Class Time: TR 8:00 - 9:30 p.m.
Classroom: Paul L. Boynton Building 212 (BO 212)

Dr. Owen M. Smith
Professor of Philosophy and Classical Studies
OFFICE: Paul L. Boynton Building 208B (BO 208B)
OFFICE HOURS:
  MONDAY 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
  TUESDAY 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
  WEDNESDAY 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
  THURSDAY 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
  and by appointment
E-MAIL ADDRESS: omsmith@sfasu.edu
OFFICE PHONE: (936) 468-2367

Prerequisites for Course: None

Course Description:
Explanation of ethical theories regarding both what actions are right and wrong and what makes people of good and bad moral character; application of ethical theories to contemporary moral issues

Required Texts:
   ISBN-10: 0140067477

Course Requirements:
• Examination 1: 30% of final grade
• Examination 2: 30% of final grade
• Issue 1 Discussion: 10% of final grade
• Issue 2 Discussion: 10% of final grade
• Issue Preparation: 10% of final grade
• Feedback on Open Source Textbook: 10% of final grade
General Education Core Curriculum:
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives. By enrolling in Introduction to Ethics, you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Personal Responsibility requirement.

Program Learning Outcomes:
This is a general education core curriculum course and no unique program learning outcomes for the philosophy major are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes:
1. Students will gain a more detailed understanding of basic ethical distinctions and terminology.
2. Students will gain a more detailed understanding of basic ethical principles and theories through the application of these principles and theories to contemporary moral problems.
3. Students will recognize the importance of basic ethical distinctions and principles in their own lives and will more effectively analyze and evaluate the choices they make regarding ethical issues.

Course Credit Justification:
Typically meets three times each week (Monday/Wednesday/Friday) in 50-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Students have significant weekly reading assignments, and typically complete two exams, a final exam, an ethical theory essay and discussion work. These activities average a minimum of 6 hours of work per week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

Course Policies:
1. Class Attendance and Conduct
   a. Since in-class exercises and discussions of course material are an essential part of the course work, each student is required to attend every class session. Students are required to be punctual in their attendance and to remain in class until the end of each class session, with the exception of breaks announced by the instructor. Behavior that is disrespectful to the instructor or to other students is not acceptable during class.
   b. 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 (cf. 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 Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities through the Early Alert System. This system provides students with access to resources or other assistance designed to help SFA students succeed.
   c. Attendance will be taken each class session either orally or in the form of an attendance sheet to be signed by each student. Each student is responsible for making sure that his/her attendance has been recorded for each class session. Attendance at a class session may be recorded only during that session.
   d. Students are not permitted to use cell phones or other electronic devices such as laptop computers during class or to have cellphones on their desks or laps during class sessions; during all class sessions, including examinations, these devices must be turned off and placed out of sight. The instructor may also require students to remove their personal possessions, such as backpacks, from their desktops during class. A penalty of one (1) partial absence will be assessed for each violation of this policy.
e. Excessive absences will result in a failing course grade. Students who arrive late to class or leave class early are assigned partial absences; for every two (2) partial absences, one (1) full absence will be assessed against a student’s attendance record. Any student who accumulates more than SIX (6) absences during the semester is subject to variety of penalties, up to and including receiving a final course grade of “F.” Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance record and recognizing when their final course grade is endangered by excessive absences. Students who miss class sessions owing to late registration will not be charged with these absences provided that they meet with the instructor in the first two weeks of the semester to discuss the syllabus and review missed material.

f. Students are responsible for all material addressed and all exercises performed in class regardless of their attendance record. Students who miss class are encouraged to obtain notes from a classmate and review these notes with the instructor.

2. Contact Information
   a. The instructor is available to meet with students in his office (BO 208B). Students who wish to meet with the instructor in his office during regularly scheduled office hours do not need to make an appointment; the instructor will meet with students on a first come, first served basis. Students who wish to meet with the instructor in his office outside of regularly scheduled office hours must make an appointment with the instructor ahead of time.
   b. Students can also contact the instructor by email either through the Desire2Learn (D2L) website or by using the instructor’s university email address (omsmith@sfasu.edu).
   c. Students can also reach the instructor through his university telephone number (936-468-2367); if the instructor is not available, please leave a message and he will return your call.
   d. Students can ask questions concerning course material or course requirements by making use of the Pager function of the Desire2Learn (D2L) website or by making a post to the Open Question Forum discussion available on the Desire2Learn (D2L) website for the course.

