INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS
PHIL 2306.640
Fall 2023

Class Time:  TBA
Classroom:  NONE

This course is designated as a hybrid course, which means that I will be employing two major modes of instruction. The primary method for providing instructional content will be a set of written course lectures that will be available through the Brightspace/D2L site for the course; to assist you in understanding the material, the secondary method is a Zoom meeting once per week to review the course lectures assigned for that week. I have sent each student an online poll regarding possible times for our Zoom meetings. Once this poll is complete, I will notify everyone of the scheduled time of our Zoom meetings.

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    TBA
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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:
NONE - The course is designed to make use of open source material composed by the instructor for use in this class. The instructor will also supply assigned readings for the two issue discussions in this course.

Course Requirements:
• Unit Quizzes – Six unit quizzes (one quiz per unit) totaling 60% of final course grade
• Issue Discussions – Two issue discussions totaling 30% of final course grade
• Dropbox Paper – 10% of final course grade
**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.

**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.

**Course Contact Hours Justification**
Introduction to Ethics (PHIL 2306) is a three-credit (= 3 semester hour) course. This course is being taught in a hybrid format with at least one class session of 50 minutes each week for 15 weeks. Each week, students are also required to complete significant weekly mandatory assigned readings in lieu of additional class attendance. Over the course of the semester, students are required to complete 6 one-hour unit quizzes as well as two online course discussions and a written dropbox essay assignment. These activities average (at a minimum) 6 hours of work each week to prepare outside of the classroom class sessions and the time devoted to mandatory reading assignments.

**General Education Core Curriculum**
Introduction to Ethics (PHIL 2306) is part of the university's Core Curriculum. As such, the work assigned in this course recognizes the general goals of the core and the specific objectives attached to those classes designated for inclusion in the Language, Philosophy, and Culture Foundational Component Area as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. 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 PHIL 23061, you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Personal Responsibility requirement. The chart below indicates: (a) the core objective(s) required to be taught in this course per the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and (b) how the required core objectives will be addressed.
Course Policies:

1. Class Attendance and Conduct
   a. Since this class has been designated as a hybrid course, there will be no required class sessions. There will be weekly Zoom sessions to review the written course lectures that have been posted on the Brightspace/D2L site for the course and address student questions and concerns. Students who are unable to attend these Zoom sessions are strongly encouraged to meet with the instructor regularly during office hours to complete these tasks.
   b. Classroom behavior during the Zoom sessions should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be excluded from the Zoom sessions and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate during the Zoom sessions. Students who do not attend Zoom sessions regularly or who perform poorly on unit quizzes may be referred to a student assistance program that provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

2. Contact Information
   a. The instructor is available to meet with students in his office (LA410B). 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. During office hours, students may also contact the instructor remotely by making use of the Pager function of the Brightspace (D2L) website for the course.
b. The instructor will also hold regularly scheduled office hours online via the Zoom application. Information concerning online office hours, including the specific invitation information for the Zoom sessions, will be available on the Brightspace/D2L site for the course.

c. 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).

d. 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.

e. Students are encouraged to ask questions of general student interest by making a post to the Open Question Forum discussion available on Brightspace/D2L site for the course.

3. Unit Quizzes
a. Following each unit of the course, students will be required to take an online quiz emphasizing complex, higher-order thinking skills to demonstrate understanding of the material contained in the textbook readings, supplemental readings, and course lectures.

b. Owing to differences in the length of each unit, the precise point value of the unit quizzes will vary. Altogether, however, these quizzes will be worth 60% of a student’s final course grade (10% per unit quiz).

c. The unit quizzes will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course. Students may attempt each unit quiz a maximum of two (2) times. A student’s grade on this quiz will the the higher of the two scores earned on these attempts.

d. At his discretion, the instructor may grant an extension to a student who cannot take a unit quiz during the designated period owing to technical (internet) limitations, serious illness or another similarly compelling reason. Any student who wishes an extension on a unit quiz must submit a written request to the instructor and provide some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing the deadline for the quiz.

