



**Introduction to Ethics, PHIL 2306 – 35711**  
**Fall 1<sup>st</sup> 8 Weeks, 2017 [Special Six Week Course]**

**Syllabus**

**HCC Online**

Instructor: Dr. Sally Parker-Ryan

**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. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so.**

Fall, 1 <sup>st</sup> 6 Weeks, 2017	HCC Online
Email: <a href="mailto:sally.parkerryan@hccs.edu">sally.parkerryan@hccs.edu</a>	PHONE: 214-830-6172 (I will endeavor to return messages within 24 hours)
Semester Credit Hours: 3	Type of Instruction: Online
Contact Hours: 48 approx. <b>All online.</b>	Course Length: 6 weeks
Sept 11 – Oct 22, 2017	Delivery: via <i>Eagle Online</i>
Learning Web:	<a href="https://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/sally.parkerryan">https://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/sally.parkerryan</a>

## Online Learning Management Software:

This is an entirely *web-based* lecture course that uses *Eagle Online*. The *Eagle Online* login page is:

<https://eagleonline.hccs.edu/login/ldap>

**You MUST HAVE an HCC email account.** It is crucial that you regularly check your HCC email account, or set a rule to send it to your primary email account. I will communicate with you **ONLY** via this email address (i.e. not via any alternative email addresses you may have). You will be able to email me through our Eagle Online Course page, and it will go through your HCC email address.

Your 'home' campus is HCC Online: <http://www.hccs.edu/online/about-us/>

The Student Services page links you to everything you need to know about online courses, especially to the Mandatory Online Orientation, and to the HCC Online Student Handbook: <http://www.hccs.edu/online/student-services/>

For Technical Support, go to: <http://www.hccs.edu/online/technical-support/>

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## Course description:

### (Prerequisite: ENGL 1301 or higher)

This is a systemic evaluation of classical and/or contemporary ethical theories concerning the good life, human conduct in society, morals, and standards of value (Texas ACGM). 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 (HCC Catalogue).

**HCC CORE CURRICULUM COURSE:** This course satisfies the **Philosophy, Language, and Culture** component area or the **Component Area Option** in the HCC Core Curriculum. If you are not sure that you need this course to graduate, please consult with your advisor.

In keeping with the guidelines of the Texas Higher Education Curriculum Board, this course will provide a solid foundation in the following Core Objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

NOTICE: Students who have questions about whether their enrollment in this course will satisfy their degree objectives should immediately see an HCC academic advisor who can review their academic degree plans.

### **Course Goals:**

To examine some of the major thinkers and schools of thought through the history of ethics from the ancients through to contemporary authors. We will look at ethical problems and concepts as they have featured in both meta-ethics and normative ethical theories. We will identify argument structures and critically examine some contemporary ethical problems, and learn to think clearly and fairly about important issues. The aim is to emerge with sharper critical thinking abilities and excellent analytic skills, and the ability to apply these to real-world ethical issues, and to personal experience.

### **Student 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.

### **Learning Objectives:**

**Acquire** a broad familiarity with the names of major thinkers, the schools they represent, geographical location, and historical periods.

**Learn** historically significant questions of ethics, definitions of special terms, and concepts of ethics and ethical decision-making.

**Cultivate** reading comprehension of writings specific to ethics and cultivation of character.

**Distinguish** various approaches to ethics, including conceptual analysis and practical bases for ethical decision-making.

**Articulate** the relevance of ethics and questioning about ethics to everyday life.

**Consider** how ethics may or may not apply to differing ways of thinking and cultural influences.

**Inventory, Summarize, and Assess** correlative questions, concepts, and schools of thought found in the history of ethics, both personal and professional.

**Create and Cultivate** alternative ethical positions on presented course content.

**Develop** coherent arguments for chosen positions, bringing to bear the rules of logic, written expression and disciplined thinking.