3. Examinations
   a. The instructor will provide fair notice of each examination and will clearly identify the material for which students will be responsible. It is the instructor's custom to schedule extra office hours prior to each examination and to hand out a study guide containing sample problems and exercises.
   b. Students are required to follow all directions provided on the examinations. Failure by a student to follow directions on an examination may result in penalties being assessed against that student’s examination grade. Partial credit will be awarded on the examinations. Students should attempt to respond to every problem and essay topic on the examinations; even if students do not finish a response, they will earn points for work shown.
   c. Any student who anticipates missing an examination is required to make every reasonable effort to notify the instructor prior to the examination. Following a missed examination, a student is required to contact the instructor in writing prior to the next class session, circumstances permitting, to request a make-up examination. The instructor may refuse to administer make-up examinations to students who, in his judgment, have not met these requirements. Under ordinary circumstances, the instructor does not administer make-up examinations once the original examination has been graded and returned to the class.
   d. A student who wishes to take a make-up examination must submit a written request to the instructor identifying the course in which the student is enrolled, the number and date of the missed examination, and the reason for missing the examination. This document must be submitted to the instructor at the time of the make-up examination; make-up examinations will not be administered to students who have not submitted a written request.
   e. The instructor will administer make-up examinations without penalty only to those students who could not take an examination at the designated time owing to serious illness or another similarly compelling reason. Any student who wishes to take a make-up examination without a grade penalty must attach to his/her written request some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing the original examination. The instructor may, at his discretion, administer a make-up examination with a substantial grade penalty to students who fail to take an examination at the designated time without an acceptable excuse.
   f. The format, time, and circumstances of make-up examinations are at the discretion of the instructor.
   g. The second examination will be administered during the final examination period. Students who have multiple examinations on the same day during the final examination period and wish to reschedule the final examination in this course are required to consult the instructor before the beginning of the final examination period. In no case will the instructor administer the second examination prior to the end of classes.
4. Issue Discussions
   a. During the course of the semester, students will be required to participate in issue discussions to explore the course material in greater detail. The instructor will post a Discussion Instructions document on the Desire2Learn (D2L) site for the course; this document will govern the issue discussions. Unit discussions will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course.
   b. Each issue discussion will have its own assignment sheet. Student participation in issue discussions will be graded on a ten (10) point scale. Students will be graded on the clarity, thoughtfulness, and collegiality of their discussion posts as well as on the number of their discussion posts. In general, however, each student must post a minimum of four substantial (reflective) on-topic posts, including at least three that respond directly to posts made by classmates.
   c. Students may increase their score on online exercises by posting more frequently, more thoughtfully, and more collegially (i.e., demonstrating a consideration for the ideas of classmates in constructing a position).
   d. Permissible responses include agreements and disagreements with classmates’ posts, provided that the responses include the reasoning behind these agreements and disagreements, elaboration of one’s own ideas or ideas presented by others, and posts that include properly credited ideas drawn from a variety of sources, including life experiences, material learned in other courses, and concepts encountered outside of class while reading or viewing a variety of media.
   e. Impermissible responses include simple agreements or disagreements with classmates’ posts without justification or expansion, irrelevant responses, responses that attack or mock classmates, and responses that contain expletives or other offensive language.
   f. Because student contributions to group discussions must be made in a timely manner, no extensions will be granted by the instructor regarding participation in a group discussion.

5. Issue Preparation
   a. During the course of the semester, students will be divided into small groups, and each group will be required to prepare an issue discussion that will explore the course material in greater detail. The instructor will post a document on the Desire2Learn (D2L) site for the course; this document will provide the parameters of the assignment, including the due dates associated with the assignment.
   b. The basic elements of the assignment, which are patterned after the issue discussions used in class, include the selection of a topic, identification of suitable source material, a set of learning outcomes, an issue summary that makes reference to the theoretical material presented in class, a set of critical thinking and reflection questions, a summary of the points of agreement between the positions presented in the source material, and a set of online resources for further investigation.
   c. The material developed by students must be suitable for inclusion in an open source textbook for the class. This requirement will entail restriction on the types of resources students may include in their submissions. All material drawn from external sources must be properly credited.
   d. Each proposed issue will be graded on a ten (10) point scale.

