INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Spring 2019
TR 2:00 – 3:15
CI-109

https://philosophy.tamucc.edu

Professor:

Don Berkich, Ph.D.

Office: FC-280
Hours: TR 11:00 – 2:00
Office#: 3976 (do not leave a message, send email instead)
Home#: 944-2756 (never after 9:00 p.m., texts strongly preferred)
Email: don.berkich@tamucc.edu
Web: https://philosophy.tamucc.edu/people/faculty/berkich

Course Description:

This course is a rigorous, 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.

Tentative Topic Schedule:

Weeks 1&2 Introduction, Relativism, Subjectivism
Weeks 3&4 Moral Theology
Weeks 5&6 Consequentialism
Weeks 7&8 Deontology
Weeks 9&10 Contractarianism, Virtue Ethics, and Moral Principles
Weeks 11-14 Case Analysis

Texts:

All readings will be provided by the professor as necessary.
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. As proof, please note the quite deliberate vacuity of the above Student Learning Outcomes.

† The professor whose course this is has been informed by the administration that the above statement repudiating Student Learning Outcomes is both ‘uncivil’ and ‘sets a poor example for students’. The professor is deeply grateful and takes no small pride in the administration’s echoing (albeit unwittingly and however distantly) Meletus’ charges against Socrates. Frankly, there can be no greater honor for those who find inspiration in Socrates the gadfly, Socrates the midwife, and, above all, Socrates the self-stinging stingray.

Requirements:

Examinations:

There will be 5 in-class quizzes throughout the semester on dates to be announced and a final examination on the university-scheduled date and time.

Participation:

Students should be prepared to contribute to class discussion, solve problems with the class, and be actively engaged in helping others solve problems.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. See below.

Policies:

The professor has assumed 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 should 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:

Attendance is mandatory. Scholars are permitted at most two absences during the session for any reason whatsoever without penalty. 30 points will be subtracted from the student's total points for every unexcused absence over two. Excuses for absences must abide by university policy—specifically, verified medical or family emergency absence. Please note that missing roll call at the beginning of class counts as an absence; plan accordingly.

Screens:

In light of a raft of recent research revealing that screens (watches, phones, tablets, computers, etc.) serve only to distract and obstruct lecture and discussion, no scholar will ever use a screen in class unless directed to do so by the office of student disabilities. Scholars will respectfully excuse themselves from class to attend to emergency calls only. Any student violating this policy will result in that day being taken as an unexcused absence.

Grading Formula:

There are 1000 points possible as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>150 points each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>250 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points = sum of the weekly examinations - 30 * (sum of unexcused absences over two)

Course Grade is determined by the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>900-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>800 - 899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>700 - 799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>600 - 699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>000 - 599</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

This syllabus is *not* authoritative. That is, the syllabus as it appears on the course website or as it is distributed in class supersedes this syllabus wherever they differ. The professor and the students are only responsible for the syllabus as it is given in class, including the schedule of topics and readings.

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.

*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 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 University Note on Dropping a 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.

*Please note that the professor whose course this is did not write the above note, despite its having been written in the first-person. Whoever it was meant well, no doubt. It is not what this professor would have written.

*Required College of Liberal Arts Note on the Grade Appeal Process:* 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.tamu.cc/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamu.cc/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf). 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 in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamu.cc/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamu.cc/about/student-resources.html).

*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.