foundations of professional ethics
summer ii 2015

course: phil3340 section: 002
time: mwtr 12:00-1:55 location: ci-102

instructor: ana-maria andrei, ph.d.
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office hours: tba and by appointment
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general course description
this course is an introduction to contemporary ethical theories and their application to a number of ethical dilemmas that arise in professional life. in the first half of the term, we will study several major ethical theories (e.g., utilitarianism, kantian ethics and contractarianism), which will provide us with a theoretical framework for examining a number of current ethical debates. in the second half of the term, we will use this theoretical framework to explore topics such as euthanasia, physician assisted suicide, abortion, animal rights and capital punishment.

student learning outcomes
students taking the course will be expected to: (1) demonstrate (on test questions) an understanding of a variety of ethical theories and principles; (2) apply those theories and principles to professional ethics issues in essays and case studies; (3) develop their reasoning skills, and demonstrate that development on test questions; (4) construct and evaluate ethical arguments in essays and case studies.

required texts:
- j. rachels and s. rachels (eds.), the elements of moral philosophy,” 7th edition, new york: mcgraw hill, 2012;
- a series of essays made available as pdf files on blackboard and which you are encouraged to print out.

please make sure you always bring along a copy of the current reading assignment when you come to class, and, needless to say, that you read it and come prepared for discussion.

course requirements
- two exams (worth 25% and 30%, respectively); each exam includes true/false and multiple choice questions, as well as shorter and longer answer questions and is designed to test your grasp of the material covered;
- class presentation (worth 15%)
- two case study papers (worth 15% each)
➢ active participation in class discussion is highly recommended as the best way to further your comprehension of the material and get feedback on your ideas.

Topics and readings

July
6 Introduction and course mechanics
7 Introduction (continued): J. Rachels, “What is morality?”
8 Cultural relativism: J. Rachels, “The challenge of cultural relativism”
9 Morality and religion: J. Rachels, “Does morality depend on religion?”
13 Utilitarianism: J. Rachels, “The Utilitarian approach”
14 Utilitarianism: J. Rachels, “The debate over Utilitarianism”
15 Kantian ethics: J. Rachels, “Are there absolute moral rules?”
16 Kantian ethics: J. Rachels, “Kant and respect for persons”
20 The social contract theory: J. Rachels, “The idea of a social contract” [first paper due]
21 Review for the midterm
22 Midterm exam
23 Euthanasia and physician assisted suicide (J. Rachels*, “Active and Passive Euthanasia” and S. Potts*, “Objections to the Institutionalization of Euthanasia”)
27 Abortion (J. J. Thomson*, “A Defense of Abortion”)
29 Animal interests and animal rights (P. Singer*, “All Animals are Equal” and T. Regan*, “The Case for Animal Rights”)
30 Capital punishment (L. Pojman*, “In Defense of the Death Penalty”)

August
3 Capital punishment (J. Reiman*, “Against the Death Penalty”)
4 Additional case studies
5 General review [second paper due]
6 Final exam
**Grading Scale**
All grades will be assigned on the standard scale: 90%-100%=A, 80%-89%=B, 70%-79%=C, 60%-69%=D, 59% and below=F.

**Late Work Policy**
No late work will be accepted, unless due to extreme circumstances. Make-up tests can be arranged only if proper medical documentation is provided.

**Attendance**
All material discussed in lecture and/or covered in the readings is the potential basis for test questions. Students are therefore expected to attend all lectures and keep up with assigned readings. If you don’t attend class, don’t expect to pass.

**Some Advice**
The material we’ll be studying is difficult. Be prepared to work hard. In order to get a good grade in the class, I recommend the following. (1) Do all the readings more than once. (2) Don’t miss lectures. (3) Raise questions in class and/or drop by my office for a chat if you’re having difficulties. (4) Review the material regularly.

**Freedom of Speech and Classroom Etiquette**
You are free to argue for any ethical position you find compelling, as long as you provide reasons for your point of view. It is inevitable that during discussions individual points of view will differ. When they do, our reaction will always be to patiently listen to the reasons offered for a particular ethical conclusion and cooperatively evaluate those reasons.

**E-etiquette**
*Turn off all cell phones before entering the classroom.* If your cell phone rings during class, I will stop the lecture. Any student who disrupts a lecture by using a personal electronic device will be asked to leave.

**Advisement**
Academic advisors are available to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. Each college has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisors. For the College of Liberal Arts the undergraduate advisor is Linda Miller (825-3466; linda.miller@tamucc.edu). The graduate advisor is Rachelle Stanley (825-5896; Rachelle.stanley@tamucc.edu). Both are located on the second floor of Driftwood. Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information please call (361) 825-5931 or log on to http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac.

**Notice to Students with Disabilities**
“The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other
things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.”

**Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes: handing in another’s work or part of another’s work as your own, turning in the same or similar papers for two different classes, presenting a group project as your work solely, purchasing or otherwise obtaining research or papers written by another and turning that work in as your own, using unauthorized notes, tests, or other study aids or copying another’s answers for an examination. University policy strictly prohibits academic dishonesty. For details about the university’s policy concerning academic dishonesty and plagiarism, please consult the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Student Handbook (http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/).

**Grade Appeal Process**

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.