



PHIL-2306-004I2-SP2025
Introduction to Ethics
Spring 2025 2nd Session
Asynchronous Online

Instructor Information: Walter Barta; wbarta@com.edu or 409-933-8214 (General Humanities Department Phone).

Student hours and location: Online Monday Evening and by appointment

Required Textbook/Materials:

Russ Shafer-Landau, *Living Ethics: An Introduction with Readings* Second Edition.

(You may also use the 1st edition as there are minimal differences between them)

Course Description: An introduction to ethics, including metaethical concepts, prominent ethical theories, and important ethical problems.

Course requirements: discussions, quizzes, journals, and presentations.

Determination of Course Grade/Detailed Grading Formula: (methods of evaluation to be employed to include a variety of means to evaluate student performance)

Assignment	%	Pts.
Moral Theories Test	12.5%	250
Moral Problems Test	12.5%	250
Moral Theories Quizzes	10%	200
Moral Problems Quizzes	10%	200
Chapter Discussion Comments	10%	200
Chapter Discussion Leader 1	10%	200
Chapter Discussion Leader 2	10%	200
Pop Culture Presentation	10%	200
Journal	15%	300
TOTAL	100%	2000
PRE/POST Survey		Xtra Credit

Late Work, Make-Up, and Extra-Credit Policy: late work is not guaranteed to be accepted. Contact professor in the event that make-up is necessary.

Attendance Policy: for in-person courses, attendance will be taken and will contribute towards ones discussion grade. For online courses, log-in activity will be used as attendance. If a student does not complete the initial attendance quiz they will be dropped from the course. If a student has too many unexcused absences they may be dropped from the course per the professor’s discretion. An absence may be excused if the professor is notified of the reason in advance.

Communicating with your instructor: ALL electronic communication with the instructor must be through your COM email. Due to FERPA restrictions, faculty cannot share any information about performance in the class through other electronic means. (Faculty may add additional statement requiring monitoring and communication expectations via D2L or other LMS)

Student Learner Outcomes:

Student Learner Outcome	Maps to Core Objective	Assessed via this Assignment
1. Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts	Critical Thinking Skills (CT)	Reading Quizzes
2. Define and appropriately use important terms such as relativism, virtue, duty, rights, utilitarianism, natural law, egoism, altruism, autonomy, and care ethics.	Critical Thinking Skills (CT)	Vocabulary Quizzes
3. Demonstrate knowledge of major arguments and problems in ethics.	Critical Thinking Skills (CT)	Reasoning Test
4. Present and discuss well reasoned ethical positions in writing.	Communication Skills (CS3)	Essay Test
5. Apply ethical concepts and principles to address moral concerns.	Critical Thinking Skills (CT)	Reasoning Test
6. Apply course material to various aspects of life.	Personal Responsibility (PR)	Journal
7. Discuss ways of living responsibility in a world where people have diverse ethical beliefs.	Social Responsibility (SR)	Discussion Leading and Comments

Academic Dishonesty: any writing that appears to be plagiarism, including self-plagiarism and the use of AI tools, will receive a zero for the assignment. Repeated plagiarism will receive a zero for the course.

Student Concerns: If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please contact me using the contact information previously provided. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact Dr. Brian Anderson, Chair, Humanities Department Chair at 409-933-8186 or banderson@com.edu.

Institutional Policies and Guidelines

Grade Appeal Process: Concerns about the accuracy of grades should first be discussed with the instructor. A request for a change of grade is a formal request and must be made within six months of the grade assignment. Directions for filing an appeal can be found in the student handbook https://www.com.edu/student-services/docs/Student_Handbook_2024-2025_v2.pdf. *An appeal will not be considered because of general dissatisfaction with a grade, penalty, or outcome of a course. Disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment of the quality of the student's work and performance is also not an admissible basis for a grade appeal.*

Academic Success & Support Services: College of the Mainland is committed to providing students the necessary support and tools for success in their college careers. Support is offered through our Tutoring Services, Library, Counseling, and through Student Services. Please discuss any concerns with your faculty or an advisor.

ADA Statement: Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to contact:

Kimberly Lachney, Student Accessibility Services Coordinator

Phone: 409-933-8919

Email: AccessibilityServices@com.edu

Location: COM Doyle Family Administration Building, Student Success Center

Textbook Purchasing Statement: A student attending College of the Mainland is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

Withdrawal Policy: Students may withdraw from this course for any reason prior to the last eligible day for a "W" grade. Before withdrawing students should speak with the instructor and consult an advisor. Students are permitted to withdraw only six times during their college career by state law. The last date to withdraw from the 1st 8-week session is February 26. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is April 21. The last date to withdraw for the 2nd 8-week session is April 30.

