Introduction to Ethics  
(PHIL 223:001)

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SYLLABUS

I. **Texts**

James Rachels, *The Right Thing to Do* 5th Ed. (abr: Right Thing)  
* There are a couple of articles we will read that I will put on electronic reserve.

II. **Course Description**

This course focuses on moral theories and issues, drawing on ideas from a variety of disciplines. Our emphases are on moral reasoning and on moral issues.

III. **General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes**

Students will demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of texts dealing with various philosophical issues. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical and social contexts of philosophical movements. Students will demonstrate an ability to respond critically to works in philosophy. Students will have participated in assignments requiring them to formulate, express, and support their opinions on the philosophical issues covered in the course. Students will have acquired knowledge of the cross-cultural influence of philosophy.

IV. **Program Learning Outcomes**

Program Learning Outcomes: When presented with a specific example of a moral dilemma, a student will be able to identify and explain the moral course of action according to (a) utilitarian ethical principles and (b) deontological ethical principles.

V. **Exemplary Educational Objectives**

1. Awareness of the scope and variety of texts dealing with ethical issues.  
2. Understanding of the historical and social contexts of philosophical movements in ethics.  
3. Ability to respond critically to works in philosophy.
4. Ability to formulate, express, and support arguments on ethical issues.
5. Knowledge of the cross-cultural influence of philosophy.

VI. **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Act Ethics
   a. Students will acquire factual knowledge concerning several theories of act ethics.
   b. Students will acquire familiarity with critiques of these theories
   c. Students will acquire facility in the practical application of these theories
2. Students will recognize the importance of basic ethical principles and distinctions in their own lives and will analyze and evaluate the choices they make regarding ethical issues.

VII. **Acceptable Student Behavior**
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

VIII. **Attendance/Participation**
An important part of doing philosophy is participating in an exchange of ideas. Several things follow from this: (1) In order to participate in class discussion, **you must do the readings assigned** (you will find a tentative course calendar on the pages that follow)—your responsibility is to make sure you have already read the material we will discuss in class for each of our particular meetings. (2) In order to participate in class, you obviously have to be present in class. Thus, you will only be allowed two unexcused absences during the semester without having your grade affected. **Beginning with your third such absence, you will have four points taken away from your overall point total each time you are absent.** So please, don’t miss class!

IX. **Academic Integrity**
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.
Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

X. Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

XI. Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

XII. Grading Policy: Exams and Paper

Your course grade will be determined by how well you do on the following:

First Exam (30% of grade)
Mid-term (35% of grade)
Final (35% of grade)

*If at the end of the term your point total puts you on the borderline between two grades, your frequent class participation will give you the higher grade.
The questions on each exam will be some combination of multiple choice, matching, and true/false.

**XIII. Tentative Course Calendar**

Week 1: Aug. 30-Sept.3
- Aug. 30 Introduction to class
- Sept. 1 “What is Morality?” (Elements, pp. 1-13)

Week 2: Sept. 6-10 (**No Class on Sept. 6: Labor Day holiday**)
- Sept. 6 & 9 “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism” (Elements, pp. 14-31)

Week 3: Sept. 13-17
- Sept. 13 & 15 “Subjectivism in Ethics,” (Elements, pp. 32-47)

Week 4: Sept. 20-24
- Sept. 20 Leiser, “Is Homosexuality Unnatural?” (Right Thing, Reading #27)
- Sept. 24 Levin, “Why Homosexuality is Abnormal” (Reserve Material)

Week 5: Sept. 27-Oct. 1 (**First Exam is on Monday, Sept. 27th**)
- Sept. 27 First Exam
- Sept. 29 “Does Morality Depend on Religion?” (Elements, pp. 48-61)

Week 6: Oct. 4-8
- Oct. 8 Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral” (Right Thing, Reading #11)

Week 7: Oct. 11-15
- Oct. 11 & 13 Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion” (Right Thing, Reading #12)

Week 8: Oct. 18-22
- Oct. 18 & 20 “Ethical Egoism” (Elements, pp. 62-79)

Week 9: Oct. 25-29 (**Oct. 27th is last day to drop without WP/WF**)
- Oct. 25 “The Utilitarian Approach” (Elements, pp. 97-108)
- Oct. 27 “Are There Absolute Moral Rules?” (Elements, pp. 124-135)

Week 10: Nov. 1-5
- Nov. 1 Singer, “All Animals are Equal” (Right Thing, Reading #14)
- Nov. 3 Machan, “Do Animals Have Rights?” (Right Thing, Reading #16)

Week 11: Nov. 8-12 (**Mid-term Exam is on Monday, Nov. 8**)
- Nov. 8 Mid-term Exam
- Nov. 10 Rachels, “The Morality of Euthanasia” (Right Thing, Reading #34)
Week 12: Nov. 15-19
   Nov. 15 Doerflinger, “Assisted Suicide” (Right Thing, Reading #35)
   Nov. 17 Ridley, “The New Eugenics” (Right Thing, Reading #36)

Week 13: Nov. 22-23 (No class Nov. 24-26: Thanksgiving Holiday)
   Nov. 22 Open Day

Week 14: Nov. 29-Dec.3
   Nov. 29 & Dec. 1 “The Debate Over Utilitarianism” (Elements, pp. 109-123)

Week 15: Dec. 6-10
   A. Dec. 6 O’Neil, “A Simplified Account of Kant’s Ethics (Reserve Material)
   B. Dec. 8 Nozick, “The Experience Machine” (Right Thing, Reading #5)

Our University Scheduled Final Exam is Monday, Dec. 13, 2010 from 1pm-3pm