



PHIL 360-01W:20880 General Ethics

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Luisa Benton
Office Location: N/A
Office Hours: Virtual by appointment
Office Phone: 214-354-4798 (cell)
Office Fax:
University Email Address: Luisa.Benton@tamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: email/text
Communication Response Time: 24 hours or less

COURSE INFORMATION

Textbook(s) Required: *Living Ethics*, 2nd edition, by Russ Shafer-Landau

Course Description

The evaluation and application of classical and/or contemporary ethical theories connecting the good life, human conduct in society, morals and standards of value.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts.
2. Define and appropriately use important terms such as relativism, virtue, duty, rights, utilitarianism, natural law, egoism, altruism, autonomy, and care ethics.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of major arguments and problems in ethics.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

4. Present and discuss well-reasoned ethical positions in writing.
5. Apply ethical concepts and principles to address moral concerns.
6. Apply course material to various aspects of life.
7. Discuss ways of living responsibly in a world where people have diverse ethical beliefs.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

To be successful in this online class you should have the following:

- A computer that you can use several times a week for an extended period of time.
- A browser that can read PDF files. If you try to open any of the PDF links or files and get an error, please go to Adobe to download the latest version of [Acrobat Reader](#). If you are using a mobile device, you will need to download a browser from the app store that is able to read PDF files. Please refer to the app store for your mobile device to find one that suits your needs.
- An updated web browser with updated plugins.

You should be able to complete the following tasks:

- Create documents and upload them to D2L Brightspace.
- Save and retrieve documents on the computer.
- Use email to communicate with your instructor.
- Locate information on the Internet using a search engine.

Mobile Device Support: You should be able to view the content from your mobile device. It is recommended that you submit your work using a computer.

To be successful in this course, you should have the following digital literacy skills:

- the ability to use computer networks to store files
- the ability to use search criteria for online search tools
- the ability to properly cite information sources

Instructional Methods

This course is conducted entirely online.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Create a schedule and follow it. Successful students are those who can create a discipline to do their work without supervision. You will not be attending a class on campus and no one will be taking attendance, but you have assignments to complete throughout the course. Create a schedule for when and how you will do the work for this course and follow it.

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Do the reading. Of course, you will have to read the material to discuss it in discussion forums and to be prepared for the exams, but you should also read each assigned reading carefully. Unlike other disciplines in which much of the reading is done to gain information, in philosophy, we are often reading complex ideas, theories, and arguments.

Stay in contact with the instructor. Your instructor is your lifeline in this course. When you are confused or have questions, email or call me. In distance learning courses you will not have face-to-face meetings with your instructor or other students, so you may feel a bit isolated and confused at times. Don't hesitate to reach out to others.

Stay in contact with your fellow students. Through the discussion forums, you will get to know your student colleagues. They can also be an important resource for you as you work on the course.

Don't get behind. This is not a self-paced course, so you will need to turn in assignments when they are due. You will need to participate regularly and often in the discussion forums. Exams must be done by their due dates. Without discipline and attention, one can fall behind quickly and hurt the chance for successful completion of the course. So, put the course on your schedule and attend to it often.

Take care of yourself physically. Most online students are busy people who take online courses in addition to having work and home responsibilities. One of the dangers for busy people is getting sick because they don't get enough sleep, eat well, or take time out to relax their bodies and their minds.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades

A = 900-1000 Points

B = 800-899 Points

C = 700-799 Points

D = 600-699 Points

F = 599 & > Points

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Assessments

Discussion Forums: Students will respond to threads in each of the 8 discussion forums as well as to posts from the instructor and other students. Specific requirements/grading expectations can be found in Unit 1. 8 @ 50 points each for a total of 400 points possible

Essay: Students will write one 3-page minimum essay on a choice of topics provided in the unit in which the essay is due, Unit 5. Specific requirements/grading expectations can be found in the Unit 5 module. 1 @ 100 points for a total of 100 points possible

Research Project: Students will submit a research project in Unit 7. Details regarding that assignment can be found in the Unit 7 module. 1 @ 100 points for a total of 100 points possible