**Critique** chosen positions and adequately defend against possible objections, both theoretical and applied.

## **Course Materials:**

**I will make all of the *required readings* available via links in Eagle Online** to Open Access material. I do, however, recommend buying the following book, as it's inexpensive and very useful (if you don't buy it, I will have the relevant chapter online anyhow):

Weston, Anthony. *A Rule Book for Arguments*, Hackett Publishing, 4th Edition, 2009. ISBN 978-0-87220-954-1, available at: <http://hccs.bncollege.com>

**HCC Writing Centers: On-Campus Tutoring & help with writing assignments:** The Houston Community College Writing Centers provide a student-centered environment where professional tutors support student success for all HCC students. The primary goal of the Writing Centers is to offer free, convenient, and personalized assistance to help students improve their writing at any stage of the writing process required in any courses at HCC. Tutors will also assist students with their job application letters, resumes, and scholarship/transfer essays.

Each session lasts about 30 minutes. Students should bring the professor's assignment sheet or notes about the requirements, a printed rough draft, their textbook, if necessary & a flash drive.

Consult Find-A-Tutor at <http://ctle3.hccs.edu/alltutoring/index.php?-link=stu> for Writing Center locations and times. At HCC Writing Centers, each tutoring session becomes a learning experience.

**Online Tutoring Assistance:** <https://hccs.upswing.io/>

**HCC Library Research & Writing:** One of the best resources for research is your own library. Try this link for ideas: [http://library.hccs.edu/research\\_writing](http://library.hccs.edu/research_writing)

Also, make use of your HCC Library's Online Learning information and assistance: [http://library.hccs.edu/for\\_students/distance](http://library.hccs.edu/for_students/distance)

**Notes on resources and supplementary reading:** I also recommend, for each topic we cover, looking it up on either, or both, of the following online encyclopedias:

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP) <http://plato.stanford.edu/> and the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP) <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

Also very useful is the following philosophy website: <http://www.philosophypages.com/index.htm> - this site has a dictionary, study guides, history,

individual philosophers as well as notes on logic and writing philosophy essays (in study guide section).

Don't forget to look for resources on the Philosophy discipline page of the Learning Web <https://learning.hccs.edu/programs/philosophy>

### **Grading Components:**

All grades will be calculated according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 1000 – weighted as per the grade schedule noted, below. The term grade legend follows:

A = 100- 90	900 – 1000 points
B = 89 - 80:	800 – 899 points
C = 79 - 70:	700 – 799 points
D = 69 - 60:	600 – 699 points
59 and below = F	Below 599 points
FX (Failure due to non-attendance)	0 points
W (Withdrawn)	0 points
I (Incomplete)	0 points
AUD (Audit)	0 points

IP (In Progress) is given only in certain developmental courses. The student must re-enroll to receive credit.

COM (Completed) is given in non-credit and continuing education courses.

FINAL GRADE OF FX: Students who stop attending class and do not withdraw themselves prior to the withdrawal deadline may either be dropped by their professor for excessive absences or be assigned the final grade of "FX" at the end of the semester. Students who stop attending classes will receive a grade of "FX", compared to an earned grade of "F" which is due to poor performance. Logging into a DE course without active participation is seen as non-attending. Please note that HCC will not disperse financial aid funding for students who have never attended class.

Students who receive financial aid but fail to attend class will be reported to the Department of Education and may have to pay back their aid. A grade of "FX" is treated exactly the same as a grade of "F" in terms of GPA, probation, suspension, and satisfactory academic progress.

To compute grade point average (GPA), divide the total grade points by the total number of semester hours attempted. The grades "IP," "COM" and "I" do not affect GPA.

4 Discussion Board Posts	40 %	For a possible 400 points
Essay	30 %	For a possible 300 points
Final Exam	30 %	For a possible 300 points

### Discussion Board Posts (DPs)

(Addresses SLO 1, 2 & 3): You will be required to do TWO things: 1) respond to a question with a short post of a **minimum 150 words**, and 2) respond to a classmate's post with a **minimum of 100 words**. You can earn a maximum of 100 points per post, and these will accumulate to represent 40% of your grade. You will post to the appropriate discussion via the class website. The post must be completed by the due date and time. ***Late posts MAY be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. Please contact me BEFORE the post is due to discuss.***

### Essay

(Addresses SLO 2, 3, 4 & 5): (**Minimum 750 words** - you may write more if you wish) You will be required to write a paper, choosing from the questions offered. The essay should be typed, formatted to 12 point font, and you must use either MLA, Chicago or APA Style conventions for citing works (see the Style Guides in the resources section of our web site).

