Ethical Theory
(Philosophy 3323:600)

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Fall 2021
12:30-1:45pm TR
Office Hrs: MWF: 11am-12pm via the D2L Pager function & TR: 2-3pm via Zoom or by appointment.

*Live Zoom meetings will be held every other Thursday from 12:30-1:45pm. Notes that I provide and online discussions on D2L will otherwise guide the general study of the material.

SYLLABUS

I. Texts: 3 total*


* There is also a piece we will read that I will provide electronically.

II. Introduction

Welcome to Philosophy 323, Ethical Theory. Philosophy is the activity of finding reasonable beliefs. Ethics, as a branch of philosophy, is the activity of finding reasonable beliefs regarding both the rightness and wrongness of actions and what makes persons morally good and bad. Ethical theory, then, is the attempt to provide a rational framework that both explains the nature of what is good and bad, right and wrong, and also provides a means to negotiate moral conflict. Our class will investigate some of the major ethical theories that have been proposed, both in their classical formulations and in their more recent developments.

Please Note: SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students'
mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**
SFASU Counseling Services  
[www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices)  
3rd Floor Rusk Building  
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic  
[www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)  
Human Services Room 202  
936-468-1041

**Crisis Resources:**
Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343  
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)  
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

### 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.

**A. How the Core Objectives Will Be Addressed**

The Core Objectives will be assessed in an assigned paper.

### IV. Program Learning Outcomes

The student should be able to analyze an ethical theory assigned by the instructor, identifying its fundamental principles and explaining how they should be applied to obtain a recommended course of action.

### 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. Arguments for: moral considerability, differing kinds of value, and decision procedures.
   a. Students will acquire knowledge of theories regarding moral considerability, differing kinds of value and how ethicists otherwise go about problem-solving moral conflicts.
   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. **Credit Hour Justification**

Typically meets twice each week (Tuesday/Thursday) in 75-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Students have significant weekly reading assignments and typically compose three 5-6 page essays. These activities average a minimum of 6 hours of work per week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

VIII. **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.

IX. **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!

**X. Academic Integrity**

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**

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)

**XI. 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.

**XII. 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/).
XIII. Grading Policy: Papers

There will be 3 essays (5-6 pages in length and each worth 1/3 of your grade). Your papers are to be word processed with citations. With respect to the first two papers, everyone will write on the same topics; the third and final paper is a research paper to be done on an agreed upon topic. Regarding the first two papers, I will assign each paper at least two weeks before the paper is due. You may always do drafts for me to look over. However, for the first paper, everyone will do a draft, so that we may fulfill the writing enhanced requirements for the course. Any drafts will tentatively be due a week after the day I assign it (again, drafts of the last two papers are voluntary). Note that you are always to proofread your papers carefully before submitting them, even when submitting a draft. Indeed, I encourage you to consult the University’s Writing Lab via the AARC for help regarding issues of grammar and style.

*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.

XIV. Tentative Course Calendar

Week 1: August 23-27

Week 2: Aug. 30-Sept. 3
   A. Timmons: pp. 7-21, “An Introduction to Moral Theory”

Week 3: Sept. 6-10
   A. Kant: pp. 1-17
   B. Kant: pp. 19-37

Week 4: Sept. 13-17
   A. Kant: pp. 38-48
   B. Timmons: pp. 205-218, “Kant’s Moral Theory”

Week 5: Sept. 20-24 (First Paper Assigned on the 23rd)
   A. Timmons: pp. 218-232, “Kant’s Moral Theory”
   B. Timmons: pp. 232-240

Week 6: Sept. 27-October 1 (First Draft Due September 30th)
   A. Mill: Chapter I
   B. Mill: Chapter II

Week 7: Oct. 4-8 (First Paper Due on the 7th)
   A. Mill: Chapters III & IV
   B. Mill: Chapter V
Week 8: Oct. 11-15
   A. Timmons: pp. 111-126, Consequentialism I: “Classical Utilitarianism”
   B. Timmons: pp. 126-140, Consequentialism I: “Classical Utilitarianism”

Week 9: Oct. 18-22 (Last day to drop without WP/WF)
   A. Timmons: pp. 143-157, Consequentialism II: “Contemporary Developments”
   B. Timmons: pp. 157-172, Consequentialism II: “Contemporary Developments”

Week 10: Oct. 25-Oct. 29 (Second Paper Assigned on the 28th)

Week 11: Nov. 1-5
   A. Timmons: pp. 269-281, “Virtue Ethics”

Week 12: Nov. 8-12 (Second Paper Due on the 11th)
   A. Timmons: pp. 245-255, “Moral Pluralism”
   B. Timmons: pp. 256-265, “Moral Pluralism”

Week 13: Nov. 15- Nov. 19 (Third Paper Discussed)
   A. Timmons: pp. 245-255, “Moral Particularism”

Week 14: Nov. 22-26 Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: Nov. 29-Dec.3
   B. Timmons: pp. 30-37, “Divine Command Theory”

Your third paper is to be handed in during our university-scheduled final exam meeting time on Thursday, December 9th.