

Phil360.1HE—Honors General Ethics Fall 2024

Dr. Bill Bolin

Office & Hours: Talbot Hall 324, MTW 3:30p—5:00p and by appt.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will allow you opportunities to address two important questions:

- (1) How ought one to live? While we won't come up with definitive answers to this question, we will read a number of philosophers to see how they justified their different approaches to it, and we will evaluate their reasoning. Along the way we will learn about four major schools of ethics: virtue ethics, deontology, utilitarianism, and care ethics.
- (2) How ought one to write? I do have definitive answers to this one, and I will share those with you repeatedly throughout the semester.

Assignments include four research-based assignments, a few quizzes over the reading, and several short (1-2 pages each) written responses to the reading. You will submit one of your research-based papers to an undergraduate journal for possible publication. This submission will serve as your transformative project as it will allow you to participate in the wider conversation of that transformative idea of how one ought to live.

The following two books are required:

- Schur, Michael. *How to Be Perfect: The Correct Answer to Every Moral Question*. New York: Simon&Schuster, 2022. Paperback: ISBN13: 9781982159320. eBook: ISBN13: 9781982159337
- Gawande, Atul. *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters at the End*. New York: Picador, 2014. Paperback ISBN 978-1250076229. eBook ISBN 9781627790550

Other reading, provided for free in digital format, will include:

- Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*
- Immanuel Kant's *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
- John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism*
- Virginia Held's *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global*

And, of course, any writer ought to have access to a thesaurus, a dictionary, and a [style guide](#).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will write short response papers and longer research-based papers that demonstrate an understanding of established approaches to defining and understanding ethics.
- Students will write four research projects that demonstrate understanding of the main schools of thought in ethics and their application.
- Students will engage with multiple perspectives in exploring the human dimensions of real-world situations and problems.
- Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances, data, texts, or art.

- In written, oral, and/or visual communication, A&M-Commerce students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with an evident message and organizational structure.
- Students will understand and practice academic honesty.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To acquire an overview of the various approaches to understanding ethics in the discipline of philosophy.
- to acquire an overview of the various cultural and social influences on thinking about ethical behavior.
- to formulate articulate responses to the reading assignments and ensuing discussions.

ASSIGNMENTS

Annotated Bibliography: You'll write one annotated bibliography as an exercise in gathering and evaluating peer-reviewed sources that you might use to support an argument and its counter-argument. The annotated bibliography will be evaluated according to criteria outlined on each assignment sheet.

Papers: You'll write three papers of 4-6 pages each (typed, double-spaced) based on assigned reading and other sources. All of these papers will require research beyond the assigned reading and the proper attribution of external sources. Each of these papers will be evaluated according to criteria outlined on each assignment sheet.

Written Responses: In addition, you'll turn in seven responses (300-400 words each) to some of the reading assignments. These responses are not designed to test how well you've read the assigned material. Rather, some will serve as opportunities for you to comment on one or two points in the reading, connecting those points to other reading and/or experiences. Others will serve as opportunities for you to evaluate sources for your longer papers. Each response paper will be evaluated according to criteria outlined on each assignment sheet.

Quizzes: You'll take five short-answer quizzes to test your comprehension of some of the reading. These quizzes, when they arise, will be given at the beginning of the class session and cannot easily be made up. Be attentive to their deadlines when they are announced.

Extra Credit: There will one extra credit opportunity, likely an eighth response paper.

Reflective Writing: Finally, you will do a number of reflective writings. I may read some of these, but they are not for me to evaluate. They serve to raise your consciousness about some of your own strengths and weaknesses as a thinker and a writer. You'll have a chance to share these with the rest of us periodically.

As a rule I do not accept late assignments, so please be attentive to deadlines. If you must miss an upcoming deadline, you will need to contact me to make *prior satisfactory* arrangements for submitting the assignment. Failure to make prior satisfactory arrangements will result in your forfeiting the right to turn in that assignment. An extra credit assignment to be named later will be an opportunity to restore points from a missed assignment or simply to add points to the total grade.

EVALUATION

Papers will be evaluated and returned with a grade. At the end of the semester, you may submit revisions of the first two papers for a possible increase of up to one letter grade for each revised paper. Written responses will be evaluated and returned with a grade, but they may not be revised for increased credit. Quizzes will have a set number of questions, with each answer counting a set number of points.