I will also post links to sites that have proven very helpful to students for writing essays, and I will provide some other guidance materials. You should let me know if you need extra help with essay writing – I am very happy to help here as it is not easy to write a philosophy paper! But the skills you will acquire in learning how to communicate effectively in writing are invaluable to you in your professional life, so well worth improving. The Essay is worth 100 points, and 30% of your final grade. ***Late Essays MAY be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. Please contact me BEFORE the post is due to discuss. Documentation may be required.***

### Final Exam

(Addresses SLO 1, 3 & 5): An exam comprised of a series of short and/or long answer questions will be made available online in the Finals week. It will go online the morning of **Thurs 10/19 at 8am and will be due by Fri 10/20 at 8am. Therefore, you will have 24 hours to complete the exam. You will complete the exam on a Word document that you can close and revisit as many times as you want before uploading it by the due date and time.** The Final Exam is worth 100 points, or 30% of your final grade. ***NO LATE EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED.***

### How to proceed with this course:

- Go to our course page on Eagle Online and make yourself familiar with it. If this is your first online course – don't stress too much! Just play around with the site, check out how it works for a bit and you will be fine. Just contact me if there is anything you do not understand 😊
- Watch videos on PLAGIARISM if you have not already.
- **Post in the “Who We Are” Forum: to get to know each other AND this is what I count to mark you as “present” for the course. You may be dropped if you do not post here.**
- For each week of the course, the basic procedure is to do the **required reading**, which will include Lecture Notes and other readings, and then complete the **assessment** by the Sunday night of each week. There are new readings and an assessment for **every week**.
- The Calendar and Upcoming Events boxes to the right will alert you to upcoming Due Dates – keep an eye on these.
- The column on the left of your home page is where you can access all of the Discussion Forums, Essays and eventually the Exam.
- In the opening sections of the course, you will find links to your style-guides and other helpful links and guides.
- Browse the links in the RESOURCES section for hint and advice on essay writing – especially writing for philosophy.
- Be sure to understand what PLAGIARISM is – and do not commit it during this, or any other course.
- **Consult the Discussion Post and Essay Rubrics.** These tell you what is expected for each form of assessment, and will help you understand the grades you get (and how to aim higher!)

**Please communicate with me** if you are having problems with the work, or need some extra help – I am here to help you succeed, so let me know EARLY so we can work together on the problem. You can always email me or call me. I am available to talk about philosophy, to offer help and advice about the course, and to help you find ways to get the most out of your studies and to help solve problems that might get in the way of these. So, please don't hesitate to get in touch – I am online every day and will get back to you within hours, most of the time.

**Pre-course required reading:** you should have already read this:

Plato, 'The Ring of Gyges': Annotated version by Dr. Sally Parker-Ryan, [CLICK HERE](#)

If you want to read more (**not required – only if interested**): Plato, *The Republic*, Written 360 B.C.E, Translated by Benjamin Jowett

Book II, reprinted at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.3.ii.html> (an open source, public domain text).



**Course Schedule:**

Please note that this schedule is subject to change, although you will always be informed in adequate time if it does. You will be issued with a more detailed schedule when you begin the course.

