Instructor information: Stefan Sencerz, Ph.D.
Office: Faculty Center 261; phone 825-2392; hours: MW 4:45 – 5:15, TR 1-3; 4:45-5:15 and BA.
E-mail: stefan.sencerz@tamucc.edu; Course web-site: http://ethics.tamucc.edu [no “www”].

Course description: This course is an introduction to contemporary ethical theories and their applications to practical issues. We will begin with an overview of ethics, including the nature ethical reasoning and some basic ethical theories. We will apply this basis to explore some current ethical debates; such as the morality of suicide and euthanasia, capital punishment, legalization of recreational drugs, animal rights and social and environmental responsibilities of professionals.

Learning outcomes: Students taking the course will be expected to
1) demonstrate (on test questions) the understanding of ethical theories and principles;
2) apply those theories and principles to professional ethics issues, in essays and case study analyses;
3) develop their reasoning skills, and demonstrate that development on test questions;
4) construct and evaluate ethical arguments in papers and essays.

Additional readings will be provided on the web site for the course http://ethics.tamucc.edu [W], or distributed in class as handouts [H]. If you miss a class, make sure that you have copies of all additional handouts distributed in the class. Please remember that outlines and handouts do not cover all of the material on which you may be tested, and they do not contain complete accounts of the topics that are covered in lectures and readings. Merely memorizing the handouts will not enable you to pass the course.

Attendance & participation: Official class roll for the main lecture will not be taken. However, all materials discussed in the lectures and covered in the readings are the potential basis for test and exam questions. Students are therefore expected to attend all class meetings and keep up with assigned readings. In general, if you don’t attend class or don’t read required texts, don’t expect to pass.

Make up tests & incompletes: Students who miss a test for a good (e.g. medical) reason will have a chance to take a make-up test, during a few days after the original test, at a time arranged with the instructor. An incomplete for the course is possible only in cases where course work is nearly complete, and the student has a legitimate reason for not completing the course work by the end of the semester.

Course organization: Class meetings will be divided into two types: (1) lectures and (2) discussion section meetings. The lectures will be given by Stefan Sencerz, Ph. D., in CI 113 and will follow the weekly schedule listed below. They will be concerned with general philosophical and ethical issues and their relations to professional activities. Beginning at March 11, the large lectures will end and students will meet in smaller groups with a recitation leader to investigate and discuss applied ethical issues. All tests are in the rooms where your section meets.
Graded assignments: Two tests covering material from lectures, each counting for 25% of your overall grade (50% total). (There is no final test.) Discussion section assignments to be determined by the section leaders (totaling 50% of your overall grade). Many of the above assignments will involve material covered only in the lectures, so lecture attendance is likely to have a significant impact on students grades. 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. Each student’s assignments will be graded by her/his discussion section instructor.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty: As a student at TAMU-CC, you are bound by the student code of conduct. Cheating, plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty is grounds for failing the course.

Freedom of speech and classroom etiquette: You are free to ask any question you please about the material. In many cases if you did not understand something, this is because it was not explained clearly to you, so you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you request clarification. You are also free to argue for any ethical position you find plausible, 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: Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, etc. If your cell phone rings (or sings) during class, I will stop the lecture and answer it for you. If you feel the urge to text message or make a call, please leave the classroom and do not return (until next class). The lectures are for lecturing and discussion. Any student who disrupts a lecture by using a personal electronic device will be asked to leave.

Academic Advising: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

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.

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, clatamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.
The fine print: For all matters concerning course withdrawal, appeal of grades, academic misconduct, etc, students are strongly advised to consult the rules outlined in the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Student Handbook and on the web at: http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/.

Important dates
January 18, M, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (CLOSED)
January 21, W, Classes begin
January 28, W, last day to register or add a class
February 16 or 17 Test #1 (25% of your grade), in sections
March 11 or 12, Test #2 (25% of your grade), in sections
March 16-20, Spring Break
April 10, F, Last day to drop class
May 04, M, Last day to withdraw from the University
May 05, T, Last day of classes
May 06, W, The reading day
May 7-8, 11-13, Final Examinations
May 16, Spring Commencement

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE: This schedule is provisional and subject to change. For the sake of simplicity, the first date of each week refers to Mondays; T-R students, please adjust accordingly. All readings refer to The Elements of Moral Philosophy, 6th ed.

01/21 (W): Classes begin: organization and general introduction


02/02 What is Morality? (continued)
Cultural Relativism; readings: Chapter 2

02/09 Ethical Egoism; readings: Chapter 5.

02/16 or 17 Test #1 (25% of your grade), in sections

02/23 Debate about utilitarianism; readings: Chapters 7-8

03/02 Deontology and Kantian Ethics of respect for persons; readings: Chapters 8-10.

03/09 Ethics and Religion; Readings: Chapter 4

03/11 or 12, Test #2 (25% of your grade), in sections

03/16-20, Spring Break

Beginning at March 11, all meetings will take place in section meetings rooms. Detailed schedules will be provided by section leaders.

THE FINALS: THERE IS NO FINAL EXAMINATION IN THIS CLASS.
Section leaders will decide how they want to use the time designated for finals. They may, use this time to schedule, e.g., quizzes testing material from sections, final presentations, etc.

The Team: