and Teacher Discussions will be graded on 12/9** (posts after this date will not count toward your grade)

**Multiple Choice Final Exam** – 12/10

**Written Final Exam** – 12/12

## **Grading Components and Weights:**

**First Week Check-in, 5 points** – During the first week of the semester, you will be required to check in to the course by introducing yourself in the introductions forum and completing a syllabus quiz. *These components are necessary for being counted present in the class.* But you will also receive 5 points once you have completed both steps.

**Short Written Assignments (x 4) 15 points each** – There will be four short assignments at the beginning of the course. These assignments will be explained in detail in EagleOnline.

**Preparing for SLOs 1, 2, 3, and 4**

**Quizzes (x 5), 10 points each** – Each section unit will require a quiz on the material covered in that section. You are responsible for having completed the assigned readings and understanding the key themes and concepts. You will be allowed 3 attempts per quiz.

**Preparing for SLOs 2 and 3.**

**Moral dilemmas discussion forum, 20 points** – The first section will have a mandatory discussion forum to get you talking about metaethical issues. Posting requirements and grading categories are explained in EagleOnline.

**Discussion Forums (x 2), 50 points each** – There will be two primary grades for discussion forums. The first grade will be for peer-to-peer discussion forums. There will be a general peer discussion forum and you will be able to post your own discussion forums. In these forums, you will be posting and responding for your classmates. The second grade will be for discussion forums where I will participate. One discussion forum will be a single thread for general questions, but I will also post discussion threads throughout the semester on a variety of topics.

**Preparing for SLOs 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.**

**Applied Ethics Discussion Forum, 20 points** – I will provide you with four different topics in applied ethics for discussion among your classmates. *You only need to participate in one of the discussion forums.* Which one you participate in is your choice. **Assessing SLOs 5, 6, and 7.**

**Essay 100 points**– You will write a 2-3 pg paper (body only, standard borders and font). You will select from among suggested topics for the paper that will be explained in detail in the course. It will be based on the readings for the course will not require external research.

**Preparing for SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.**

**Personal Project Assignment, 100 points** – You will be required to complete a personal project of your own choosing. I am willing to consider any proposal for a project submitted to me. You will be required to submit a proposal your project. Projects options include: creating a public website, completing a digital story (short video), write a study guide for future students that clearly summarizes the key points in one of the articles identified for recommended reading, fix and supplement a Wikipedia entry related to the content in this course, update or edit the textbook that was used in this class, write a memo (not an essay) that clearly outlines the ethical issues associated with one of the applied ethics case studies and suggest some responses to the issue. Additional project ideas can be proposed.

**Multiple Choice Final Exam, 50 points** – An online final quiz will be generated using the questions from each of the unit quizzes. This final will consist of 50 questions and you will only be allowed 1 attempt. **Assessing SLOs 2 and 3.**

**Essay Final Exam, 50 points** – The final exam will consist of two long-form reflections on the semester. They will center around your work, your ethical views, and the work of your classmates. Grading criteria and detailed descriptions are provided in EagleOnline. **Assessing SLOs 1, 3, and 4.**

**Extra Credit / Bonus Points** – 10 bonus points will be awarded for the following achievements: “best contribution to a discussion forum” award (I will award these points based on comments and activities that I feel are noteworthy), participation in an additional applied ethics discussion forum, completion of the course evaluation (points awarded once you submit proof of completion to me through email), or completion of an additional personal project.

### **Grading Policy:**

All grades will be calculated according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 540. The term grade legend follows:

A = 90% to 100% (495 to 550 point)

B = 80% to 89.9% (440 to 494 points)

C = 70% to 79.9% (385 to 439 points)

D = 60% to 69.9% (330 to 384 points)

F = 0% to 59.9% (000 to 329 points)

**Late policy: Late work will be accepted with penalty, unless I have received 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 UpSwing: <https://hccs.upswing.io/>***

***Please use it if you need it! You are respon***

### **Make-up Policy:**

Students are responsible for all due dates. It is the student's responsibility to contact and consult with the instructor for make-up assignments. Any student who is unable to complete a quiz or assignment on the scheduled date must make arrangements *prior to the due date*. If assignments are submitted after the scheduled due date, they will receive a point deduction in the amount of 10% for the first day and 10% for each subsequent week. Except for a medical excuse or documented family or personal emergency, there is no exemption from these rules.

**Incomplete policy:** a student may receive an incomplete for the course *only* under the following circumstances: 1) the student has a medical, legal, or family emergency that prevents the student from completing work for the course, 2) this issue occurs after the last day to

withdraw (otherwise, the student would be expected to withdraw from the course), 3) and the student has maintained good academic standing up to that point.

## **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Access Student Services Policies on their Web site:

<http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/student-handbook/>

### **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 Rights and Responsibilities* 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, collusion, or any other behavior that is deemed to be academically dishonest will earn a '0' for that assignment; two instances will result in an automatic 'F' for the course. Probation or dismissal from HCC and ALL its several colleges may also result. See *Student Rights, Policies, and Procedures*: <http://www.hccs.edu/about-hcc/procedures/student-rights-policies--procedures/student-procedures/>

### **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 after the "last date to withdraw", which for Fall 16-week session, 2018 is **November 2 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:**

HCC strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please meet with a campus Abilities Counselor as soon as possible in order to establish reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and Ability Services. It is the policy and practice of HCC to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. For more information, please go to <http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/disability-services/>

### **Title IX Discrimination:**

Houston Community College is committed to cultivating an environment free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual or gender-based nature including sex discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Sex discrimination includes all forms of sexual and gender-based misconduct and violates an individual's fundamental rights and personal dignity.

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex including pregnancy and parental status-in educational programs and activities. If you require an accommodation due to pregnancy please contact an Abilities Services Counselor. The Director of EEO/Compliance is designated as the Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator. All inquiries concerning HCC policies, compliance with applicable laws, statutes, and regulations (such as Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504), and complaints may be directed to:

David Cross - Director EEO/Compliance - Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity

3100 Main - Houston, TX 77266-7517 or [Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu](mailto:Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu) (713) 718-8271

### **Basic Needs**

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. HCC has services to assist you. If you feel comfortable doing so, you are also encouraged to contact your instructor to request assistance.

### **Open/Campus Carry of Handguns:**

At HCC the safety of our students, staff, and faculty is our first priority. As of August 1, 2017, Houston Community College is subject to the Campus Carry Law (SB11 2015). For more information, visit the HCC Campus Carry web page at:

<http://www.hccs.edu/departments/police/campus-carry/>