MONDAY (BEGIN WEEK)	WE EK No.	INFO.	READING (all will be made available online – no need to buy textbooks)	TOPIC	SUB-TOPIC	SUNDAY (ASSESSMENTS DUE END OF WEEK – BY MIDNIGHT)
09/11	1		To have already completed: The Ring of Gyges  McKinnon  Sober Rachels  Benedict	Introduction to Ethics  META-ETHICS	What is Ethics?  The divisions of Ethics: Meta-ethics & Normative Ethics.  Realism and Relativism	During this week, post your introduction, and share something about yourself with the class on 'Who We Are' on our class website.  Discussion Post (DP) #1 due 09/17
09/18	2		Plato	NORMATIVE ETHICAL THEORIES	1. The Euthyphro and Divine Command Theory  2. Egoism	DP #2 due 09/24
09/25	3		Bentham and Mill	UTILITARIANISM	3. Utilitarianism	DP #3 due 10/01
10/02	4		Kant	KANT	4. Kantian Moral Theory	<b>ESSAY DUE 10/08 BY MIDNIGHT</b>
10/09	5		Aristotle  CASE STUDIES	ARISTOTLE  CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN ETHICS	5. Virtue Ethics and <i>Eudaimonia</i>  Contemporary Issues in Ethics: Case Studies	DP #4 due 10/15
10/16 – 10/20  FINALS WEEK	6		EXAM REVISION	THURS 10/19: Exam goes online by 8am	FRI 10/20: Exam Due by 8am	ALL DONE – CONGRATUALATIONS!!

## WEEK 1 PART ONE: Introduction

**Required reading:** (don't forget, **all reading is online for you already**, just go to the Module for the week):

1. Lecture Notes
2. McKinnon, Barbara. (2009), except from Chapter 1: 'Ethics and Ethical Reasoning', pp.2-12, *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues*, Sixth Edition, Wadsworth-Cengage Learning, California.
3. Sober, Elliott. (2013), excerpt from 'Chapter 28: Ethics-Normative and Meta', pp. 305-309, 329-331, *Core Questions in Philosophy: a Text with Readings*, Pearson Press: New Jersey.

### **Topics**

What is ethics?

Meta-Ethics: Realism and Relativism

Normative Ethics: Teleological and Deontological ethical theories

## **PART TWO: Meta-ethics (Questions *about* ethical theories)**

**Required reading:**

1. Lecture Notes
2. James Rachels, 1986, excerpt reprinted in Lois P. Pojman & Lewis Vaughn, *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth*, 9th Ed., OUP, Oxford, 2014.
3. Ruth Benedict, 1934, excerpt reprinted in Lois P. Pojman & Lewis Vaughn, *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth*, 9th Ed., OUP, Oxford, 2014.
4. McKinnon, Barbara. (2009), except from Chapter 2: 'Ethical Relativism', pp. 18-23, *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues*, Sixth Edition, Wadsworth-Cengage Learning, California.

### **Assessment for this week:**

1. You **MUST post on the Who We Are discussion board**. This lets me see whom to count as 'active' in the course. If you do not post here, you may be dropped from the course.
2. Discussion Post #1 (hereafter DP #): **Due: Sunday 09/17 by midnight.**

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**WEEK 2: Normative Ethical Theories (Questions about ethical behavior): Euthyphro, DCT, Egoism**

**Required reading:**

1. Lecture Notes
2. Plato, 'The Euthyphro'

3. Rachels on Divine Command Theory
4. Rachels on Egoism
5. Sober, Elliott. (2013), excerpt from 'Chapter 31: Conventionalist Theories', pp. 331-333, *Core Questions in Philosophy: a Text with Readings*, Pearson Press: New Jersey.

**Topics:**

The Euthyphro Problem in Value Theory

Divine Command Theory

Morality and Religion

**Assessment:** DP #2: **Due: Sun 09/24 by midnight.**

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**WEEK 3:** Normative Ethical Theories: Utilitarianism

**Required reading:**

1. Lecture Notes 1
2. Bentham, Jeremy (1789), Chapters 1 & 2 of Principles of Morals and Legislation.
3. MacKinnon on Utilitarianism.
  
4. Lecture Notes 2
5. Mill, John Stuart (1863), *Utilitarianism*, excerpts from Chapter 2 pp. 4-8 and all of Chapter 4.

**Assessment:** DP #3: **Due: Sun 10/01 by midnight.**

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**WEEK 4:** Normative Ethical Theories: Kant

**Required reading:**

1. Lecture Notes 1
2. Kant, Immanuel (1785), Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, PREFACE PLUS CHAPTER 1.
3. Elliott Sober on Kant
4. Lecture Notes 2
5. Kant, Immanuel (1785), Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, CHAPTERS 2 & 3.

