FOUNDATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
FALL 2016

COURSE: PHIL2306    SECTION: 003
TIME: TR 9:30-10:45    LOCATION: CI-127

Instructor: Ana-Maria Andrei, Ph.D.
Office: TBA
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:
- 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); exams typically include true/false, multiple choice and short answer questions, as well an essay question, and are 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

(This is a tentative schedule. For your benefit, we will be flexible about what exactly we discuss and when. It is your responsibility to stay up to date with schedule revisions.)

Week 1 (08/25) Introduction and course mechanics

Week 2 (08/30, 09/01) Introduction, cont’d; Cultural relativism
   J. Rachels, “What is morality?”
   J. Rachels, “The challenge of cultural relativism”

Week 3 (09/06, 09/08) Morality and religion
   J. Rachels, “Does morality depend on religion?”

Week 4 (09/13, 09/15) Utilitarianism
   J. Rachels, “The Utilitarian approach”

Week 5 (09/20, 09/22) Utilitarianism
   J. Rachels, “The debate over Utilitarianism”

Week 6 (09/27, 09/29) Kantian ethics
   J. Rachels, “Are there absolute moral rules?”

Week 7 (10/04, 10/06)
   Review Session
   Midterm exam

Week 8 (10/11, 10/13) Kantian ethics, cont’d; the social contract theory
   J. Rachels, “Kant and respect for persons”
   J. Rachels, “The idea of a social contract”

Week 9 (10/18, 10/20) The social contract theory, cont’d; virtue ethics
   J. Rachels, “The idea of a social contract”, cont’d
   J. Rachels, “The ethics of virtue” [first paper due]

Week 10 (10/25, 10/27) Euthanasia and physician assisted suicide
   J. Rachels*, “Active and Passive Euthanasia”
   S. Potts*, “Objections to the Institutionalization of Euthanasia”

Week 11 (11/01, 11/03) Abortion
   J. J. Thomson*, “A Defense of Abortion”
Week 12 (11/08, 11/10) Animal interests and animal rights
   P. Singer*, “All Animals are Equal”
   T. Regan*, “The Case for Animal Rights”

Week 13 (11/15, 11/17) Capital punishment
   L. Pojman*, “In Defense of the Death Penalty”
   J. Reiman*, “Against the Death Penalty”

Week 14 (11/22) Additional case studies

Week 15 (11/29, 12/01) Additional case studies

Week 16 (12/06) Final Review [second paper due]

[The final exam will be held on the assigned date.]

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. Missing more than four classes will negatively impact your final grade.

Classroom etiquette
Students are expected to come to class on time and switch off cell phones before entering the classroom. Please do not read newspapers, use your laptop or phone in a disruptive fashion, sleep or distract your fellow students in any other way. You should be attentive, take notes, participate in classroom activities as required and be courteous to your classmates and the instructor. No recording of any kind is permitted in this course unless recommended by the Disability Resource Center.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the presentation of work as one’s own that was in fact produced by another author (e.g., the submission of a paper as one’s own work, when it was written by someone else, or the submission of a portion of a paper written by another author without citing the source of the material). University policy strictly prohibits plagiarism. Plagiarized work will be assigned a grade of “F.”

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, or log onto http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac.

Disability services
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.

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.