



PHIL 360: General Ethics COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer 2019

Instructor: Mr. James Berquist (Ph.D. Candidate)

Office Location: Online (On eCollege)

University Email Address: James.Berquist@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: You will receive a response within 24 hrs, except perhaps on weekends and holidays.

COURSE INFORMATION

Required texts:

All texts provided in PDF format online and/or by email.

Course Description:

Ethics is the study of *correct* or *right* human action, and the *principles* thereof in particular. In this course we will be considering the basic and most influential theories of correct human action that have been proposed over the centuries with special emphasis on the foundations for those theories. The goal is twofold. First, we seek to understand the key theories that have been proposed and what they are based upon (hence, indirectly, also what *all* moral theories are based upon). Secondly, we seek to be able to bring that knowledge to bear on our lives, and see the objective character of morality.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Over the course of our study, the student will learn:

1. the key moral/ethical theories that have been argued for over the centuries.
2. the central reasoning *behind* those theories (i.e. what are the principles of moral reasoning).
3. the natural implications implicit in moral theories.
4. the history of the grand *debate* concerning moral/ethical action.
5. how to apply his/her newfound knowledge to present day moral issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Lectures: I send out a lecture weekly (it will be a long-ish lecture, since we are trying to pack in a good amount of material in a short amount of time).

Exam: There will be an exam at the end of the course.

Response papers: In addition, you'll turn in two written responses (each one 300-400 words) to some of the reading assignments. These responses are not designed to test how well you've read the assigned material. Rather, they serve as opportunities for you to comment on one or two points in the reading, connecting those points to other reading and/or experiences. Each response paper will be evaluated according to the level of detail in your insightful commentary and sensible connections to other reading and/or experiences or observations. Specific assignments are forthcoming in eCollege. These response papers are your main outlet for *doing* philosophy.

Quizzes: You'll take 4 quizzes to test your comprehension of some of the reading. These timed, open-book quizzes will have objective questions. The point will be completely geared towards *reading* comprehension, and *attendance* to the weekly lecture.

Discussion Posts: Several weeks will include discussion posts. Your posts will be ungraded but will serve as a space for you to show that you are grasping the significant points of the readings.

GRADING

Grade scale:

A = 90%-100% (90-100 pts)

B = 80%-89% (80-89 pts)

C = 70%-79% (70-79 pts)

D = 60%-69% (60-69 pts)

F = 59% or Below (59 pts or less)

Assignment percentages:

(30%) EXAMS: (1x20 pts) 20 pts

(30%) RESPONSE PAPERS: (2x20 pts) 40 pts

(40%) QUIZZES: (4x10 pts) 40 pts

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance, defined as regularly logging into D2L and participating, is important for several reasons, but it is especially important for you to keep up with the assignments in this class. The tentative calendar below offers only the most general description of activities; more detail will be provided in class as the semester goes on. If you discover you must miss a deadline for an exam or the response paper, you must contact me before the deadline in time to make satisfactory arrangements for submitting the assignment. As per university policy, excessive absences (three weeks' worth) could result in you being dropped from the course.

PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC DISHONESTY STATEMENT

Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]). Plagiarism on one essay in this course will result in a 0 for that assignment, and thus to loss of at least 15 percent of one's grade.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Note: **Subject to Change**

Week #	Reading Assignments	Written Assignments
Wk. 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Plato's <i>Gorgias</i>2. Epicurus' <i>Letter to Menoeceus</i> and <i>Leading Doctrines</i> <p>Question: Is pleasure the greatest good? Why or why not?</p>	Quiz 1
Wk. 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. J.S. Mill's <i>Utilitarianism</i>2. Immanuel Kant's <i>Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals</i> <p>Question: Is there anything essential these philosophers agree on? If so, what?</p>	Quiz 2 RP 1

Wk. 3	1. Aristotle's <i>Ethics</i> (Book I) 2. Aristotle's <i>Ethics</i> (Books V, VIII, and X - selections) Question: Why is it that the <u>just</u> man loves himself more than the selfish man loves himself?	Quiz 3
Wk. 4	1. Aquinas' <i>Treatise on Law</i> : Q. 90 2. Aquinas' <i>Treatise on Law</i> : Q. 94, A. 2 RP 2: Why is it that 'selfish' ethics <i>and</i> 'altruistic' ethics both fail?	Quiz 4 RP 2
Wk. 5	Review, and Exam	Final Exam

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library
Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.