**Topics:**

The Universal Law and 'good will'

Duties – actions performed out of ‘inclination’ and actions performed out of ‘respect for the law’

The Universal Law known by *reason* and not *experience*

‘Good will’ = volition motivated by the Universal Law in and of itself, and is *independent* of ends – motivated by reason not by reference to ends (e.g. happiness)

Categorical and Hypothetical Imperatives

The Kingdom of Ends

**Assessment:** Essay: **Due Sun 10/08 by midnight.**

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**WEEK 5 PART ONE:** Normative Ethical Theories: Aristotle & Virtue Ethics

**Required reading:**

1. Lecture Notes 1 & 2.
2. Selections from: Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics.
3. MacKinnon on Aristotle.

**Topics:**

Aristotelian Ethics

*Eudaimonia*

**PART TWO:** Case Studies: Applying theories to real-world cases.

**Required Reading:**

1. Read over the case studies, and think about the questions posed at the end (these are questions for reflection only – not essay or DP questions).

**Assessment:** DP #4 **DUE: Sun 10/15 by midnight.**

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**WEEK 6:** Finals

**Assessment:** Final Exam (Online) **Goes online: Morning of THURS 10/19 by 8am, and is due to be uploaded 24 hours later, FRI 10/20 by 8am. NO LATE EXAMS ACCEPTED.**

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**The HCC Online Student Handbook** contains policies and procedures unique to the online student. Students should have reviewed the handbook as part of the mandatory orientation. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the handbook's contents. The handbook contains valuable information, answers, and resources, such as contacts, policies and procedures (how to drop, attendance requirements, etc.), student services (ADA, financial aid,

degree planning, etc.), course information, testing procedures, technical support, and academic calendars.

You can find the HCC Online Student Handbook here: <http://www.hccs.edu/online/student-services/>

*PLEASE ALSO REVIEW THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT POLICY ABOUT PLAGIARISM:*

**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, and may cause the student to receive either an "F", or "I" in the course depending on your professor's stated requirements for the assignment and the weight it carries in determining your course grade. Students receiving an "I" for a course are ineligible for graduation until the "I" has been removed from a student's transcript. Probation or dismissal from HCC and ALL its several colleges may also result. See Student Handbook. **Please be aware that ever-evolving applications exist that detect plagiarism, and your instructor will run your work through them.**

***Be sure to watch the videos on plagiarism that I have placed on the Resources page of our class website.***

**My policy on plagiarism: first count, I will give a warning and ask you to redo the assignment. If you do not redo the assignment, you get a zero. Second count, you get a zero – no redo. Third count you fail the course.**

**Withdrawal Policies:**

HCC DE Students are expected to check in to the course site regularly, and to complete all work by noted due dates. **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 is **PLEASE SEE SPECIAL UPDATED CALENDAR ONLINE** for this course. 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.

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

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/>.

### **Students with disAbilities:**

The HCC Accessibility website is located at the following url:

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

You will find information about the types of assistance offered to students with special instructional needs on that web page. You will also find contact information for your college's ADA compliance and accessibility office.

Here is a list of the ADA counselors:

<http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/disability-services/ada-counselors/>

### **Central College**

713.718.6164

**Coleman College**

713-718-7376

**Northeast College**

713-718-8322

**Northwest College**

713-718-5667

713-718-5408

**Southeast College**

713-718-7053

**Southwest College**

713-718-7909

**Adaptive Equipment/Assistive Technology**

713-718-6629

713-718-5604

**Interpreting and CART services**

713-718-6333

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**EGLS3:**

At Houston Community College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time near the end of the term, you will be asked to answer a short online survey of research-based questions related to instruction. The anonymous results of the survey will be made available to your professors and department chairs for continual improvement of instruction. Look for the survey as part of the Houston Community College Student System online near the end of the term.