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

b. Each issue discussion will have its own assignment sheet. Student participation in issue discussions will be graded on a fifteen (15) 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. Dropbox Paper

a. Following the final unit of the course, students will be required to submit a short paper containing their responses to three specific essay topics. Two of the essays will address moral dilemmas, presenting the resolution of a dilemma from a specific theoretical perspective and justifying that resolution. The third essay will involve the interpretation of a classic didactic story from the perspective of Taoist virtue ethics. NONE OF THE ESSAYS IS A RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT.

b. At the appropriate time, the instructor will provide each students with an assignment sheet for this paper. The paper will be submitted to a dedicated dropbox on the Brightspace/D2L site for the course and will be worth 10% of a student’s final course grade.

c. At his discretion, the instructor may grant an extension to a student who cannot complete the dropbox paper during the designated period owing to technical (internet) limitations, serious illness or another similarly compelling reason. Any student who wishes an extension on a dropbox essay must submit a written request to the instructor and provide some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing the deadline for the assignment.
6. **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/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

7. Academic Integrity
   a. **The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity** ([https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/policies/10.4.pdf](https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/policies/10.4.pdf)) outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.
   
   b. Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation.
   
   c. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.
   
   d. Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.
   
   e. Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.
f. Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

8. Grades
a. The course grade for each student will be determined by the instructor. In case of a borderline grade, the student will receive the lower grade. The standard scale used in grading will be as follows: 90.0 and above - A; 80.0 to 89.9 - B; 70.0 to 79.9 - C; 60.0 to 69.9 - D; 59.9 and below - F.

b. As course requirements are graded, the instructor will publish student grades to the D2L site for the course; if a grade has not been published on the D2L site for the course, the grade is not yet available. The instructor does not generally respond to requests to specify the date by which a particular course requirement will be graded, to provide unpublished grades to students, or compute current course averages for students.

c. 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.

d. 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 to compurw the grade point average.
Tentative Course Schedule:

Orientation (August 28 - September 01)

Unit One: Foundations (August 31 - September 08)
  1.1 Ethics as a Philosophical Discipline
  1.2 Moral Terms and Moral Judgments
  1.3 The Divisions of Ethics
  1.4 Moral Reasoning and Moral Conflicts
  1.5 The Distinction between Moral Judgments vs. Legal Judgments
  1.6 Two Types of Moral Judgments
  1.7 Ethics and Religion
  Unit One Quiz

Unit Two: Two Metaethical Stances (September 11 - September 22)
  2.1 Two Metaethical Stances: Introduction
  2.2 Moral Realism (Moral Absolutism)
  2.3 Moral Relativism
  Unit Two Quiz

Unit Three: Relativistic Normative Ethical Theories (September 25 - October 11)
  3.1 Relativistic Normative Ethical Theories: Introduction
  3.2 Cultural Ethical Relativism (CER)
  3.3 Individual Ethical Relativism (IER)
  3.4 Ontological Relativism (OR)
  Unit Three Quiz

Unit Four: Deontology (October 11 - November 01)
  4.1 Introduction to Deontology
  4.2 Meaning of Moral Terms: Kant's Three Propositions of Morality
  4.3 The Procedure for Making Moral Judgments, Part I: Kant's Categorical Imperative
  4.4 Procedure for Making Moral Judgments, Part II: The Principle of Voluntary Informed Consent
  Unit Four Quiz

Issue Discussion 1: TORTURE

Unit Five: Utilitarian Ethics (November 01 - November 17)
  5.1 Introduction to Utilitarianism
  5.2 The Utilitarian Ethical Theory of Jeremy Bentham
  5.3 The Revision of Utilitarian Hedonism by John Stuart Mill
  5.4 The Development of Utilitarian Ethics
  Unit Five Quiz

Issue Discussion 2: VEGETARIANISM (USE OF ANIMAL PRODUCTS)
Unit Six: Virtue Ethics and Daoism (November 27 - December 08)
   6.1 Daoism: Foundations
   6.2 Daoist Philosophical Principles: The Bipolarity of Nature, Dao, and De
   6.3 Central Taoist Ethical Principles
   Unit Six Quiz
   Dropbox Paper

THERE IS NO FINAL EXAMINATION IN THIS COURSE.

THE ISSUE 2 DISCUSSION, THE UNIT 6 QUIZ, AND THE DROPBOX PAPER WILL EXTEND INTO THE FINAL WEEK OF CLASSES (DEAD WEEK) AND EXAM WEEK

Mental Health and Fitness
1. 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.

2. On-campus Resources:
   a. SFASU Counseling Services
      www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
      Health and Wellness Hub (corner of E. College and Raguet)
      936-468-2401

   b. SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
      www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
      Human Services Room 202
      936-468-1041

3. Crisis Resources:
   a. Burke 24-hour Crisis Line: 1(800) 392-8343

   b. National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8

   c. Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)

   d. Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741