



Introduction to Ethics Syllabus

Introduction to Ethics, PHIL 2306-36152
Fall 12 week, Second Start (3 Credit Hours)
Houston Community College
HCC Online
<http://www.hccs.edu/online/>

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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 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 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>

Dancy, Jonathan. "Ethical Particularism and Morally Relevant Properties," *Mind* 92: 368 (1983), pg. 530-47.

Held, Virginia. "Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 50 (1990), pg. 321-44.

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.

Recommended Readings:

Boghossian, Paul. "The Maze of Moral Relativism," *The New York Times*, "The Philosopher's Stone," Op-Ed, July 14, 2011.

Korksgaard, Christine. "The Right to Lie: Dealing with Evil," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 15: 4 (1986), pg. 235-49.

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

Singer, Peter. "The Singer Solution to World Poverty," *The New York Times Magazine*, September 5, 1999, pg. 60-3.

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 10/5

Unit 1: Foundational Ethical Questions

Readings: Course Notes and Handbook

Moral dilemmas assignment due – 10/1

Plato reflection assignment due – 10/8

Moral realism discussion forum – closed 10/15

Moral reasoning assignment due – 10/15

Quiz 1 – 10/15

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 – 10/25

Paper 1 – due 11/1

Virtue Discussion Forum – closed 10/29

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 – 10/29

Ethics of Duty Discussion Forum – closed 11/5

Unit 4, Utilitarianism:

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, selections

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

Quiz 4 – 11/5

Utilitarianism Discussion Forum – closed 11/12

Unit 5, Other Moral Theories:

Held, "Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory"

Ross, "The Basis of Objective Judgments in Ethics"

Dancy, "Ethical Particularism and Morally Relevant Properties"

Quiz 5 – 11/19

Other Moral Theories Discussion Forum – closed 11/22

Unit 6, Case Studies Group Project

Paper, website, or presentation due – 12/6

Multiple Choice Final Exam – due 12/13

Written Final Exam – due 12/15

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 3) 15 points each – There will be three short written 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.

Discussion Forums (x 5), 20 points each / 40 points for Discussion 1 – The four units on moral theory will each have its own discussion forum. You will be graded on thoughtful responses to questions and engagement with classmates. Discussions will be open for two weeks. Please pay attention to closing dates on the discussion forums. Up to 50 points extra credit will be awarded to the most outstanding contributors to the discussion forums.

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

Group Project, 100 points – Groups will be assigned after the last day to withdraw. There will be four groups. Each group will be assigned a topic in applied ethics. The task of the group will be to address a case study in that topic of applied ethics and use moral reasoning, based on any of the moral theories discussed in the class, to develop an ethical response to the moral issue as presented in the case study. **Assessing SLOs 5, 6, and 7.**

Paper 100 points– You will write two papers for this course. Each paper will be 2-3 pgs in length (body only, standard borders and font). The topics for these papers will be explained in detail in EagleOnline. The papers will be based on the readings for the course and minimally on external research. **Preparing for SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.**

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, 100 points – The final exam will consist of glossary terms, short answer questions, and two essay questions. You will define philosophical terms and concepts; explain core concepts and arguments from assigned readings; apply 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, 3, and 4.**

Grading Policy:

All grades will be calculated according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 600. The term grade legend follows:

A = 90% to 100% (513 to 570 point)

B = 80% to 89.9% (456 to 512 points)

C = 70% to 79.9% (399 to 455 points)

D = 60% to 69.9% (342 to 398 points)

F = 0% to 59.9% (000 to 341 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 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 complet 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.

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 and Responsibilities*: <http://www.hccs.edu/district/about-us/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 Second Start Session, 2017 is November 13 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:

Please visit the Student Ability Services web page :

<http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/disability-services/ability-services-policies-and-procedures/>

For information about your local campus resources, please visit:

<http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/disability-services/ability-services-office-locations/>

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 (713) 718-8271

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/district/departments/police/campus-carry/>.