6. Feedback on Open Source Textbook
   a. During the course of the semester, each student must provide at least four (4) specific suggestions for modification of the open source textbook used during the course. Modifications may include inclusion of additional preliminary questions, clarification of the explanatory text, development of the thought experiments included in the textbook, and formulation of additional critical thinking and reflection questions.
   b. The instructor will post a document on the Desire2Learn (D2L) site for the course; this document will provide the parameters of the assignment, including the due dates associated with the assignment, as well as a form that students may use to submit their suggestions.
   c. Students will submit their suggestions to a dropbox on the Desire2Learn (D2L) site for the course; this dropbox will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course.
   d. Each suggestion will be worth a maximum of 2.5 points toward a student’s final course grade.
7. **Academic Integrity**
   a. 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.
   b. **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 one’s 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. Students may access the complete policy concerning academic integrity at <http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf>.
   c. Students are required to be familiar with all items they submit in fulfillment of course requirements. If in the instructor’s opinion, a student does not demonstrate sufficient familiarity with any such item, the instructor may reject the item and assign the student a score of zero (0.0) for that item.
   d. Students in this course are required to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. If the instructor makes a finding that a student has committed an act of cheating or plagiarism in this course, that student is subject to receiving a final course grade of “F.” Moreover, a formal Report of Academic Dishonesty will be submitted to the student’s personal file with the relevant academic dean. The student appeal process regarding final course grades, including grades affected by violations of the university’s academic integrity policy, may be found at <http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/final-course-grade-appeals-by-students-6.3.pdf>.

8. **Midterm Grade:** In accordance with university policy, students will be assigned a midterm grade in this course. This grade will be based upon all course requirements completed prior to midterm. A student’s midterm grade is no guarantee of the student’s final course grade. A student with a passing midterm grade may still fail the course; a student with a failing midterm grade may still pass the course.

9. **Accommodations:** 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/>.

10. **Withheld Grades:** 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.
Tentative Course Schedule:

Unit One: Foundations (August 26 - September 13)
• Moral Terms and Moral Judgments
• The Divisions of Ethics
• Moral Reasoning
• Moral Judgments vs. Legal Judgments
• Strong Moral Judgments vs. Weak Moral Judgments
• Forms of Ethical Relativism: Cultural Ethical Relativism, Individual Ethical Relativism, and Ontological Relativism

• FIRST SUBMISSION OF FEEDBACK ON THE OPEN SOURCE TEXTBOOK

Unit Two: Deontology (September 16 – October 11)
• Meaning of Moral Terms: Kant's Three Propositions of Morality
• Procedure for Making Moral Judgments, Part I: Kant's Categorical Imperative
• Procedure for Making Moral Judgments, Part II: The Principle of Voluntary Informed Consent
• DISCUSSION ISSUE: TORTURE
• SECOND SUBMISSION OF FEEDBACK ON THE OPEN SOURCE TEXTBOOK
• FIRST EXAMINATION

Unit Three: Utilitarianism (October 14 – November 08)
• Meaning of Moral Terms: Bentham's consequentialist hedonism and Mill's revisionist hedonism
• Procedure for Making Moral Judgments: The Utilitarian Happiness Calculus
• Evolution of Utilitarian Ethics
• DISCUSSION ISSUE: VEGETARIANISM (USE OF ANIMAL PRODUCTS)
• THIRD SUBMISSION OF FEEDBACK ON THE OPEN SOURCE TEXTBOOK

Unit Four: Virtue Ethics and Taoism (November 11 – December 06)
• Taoist Philosophical Principles: The Bipolarity of Nature, Tao, and Te
• Central Taoist Ethical Principles (Hoff, The Tao of Pooh)
• Taoist Rules of Conduct (Tao Te Ching)
• Interpretation of Taoist Stories
• FOURTH SUBMISSION OF FEEDBACK ON THE OPEN SOURCE TEXTBOOK
• SUBMISSION OF ISSUE PREPARATION
• SECOND EXAMINATION: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 8:00 – 10:30 A.M.