FN Grading: The FN grade is issued in cases of *failure due to a lack of attendance*, as determined by the instructor. The FN grade may be issued for cases in which the student ceases or fails to attend class, submit assignments, or participate in required capacities, and for which the student has failed to withdraw. The issuing of the FN grade is at the discretion of the instructor. The last date of attendance should be documented for submission of an FN grade.

Early Alert Program: The Student Success Center at College of the Mainland has implemented an Early Alert Program because student success and retention are very important to us. I have been asked to refer students to the program throughout the semester if they are having difficulty completing assignments or have poor attendance. If you are referred to the Early Alert Program you will be contacted by someone in the Student Success Center who will schedule a meeting with you to see what assistance they can offer in order for you to meet your academic goals.

Resources to Help with Stress:

If you are experiencing stress or anxiety about your daily living needs including food, housing or just feel you could benefit from free resources to help you through a difficult time, please click here <https://www.com.edu/community-resource-center/>. College of the Mainland has partnered with free community resources to help you stay on track with your schoolwork, by addressing life issues that get in the way of doing your best in school. All services are private and confidential. You may also contact the Dean of Students office at deanofstudents@com.edu or communityresources@com.edu.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

The College District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy.

Course outline: (include calendar with lecture topics, due dates)

W	Topic	Textbook Readings	Extras	Tests	Discussions	Pop Culture
1	Intro	Ch 1: What Is Morality? Ch 2: Moral Reasoning	I, Robot Film https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbP4ls2w4oA	Attendance Q1	Intro	Signup Sheets
2	Theories of Values	Ch 3: Skepticism about Morality Ch 4: The Good Life Ch 5: Consequentialism	I, Robot BBC Drama https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2Nzw04Dy58	Q2	3,4,5	My Pop Topics
3	Theories of Actions	Ch 6: Kantian Ethics Ch 7: Social Contract Theory Ch 9: The Ethic of Prima Facie Duties		Q3	6,7,8	
4	Theories of Actors	Ch 8: Natural Law Ch 10: Virtue Ethics Ch 11: Feminist Ethics and the Ethics of Care		Q4 E1	9,10,11 Journal 1	My Theories
5	Life and Death	Ch 12: Abortion Ch 15: Euthanasia Ch 20: Death Penalty	The Animatrix Film https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3E8w9919Rg	Q5	12,13,1 5	My Problems
6	Distributive Justice	Ch 16: Economic Justice and Economic Inequality Ch 17: Globalization and Immigration Ch 18: The Legacy of Racism	Gattaca https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H61SHRjxrZ4	Q6	16,17,1 8	
7	Pains and Pleasures	Ch 13: Animals Ch 21: Drugs Ch 23: Sexual Morality		Q7	20,21,2 3	Present
8	Existential Risks	Ch 14: Environment Ch 19: Terrorism (alt. Privacy) Ch 22: Genetic Engineering	Selections TBA from SEP Article on AI Ethics https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-ai/	Q8 E2	14,19,2 2 Journal 2	Commen t

Assignment Descriptions:

	Assignments
Readings	Textbook and extra readings should be finished at the start of the week and assignments should be finished by the end of the week. For Part 1: Moral Theories (1-11), focus on all chapter sections; for Part 2: Moral Problems (12-23), focus on reading the Argument Analysis sections. End-of-chapter extra readings are optional unless specified. (Note: Ch. 19 of the textbook is different for different editions.) Several movies/podcasts will also be assigned.
Quizzes/Tests	There will be a total of 8 quizzes, 1 quiz per week, each covering the key ideas and methods for the week. There will be a total of 2 tests, 1 test per textbook part, each covering a part of the textbook and extra material, requiring you to morally reason about the material in short answer form. Quizzes and tests will each be split into 2 sections, a vocabulary section and a section quiz. All quizzes and tests will require Respondus lockdown.
Discussions	There will be 2 discussions that the students must schedule and lead: first on a Moral Theory (~40 mins) during the first part of the course and second on a Moral Problem (~40 mins) during the second part of the course. The sign up sheet will be available on the first day of class. For in-person courses, all students will read their assigned chapter and prepare several questions/comments to bring to class to converse about, and the discussion leaders will be called on to lead debating the topic and discussing the questions/comments with the professor. For online courses, discussion leaders will schedule a meeting time for an "podcast-style" discussion/debate with the professor which will be posted publicly. Others will make at least two short questions/comments per week and at least two short responses to the discussions, providing an argument supported by something from the discussion and/or something from the textbook.
Presentation	On the last week of the course there will also be a separate presentation on a Popular Culture Topic (~20 mins). All students will introduce themselves, choose some pop culture topics, choose some favorite theories, choose some problems, and from this develop an argument to be presented in a short podcast discussion. The sign up sheet is the same.
Journal	Students will make a series of journal entries, developing arguments supporting their stances regarding various moral problems. There will be two entries. Each entry will be further developing and defending the student's stance. Further instructions will be provided online.
Surveys	Students can take two short surveys, PRE and POST course, for extra credit.