INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS -- FALL 2017
PHIL 2306.003 MW 2:30-3:15, CI 107

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION: Stefan Sencerz, Ph.D.
Office: Faculty Center 261; phone 825-2392; hours: MTWR 3:15-4:00; TR 12:15-2:00, and BA.
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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.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:
Three tests (25% + 30% + 30%) = 85%
Attendance-participation, quizzes and homework (there will be 7-9 short quizzes and case studies testing your understanding of the assigned material; one worst grade will be dropped) = 15%
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.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attending class enables students to participate in discussion and learn from both the instructor and their classmates. Also, lecture material will be covered in detail on attendance quizzes and tests.

Almost each week there will be short quizzes testing your understanding of the material assigned for the class. Please, expect 7-9 short assignments throughout the semester, one worst grade will be dropped.
All tests will have both a multiple choice component and an essay part.
You can miss 2 classes without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will result in the loss of credit you would have earned during the class you miss. Late arrivals and early departures disrupt the class; therefore, they are discouraged. (In case of necessity, please inform the instructor beforehand, if possible.)

PLAGIARISM: Representing someone else's work as your own is known as plagiarism. Whether it is done intentionally (e.g. cheating) or innocently (e.g. failing to place proper quotation marks) plagiarism is a serious offense. Plagiarized work will be assigned a grade of “F.”

MAKE-UP TESTS AND INCOMPLETE: Students who miss a test for a good reason will have a chance to take a make-up during the week 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 good excuse for not completing the course work by the end of the semester.
GRADE APPEALS: As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATIONS: 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 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 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://cla.tamucc.edu/advising/.

DROPPING CLASS: I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 6th, 2018 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

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 15, M, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
January 16, T, Classes begin
02/19-20 (M-T) the first test – 25%
March 12 – 16, Spring Break
04/02-03 (M-T), the second test – 30%
April 06, F, last day to drop a class
May 02, W, last day of classes; the final draft of the paper
May 04 – 10, Finals week (the 3rd test, 30%)
TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE: This schedule is provisional and subject to change. All readings refer to *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 8th ed.

01/16 (W): Classes begin: organization and general introduction
  Readings: Rachels, chapter 1.

01/22  What is Morality? Principles of logical reasoning.

01/29  What is Morality? (continued)
  Cultural Relativism. Readings: Chapter 2

02/05  Ethical Egoism. Readings: Chapters 5

02/12  Debate about utilitarianism: Chapters 7-8

02/19-20 (M-T) Test #1 (25%)

02/26  Debate about utilitarianism (continued)

03/05  Deontology and Kantian Ethics of respect for persons
  Readings: Chapters 8-10.

03/12 – 16 Spring Break

03/19  Deontology (continued); Ethics and Religion
  Rachels, Chapters 2 and 4 (again); Harris, “The Ethics of Natural Law” [Web]

03/26  Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide
  Rachels, Chapter 1 and 7.2 (again); additional readings [W]

04/02-03 (M-T) Test #2 (30%)

04/09  Legalization of recreational drugs
  Rachels, Chapter 7:4

04/16  Capital Punishment
  Rachels, Chapter 10; Justice Stevens, “On Death Sentence”

04/23  Environmental Ethics and Animal Rights
  Rachels, Chapter 7.4; Sencerz, http://ethics.tamu.edu/extended_examples_nonhuman_animals
  (Read essays by Peter Singer and Tom Regan, linked to this page)
  W. O. Stephens, “Five Arguments for Vegetarianism,”
  *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 1, no. 4, 1994: 25–39 (link above)

04/30  TBA

PHIL 2306.003 MW 2-3:15 – TEST May 09 (W) 1:45-4:15