



# Philosophy Syllabus

Introduction to Ethics, PHIL 2306-32595

Spring 2013, Web-Enhanced (3 Credit Hours)

HCC – Northwest College

Spring Branch Campus, Room 319

T, Th 9:30 – 11:00

Instructor: Nathan D. Smith, PhD

Spring Branch Campus, Room 900-D

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713-718-7258

Office hours: Tuesday – 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:

Aquinas, Thomas. 1988. *The Cardinal Virtues*, edited by Richard J. Reagan, S. J. Hackett Publishing. (ISBN: 0-87220-745-5)

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

Ghandi, Mahatma. 1996. *Selected Political Writings*. Hackett Publishing. (ISBN 0-87220-330-1)

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

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

## Course Calendar:

*For a continuously updated calendar with specific instructions and due dates for assignments, please see the Eagle Online course shell for this course.*

Week 1 – Syllabus, What is ethics? (Powerpoint and discussions)

Week 2 – An introduction to ethical reasoning (online readings)

Week 3 – What is the basis of ethics?

Required reading: Plato, *Euthyphro*. Recommended reading: Plato, *Apology*

Week 4 – Virtue

Required reading: Plato, *Meno*

Week 5 – Virtue

Required reading: Aquinas, *The Cardinal Virtues*,

Week 6 – Virtue

Required reading: Aquinas,

Week 7 – Virtue

Required reading: Aquinas,

Week 8 – Review and Mid-term exam

Week 9 – Duty

Required reading: Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, "Preface"; Recommended reading: "Introduction"

Week 10 – Duty

Required reading: Kant, *Grounding*, Section I and II

Week 11 – Duty

Required reading: Kant, *Grounding*, Section II, and III

Week 12 – Consequences

Required reading: Mill, *On Utilitarianism*, pg. ; Recommended reading: Bentham, *Principles of Morals and Legislation*

Week 13 – Consequences

Required reading: Mill, *On Liberty*, pg.

Week 14 – Other theories and applications (online readings)

Week 15 – Other theories and applications (online readings)

Final exam review, complete all assignments, Extra Credit, and other materials

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 7 2013

### **Grading Components and Weights:**

**Team Project (x 2) 100 points each** – You will be assigned to a team at the beginning of the semester, consisting of 5 or 6 students. You will work with your team on in-class assignments and together you will compile a team folder that will be submitted (online or in-class) before the mid-term and final exams. It will include: 1) a glossary of philosophical terms, 2) summaries of the assigned readings, 3) prepare for exam questions using notes from in-class assignments, and 4) a self-assessment score for each team member based on participation in preparation of the team folder and participation in in-class activities. **Preparing for SLOs 1, 2, 3, and 4**

**Online Discussion Forums (x2) 50 points each** – You will be required to participate in two online discussion forums. The topics and requirements will be explained online. There are several different ways to achieve the highest score in your online discussion, but all of them depend on the level of thought you put into the discussion and the amount that you interact with your classmates. **Preparing for SLOs 2, 3, 4, and 5**

**Mid-term Exam, 100 points** – Identify figures, dates, and works in the history of ethics; define philosophical terms and concepts; explain core concepts and arguments from assigned readings; and apply ethical concepts to personal experience and contemporary issues. **Assessing SLOs 1, 2, and 3.**

**Final Exam, 200 points** – Identify figures, dates, and works in the history of ethics; define philosophical terms and concepts; apply ethical concepts to personal experience and contemporary issues; compare, contrast, and critique ethical theories and arguments; and justify a position on ethical issues. **Assessing SLOs 1, 3, 4, and 5**

**Optional Assignments (x2) 100 points each** – You are required to complete two additional assignments. But the type of assignment you complete and the due date for completion of these assignments is up to you (within parameters explained online). You can be scored for in-class participation (which means that you must be prepared to answer questions and participate in discussions in class); you can do a short literature review by summarizing an article or book pertaining to course content; you can write a traditional paper of 500 words (2 pages) on a topic of your choosing; or you can make a short in-class presentation (10-15 minutes) on a topic of your choosing. **You must select your assignments and a due date for each of them in order to be counted as present in the course. Preparing for SLOs 2, 3, 4, and 5**

**Extra Credit:** Up to 50 points will be awarded to students who attend some HCC student activity (an on-campus lecture or film event, club meeting, volunteer activity, etc.). You must provide proof of attendance and a 1 page summary and reflection on your experience. Extra credit points will be awarded based what you turn in to me. *All Extra Credit must be submitted by the last scheduled day of class.*

### **Grading Policy:**

All grades will be calculated according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 900. The term grade legend follows:

A = 90% to 100% (810 to 900 point)

B = 80% to 89.9% (720 to 809 points)

C = 70% to 79.9% (630 to 719 points)

D = 60% to 69.9% (540 to 629 points)

F = 0% to 59.9% (000 to 539 points)

**Late policy: Late work will be accepted, but 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 !!*

### **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.*

### **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.

### **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 Spring 2013 on Monday, April 1 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](http://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.