Philosophy
Syllabus

Introduction to Ethics, PHIL 2306-45160

Summer I 2013, Web-Enhanced (3 Credit Hours)

HCC – Northwest College

Spring Branch Campus, Room 319

M-F 10:00 – 12:00

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:

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:

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

June 3 – Syllabus, What is ethics? (Powerpoint and discussions)

June 4 – Moral Dilemmas

June 5 – Moral Reasoning

June 6 – Moral Reasoning

June 7 – Foundations in Ethics

June 10 – Plato, *Euthyphro*

June 11 – Plato, *Meno*

June 12 – Plato, *Meno*

June 13 – Virtue Ethics

June 14 – Contemporary moral issues

June 17 – Mid-Term Exam Review

June 18 – Mid-Term Exam

June 19 – Kant: duty

June 20 – Kant: categorical imperative

June 21 – Kant: three versions

June 24 – Kant: "On a Supposed Right to Lie"

June 25 – Bentham and Mill

June 26 – Mill

June 27 – Mill

June 28 – Contemporary Moral Issues

July 1 – Contemporary Moral Issues

July 2 – Last Day of Class, Final Exam Review

July 5 – Final Exam

Grading Components and Weights:

Team Review Folder Project (x 2) 100 points each – You will select a team of 5 or 6 students to work with. You and your team will compile a review folder for the mid-term and final exams. These "folders" can be turned in in class or online on the day of the mid-term and final exams. It will include: 1) a glossary of philosophical terms and 2) prepared outlines for exam questions. Each group member will receive a separate grade for the group folder. **Preparing for SLOs 1, 2, 3, and 4**

Group Evaluation, 100 points – Each person in the class will submit an evaluation rubric for each member in that person's team on the last day of the course. Your score on this element will be based on your team members' evaluation of you.

Mid-term Exam, 100 points – 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; and evaluate arguments and positions in ethics. **Preparing for SLOs 1, 2, and 3**.

Final Exam, 200 points – 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**

Optional Assignment, 100 points – The type of assignment you complete and the due date for completion of the assignment 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 2-3 page book review or a summary of one of the readings to be posted on the course web page; you can write content for and manage the course wiki using relevant content for the course; you can write a traditional 2-3 page paper on a topic of your choosing; or you can make a short in-class presentation (10 minutes) on the reading topic for the day. **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**

Term Paper, 100 points – You will complete a 3-5 pg. term paper on a topic of your choosing. The paper should provide an interpretation of key terms and concepts as they apply to particular situations. It should offer a variety of philosophical viewpoints, evaluate possible positions, and either compare and contrast or provide a synthesis of the presented material. **Assessing SLOs 2, 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 900. The term grade legend follows:

    A = 90% to 100% (720 to 800 point)

    B = 80% to 89.9% (640 to 719 points)

    C = 70% to 79.9% (560 to 639 points)

    D = 60% to 69.9% (480 to 559 points)

    F = 0% to 59.9%   (000 to 479 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. <u>Except for a medical excuse or documented family or personal emergency, there is no exemption from these rules.</u>

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 Spring 2013 on Monday, June 24. 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.