Assignment Values	Final Grade Ranges
Annotated Bib and Papers 80 pts (4 @ 20 pts. each)	A=180--200
Written Responses 70 pts. (7 @ 10 pts. each)	B=160--179
Quizzes 50 pts. (5 @ 10 pts. each)	C=140--159
Extra Credit 10 pts.	D=120--139
	F=0--119

I use the following as a guide in grading papers and written responses:

- A (18,19 or 20; 9,10) = outstanding
- B (16,17; 8) = impressive
- C (14,15; 7) = pretty good
- D (12,13; 6) = passing
- F (10; 5) = failing
- 0 = no credit with no option to revise

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance 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 are absent the day an assignment is due, you must contact me and make satisfactory arrangements for turning in the assignment. In most cases, such arrangements will require uploading or emailing to me the assignment by the deadline. Failure to make *prior satisfactory* arrangements will result in your forfeiting the right to turn in that assignment. As per university policy, excessive absences (three weeks' worth) may result in your 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]).

AI use in course [Draft 2, May 25, 2023] Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments

or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

Plagiarism on one assignment in this course will result in a failing grade for the course.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR

All texts listed below, excluding the Schur and Gawande books, are available for download in the course shell. Class meetings will be moved completely online as the situation warrants.

Aug. 27 Introduction: Intro to course procedures and to ethics; reflective writing; lecture on reading philosophy

Aug. 29 Introduction: Plato, *Crito*; assign Annotated Bibliography--; lecture on reading arguments

Sept. 3 Introduction: King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"; Lecture on virtue ethics

Sept. 5 Overview of Ethics: Schur, Intro and chapters 1-2; lecture on organizing your bibliography; **WR1 due**

Sept. 10 Overview of Ethics: Schur, chapters 3-4; lecture on citing sources in [Chicago NB](#).

Sept. 12 Virtue Ethics: Aristotle, Book II, chapters 1-7; **WR2 due**

Sept. 17 Virtue Ethics: Aristotle, Book II, chapters 8-13

Sept. 19 Ethical Issues: **Annotated Bib due**; reflective writing; assign Paper#1; lecture on deontology

Sept. 24 Deontology: Kant, Preface; O'Neill, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics"

Sept. 26 Deontology: Kant, First Section

Oct. 1 Deontology: Kant Second Section

Oct. 3 Deontology: Kant, Third Section; **WR3 due**

Oct. 8 Ethical Issues: Schur, chapters 5-6

Oct. 10 Ethical Issues: Schur, Chapter 7; **WR4 due**

Oct. 15 Ethical Issues: Schur, Chapter 8

Oct. 17 Ethical Issues: **Paper#1 due**; reflective writing; assign Paper# 2; lecture on utilitarianism

Oct. 22 Utilitarianism: Mill, chapters 1 and 2

Oct. 24 Utilitarianism: Mill, Chapter 3

Oct. 29 Utilitarianism: Mill, Chapter 4; **WR5 due**

Oct. 31 Utilitarianism: Mill, Chapter 5

Nov. 5 Ethical Issues: Schur, chapters 9-10

Nov. 7 Ethical Issues: Schur, chapters 11-12; **WR6 due**

Nov. 12 Ethical Issues: Schur, Chapter 13 and Coda; Lecture on revision and proofreading

Nov. 14 Ethical Issues: **Paper#2 due**; reflective writing; assign Paper#3; lecture on care ethics

Nov. 19 Care Ethics: Held, Chapter 1

Nov. 21 Care Ethics: Gawande, Introduction and chapters 1 and 2

Nov. 26 Care Ethics: Gawande, chapters 3 and 4; Lecture on preparing manuscripts for markets and on preparing the final portfolio of submissions

Nov. 28 Thanksgiving

Dec. 3 Care Ethics: Gawande, chapters 5 and 6; **Extra Credit due**

Dec. 5 Care Ethics: Gawande, chapters 7 & 8 and Epilogue

Dec. 10 ([Final Exam schedule](#)) **WR7 Due; Paper #3 due; optional revisions due--all by 12:30pm**

University Specific Procedures

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

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 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

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.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url: <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.