Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
PHIL 2306.H01

Honors Introduction to Ethics

TR 12:30-1:45
IH-163

http://philosophy.tamucc.edu

Professor:

Don Berkich, Ph.D.

Offices: FC-280
Hours: TBD
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Course Description:

This course is a rigorous and comprehensive study of theoretical and applied ethics with an emphasis on the application of ethical theory to clarify, explain, and resolve real-world ethical dilemmas. Although theoretical and applied ethics are also studied in the Core’s Capstone Professional Ethics course, Honors Professional Ethics differs substantially in the breadth and depth of study in theoretical ethics, the addition of topics in meta-ethics, the addition of contemporary readings, the emphasis on the development of a broad range of philosophical skills, and unique opportunities for students to explore topics in applied ethics.

Topic Schedule:*

Week 1    Introduction, Relativism, Subjectivism
Week 2    Moral Theology
Week 3    Consequentialism
Week 4    Deontology
Week 5    Contractarianism, Moral Principles
Week 6    Moral Dilemmas
Week 7    Case Analysis
Week 8    Ethics Bowl Case Presentations
Week 9    Ethics Bowl Case Presentations
Week 10   Ethics Bowl Case Presentations
Week 11   Topics in Bioethics
Week 12   Topics in Business Ethics
Week 13   Topics in Computer Ethics
Week 14   Course Summary

* Tentative, pending class pacing and interest.
Student Learning Outcomes:

As determined by a pre and post-test, students will

1. Learn the names of at least three important philosophers who have written on these topics--e.g., Hobbes, Kant, and Mill.

2. Learn the names of at least three important arguments on these topics--e.g., the Case of the Inquiring Murderer, the Justice Argument, and the Prisoner's Dilemma.

* A requirement of the University for accreditation purposes only. A result of the contemptible commodification of education and the corporatization of its institutions. Used as the basis for a pre- and post-test in a facile attempt to demonstrate quality in teaching and learning. Fails to reflect any grasp of the distinction between training and education by presupposing that understanding, discovery, and knowledge can be precisely measured, economized, and thereby controlled. An embarrassing academic fad and an affront to the towering intellects whose investigations we have the privilege of pursuing this semester.

Texts:

- Mill, J.S., “Utilitarianism”.
- Hobbes, T. “Leviathan”.
- Moore, G.E., “Principia Ethica”.
- Rachels, J., “Ethical Theory 1: The Question of Objectivity”.
- Rachels, J., “Ethical Theory 2: Theories About How We Should Live”.

* Useful but not required--selections from these and other sources will be provided as necessary. Some of these sources are freely available online through Project Gutenberg or Google Books.

Requirements:

Case Studies

Students will complete three peer-reviewed case studies of approximately five pages each. Dates and specific instructions will be announced pending the Ethics Bowl schedule.

Ethics Bowl Presentations

Assigned two Ethics Bowl cases each, students will engage in at least two graded mock Ethics Bowl Presentations to prepare for competing in the Texas Regional Ethics Bowl.

Final Examination

There will be a single take-home essay final exam for the semester due Wednesday December 13.
Policies:

The professor assumes that students enrolled in this course are sincere student-scholars. That is, the professor shall treat them with the respect due scholars, and, as scholars, they shall do their best to live up to the standards of scholars. To wit,

Preparation:

Scholars carefully read assignments in advance of class, take notes on their reading, explore specific issues in discussion with fellow scholars, and follow-up class by re-reading portions of the required readings and exploring suggested readings.

Participation:

Scholars are eager to respectfully, openly, and critically discuss arguments and issues raised by the readings. Scholars are adept at following a line of reasoning wherever it may lead. Most importantly, scholars welcome the insights and criticisms of their peers: A scholar understands that it is possible to entertain a proposition without believing it, just as it is possible to present an argument without personally endorsing the argument. Scholars enjoy vigorous deliberations and are always careful to treat fellow scholars with patience and good humor.

Assignments:

Scholars fully immerse themselves in assignments and never assume that an assignment is only legitimate if it will be covered on a test. Scholars are naturally curious and see every assignment as an opportunity to explore new issues, see old issues in new light, and hone their growing skills.

Cheating:

Scholars are very careful to give proper credit and maintain the highest standards of scholarly conduct. Thus, subject to university guidelines, any instance of cheating (including plagiarism) will be vigorously prosecuted.

Attendance:

Scholars always attend class barring serious injury, illness, or disaster. Scholars view class-time as rare and valuable for the thought it evokes and the opportunities it presents. Scholars arrive early for class and never leave class early without obtaining prior approval from the professor.
Grading Formula:

There are 1000 points possible as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three Case Studies</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Ethics Bowl Presentations</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points = 

Case Studies Total + Ethics Bowl Presentations Total + Final Examination

Course Grade is determined by the following scale:

A: 900-1000
B: 800-899
C: 700-799
D: 600-699
F: 000-599

Additional Notes:

Any change in the above will be announced in class. No change will be made which would be detrimental to the student's grade.

Please note that this syllabus is not authoritative. That is, the syllabus on the course website supersedes this syllabus wherever they differ. The professor and the students are only responsible for the syllabus as it appears in its entirety on the course website, including the schedule of topics and readings. This syllabus is provided solely to meet the requirements of the Texas State Legislature and has no bearing whatsoever on how the course will in fact be run.

Any student missing a due date must provide a documented, acceptable reason according to university guidelines. Students with a proper excuse for missing a due date will be given a reasonable extension.

Students without a proper excuse for missing a due date will lose 20 points per day after the due date.

Required University Note 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.

Required College of Liberal Arts Note on 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/.

Required College of Liberal Arts Note on the Grade Appeal Process: As stated in University
Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). 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. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

By accepting this syllabus the student indicates that the syllabus has been read, all requirements