INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS – SPRING 2020
PHIL 2306.003 TR 11:00-12:15, CI 127

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION: Stefan Sencerz, Ph.D.
Office: Faculty Center 261; phone 825-2392; hours: MW, MW 3:30-5:00, TR 12:15-1:50; 3:15-4; TR 3:15-4:15, and BA. E-mail: stefan.sencerz@tamucc.edu;
Course web-site: http://philosophy.tamucc.edu [no “www”; additional info on blackboard].

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://philosophy.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% (tests will have both multiple-choice components and essay parts).
- Attendance-participation, quizzes and homework (there will be 8 short quizzes and case studies testing your understanding of the assigned material; 6 best grades will count; 6 x 2.5 = 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 8 short assignments throughout the semester. All homework and quizzes must be done on time (that is how I measure attendance). 2 worst grades will be dropped.

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: University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic
misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a grade of F.

**Definition:** In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation of academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/), and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

**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.

**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.

**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. **The last day to drop a class for the spring semester is April 10, 2020.**

**GRADE APPEAL:** As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, 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.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or
guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at:

CLASSROOM / PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR: TAMU-CC, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

STATEMENT OF CIVILITY: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high-quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

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 20, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
January 21, Classes begin
February 27, the first test – 25%
March 09 – 13, Spring Break
April 01, the second test – 30%
April 10, F, last day to drop a class
May 06, W, last day of classes
May 08 – May 14, 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.

01/21 Classes begin: organization and general introduction
Readings: Rachels, chapter 1.

01/28 What is Morality? Principles of logical reasoning, basic ethical principles.

02/04 What is Morality? (continued)

02/11 Normative Systems (Morality, Law, Religion)

02/18 Normative Systems (conclusions)
Cultural Ethical Relativism. Readings: Chapter 2

02/25 Cultural Ethical Relativism (conclusions)

03/03 Test #1 (25%)
Ethical Egoism. Readings: Chapters 5

03/09-13 Spring break

03/16   Ethical Egoism (continued)

03/24   Debate about utilitarianism: Chapters 7-8

03/31   Debate about utilitarianism continued

04/07   **Test #2 (30%)**  
         Deontology and Kantian Ethics of Respect for persons, Chapters 9-10

04/14   Deontology continued

04/21   Legalization of recreational drugs, Rachels 7:4

04/28   Capital Punishment, Rachels, Chapter 10;  
         Justice Stevens, “On Death Sentence”  

05/05   Environmental Ethics and Animal Rights  
         Rachels, Chapter 7.4; Sencerz,  
         [http://philosophy.tamu.edu/extended_examples_nonhuman_animals](http://philosophy.tamu.edu/extended_examples_nonhuman_animals)  
         Peter Singer and Tom Regan, linked to this page

**THE FINAL TEST (DATE TBA)**