Exams: Students will take 4 timed multiple-choice and true false exams. 4 @ 100 points each for a total of 400 points possible

Extra Credit: Some semesters/terms, extra credit may be available. **The maximum points students may earn for extra credit is 40.**

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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

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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>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

You should communicate with me using your tamuc email address. Guidelines and expectations for professional communication can be found in the Course Orientation link in our course.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

LATE WORK POLICY

Please be aware that late work is not accepted. All assignments/exams must be submitted by their due dates and by midnight on that day. Assignments submitted late will receive no credit.

Because I do know all too well that 'life happens', I will make ONE exception over the course of the semester regarding late work. You may turn in the essay, the research project, or ONE exam late during the semester IF AND ONLY IF you submit the late

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assignment within 72 hours of the due date. This applies to ONE of the above-named assignments only. It does NOT apply to discussion forums.

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.

University Specific Procedures

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

AI use in course

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).

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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.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

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 Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

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

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 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](#)

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<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.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

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

Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content

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COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Assignment Calendar for Spring 2025 1/13-5/9

All assignments and assignment information can be found in the relevant unit modules; e.g., the list of required reading and discussion forums/assignments for Unit 1 are in the Unit 1 module. For all due dates referred to below, assignments must be submitted by end of day (11:59 PM) on that day 🕒. You do not need to wait until the due date to submit an assignment; submitting early is a great idea 💡!

Monday 1/13-Sunday 1/26: Getting Started and Unit 1

- Read Announcements, Getting Started, Course Orientation, Syllabus, and Course Calendar
- Submit Student Contract 📄 and Using MLA/Avoiding Plagiarism assignment (these are found in the Getting Started Activities link) by 1/19 ***typically, assignments will be due on a Sunday, but given the holiday weekend, this date falls on a weekday**
- Complete all required readings and the study guide for Unit 1 📖
- Discussion Forum: You should read the Discussion Forum Protocol and Grading Expectations before participating in any forums to understand what is expected for all Discussion Forums
- Specific forum thread due dates for Unit 1 are below:
Self-Introduction to the Class: 1/19 🤝
Opinions: 1/26 👍👎

Monday 1/27-Sunday 2/9: Unit 2

- Complete all required readings and the study guide for Unit 2 📖
- Discussion Forum: Moral Relativism: 2/9 😞
- Review study guides for Units 1 and 2 👁️
- Take Exam 1 by 2/9 📄 📝

Monday 2/10-Sunday 2/23: Unit 3

- Complete all required readings and the study guide for Unit 3 📖
- Discussion Forum: The Trolley Problem: 2/23 📺



Monday 2/24-Sunday 3/9: Unit 4

- Complete all required readings and the study guide for Unit 4 📖
- Discussion Forum: Our Response to Poverty: 3/9 💰
- Review study guides for Units 3 and 4 👁️
- Take Exam 2 by 3/9 📄 ✓







Monday 3/17-Sunday 3/30: Unit 5

- Complete all required readings and the study guide for Unit 5 📖




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- Discussion Forum: What Matters More?: 3/30 
- Submit Essay by 3/30 







Monday 3/31-Sunday 4/13: Unit 6

- Complete all required readings and the study guide for Unit 6 
- Discussion Forum: Inequality: 4/13 
- Review study guides for Units 5 and 6  
- Take Exam 3 by 4/13  

Monday 4/14-Sunday 4/27: Unit 7

- Complete all required readings and the study guide for Unit 7 
- Discussion Forum: The Tracy Latimer Case: 4/27 
- Submit Research Project: 4/27 

Monday 4/28-Friday 5/9: Unit 8: Please note: Shorter Unit!!!

- Complete all required readings and the study guide for Unit 8 
- Discussion Forum: 2 threads NB: different due dates
 Morality, Science, and Moral Progress: 5/4   
 Reflection: 5/9 
- Review study guides for Units 7 and 8 
- Take Exam 4 by 5/9 