INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS
PHI 223.600
Spring 2020

Class Time:  MWF 11:00 - 11:50 a.m.
NOTE:  THIS CLASS WILL BE TAUGHT AS A HYBRID CLASS.  WE WILL MEET ONCE PER WEEK ON WEDNESDAYS FOR REVIEW OF COURSE MATERIAL.  ALL OTHER WORK WILL BE DONE ONLINE.

Classroom:  Paul L. Boynton Building 210 (BO 210)

Dr. Owen M. Smith
Professor of Philosophy and Classical Studies

OFFICE:  Paul L. Boynton Building 208B (BO 208B)
OFFICE HOURS:
  MONDAY  2:30 – 5:00 p.m.
  TUESDAY  9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
  WEDNESDAY  9:00 – 10:30 a.m.
  THURSDAY  9:30 – 11:30 a.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:
This course will be taught using Open Source materials, which will be provided to students free of cost on the Brightspace (D2L) site for the course.

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
•Agent Ethics Discussions:  10% of final grade
•Cultural Reflections:  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.

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 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 the single class session every week. 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 iCare Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.
   c. Attendance will be taken each class session either verbally or in the form of an attendance sheet to be signed by each student. Students are responsible for making sure that their 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 three (3) absences during the semester is subject to 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 Brightspace (D2L) website for the course 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 Brightspace (D2L) website for the course or by making a post to the Open Question Forum discussion available on this site.

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.
   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.
   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. Students who wish to take a make-up examination without a grade penalty must attach to their 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 and Agent Ethics Discussions

a. During the course of the semester, students will be required to participate in discussions to explore the course material in greater detail. The instructor will post a Discussion Instructions document on the Brightspace (D2L) site for the course; this document will govern the issue discussions. Unit discussions will be available through the Course Tools menu on the Brightspace website for the course.

b. Each discussion will have its own assignment sheet. Student participation in online 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. Cultural Reflections

a. Every student is required to attend at least two (2) cultural events on campus and submit a cultural reflection form to the instructor providing information about each event and relating each event to topics addressed in class during the course of the semester. The instructor will make periodic announcements of eligible cultural events, which may include talks by guest speakers, dramatic productions, films, panel presentations, and symposia. Students are also encouraged to notify the instructor of eligible events so that he can inform the remainder of the class. For an event to be eligible for a cultural reflection, the instructor must approve the event prior to the submission of any cultural reflection forms.

b. The cultural reflection form will be posted by the instructor on the Brightspace (D2L) site for the course and must be submitted to an online dropbox provided by the instructor for this purpose.
c. The first cultural reflection form is due by Friday, March 06, 2020; the second cultural reflection form is due by Friday, April 24, 2020. Each cultural reflection is worth 5% of a student's final course grade.

6. 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. Please read the complete policy at <http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp>.
   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 appropriate academic dean.

7. 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/>.

8. 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 (January 15 – February 07)
• 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

Unit Two: Deontology (February 10 – March 06)
• 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
• ISSUE DISCUSSION: CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEM 1
• FIRST EXAMINATION - ONLINE

Unit Three: Utilitarianism (March 16 – April 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
• ISSUE DISCUSSION: CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEM 2

Unit Four: Virtue Ethics and Taoism (April 13 – May 01)
• Fundamental Taoist Philosophical Principles: The Bipolarity of Nature, Tao, and Te
• Key Agent Ethical Guidelines: Doctrine of the Mean; Role of Habit; Practical Reasonableness
• Interpretation of Taoist Stories
• AGENT ETHICS DISCUSSIONS
• SECOND EXAMINATION: ONLINE