



**PHIL 2306-103CL**  
**Introduction to Ethics**  
**Spring 2024**  
**Saturday 9-11:50AM**

**Instructor Information:** Alan Milam, [amilam@com.edu](mailto:amilam@com.edu)

**Student hours and location:**

Class: LRC 257

Office hours: Fridays 3:30-4:30 virtual via email, Brightspace, and Teams by appointment.

**Required Textbook/Materials:** **Living Ethics: An Introduction with readings second edition.**  
**By Russ Shafer-Landau. Oxford University Press, 2019.**

**\*\*Any Additional readings will be distributed by me via Brightspace D2L**

**Course Description:** The systematic evaluation of classical and/or contemporary ethical theories concerning the good life, human conduct in society, morals, and standards of value.

**Course requirements:** Discussion via Brightspace D2L, 2 Exams, and 2 Essays. All citations should be done according to MLA style guidelines.

**Exams:**

- There will be two exams in this course.
- The exams will consist of multiple choice, short constructed responses, and short constructed responses that require text evidence.
- The exams will not be timed.
- The exams will be open book.

**Essays:**

- Essay 1 is a 4–6-page research paper that analyzes a particular topic in ethics fairly by summarizing its background and the various perspectives that make up that ethical controversy.
- Essay 2 is a 4-6 pages argumentative essay where you will be arguing and defending your position in a particular topic in ethics. You may continue to research an aspect of the topic you analyzed in Essay 1 for Essay 2.

**Class Discussion:**

- We will be discussing many of the readings in class to model, help brainstorm, and draw out the various points of conflict in the ethical positions and controversies. You will need to contribute to these conversations weekly, in class and more formally via Brightspace D2L as a part of your grade in this course.
- **WRITING AN ANALYTICAL EVALUATION** – some tips and guidelines A good philosophy paper takes an analytical approach. This means that it must: identify and clearly state a philosophical claim, state the reasons backing up that claim, and make a critical evaluation of this claim. All three aspects are essential for a good paper. The first thing you should do is identify the claim; it may be stated or implied. Once the philosophical claim is identified and stated, and the author's reasons for it made clear, the claim must be critically evaluated. Some questions or things to consider: (0) Is the claim vague or ambiguous? If so, can it be restated in a clear and rigorous manner? (1) Is the claim logical? (2) Does it follow from the stated premises? (3) Are those stated premises coherent and plausible? (4) Does the claim rest on any unjustifiable assumptions? (5) Is the claim consistent with other things the author claims? (6) Does the author commit any fallacies in presenting his/her case? For instance, does he or she beg the question (assume or take as a premise something that should be proven first)? (7) If he or she makes factual claims, are they actually true? Each paper must have a Works Cited. Complete bibliographical details of each work must be given. The title, author, publisher (or journal title), date, place of publication (or Internet address), and page number(s) should be given. Use as many sources as you want from the Internet but see cautionary note below. Whenever you quote a source, paraphrase it, refer to it, or use it to support or document a claim, you must cite that source.

**Determination of Course Grade/Detailed Grading Formula: Discussion on Brightspace D2L/in class (20%), 2 Exams (each 15%, 30% total) 2 Essays (20% and 30%)**

**Class Discussion: 20%**

**Exam x 2: 15% each (30% total)**

**Essay 1: 20%**

**Essay 2: 30%**

**Grade Scale A = 100 - 90 B = 89 - 80 C = 79 - 70 D = 69 - 60 F = 59 and below.**

**Late Work, Make-Up, and Extra-Credit Policy: Late work is not acceptable in this class for the following reasons: the availability via Brightspace D2L, syllabus calendar, you are ostensibly an adult, and when you turn something in late you place an imposition on your teacher's time by demanding they do extra work for you. Please make sure you are aware of the exam times and deadlines for the essay projects and class discussions.**

**Attendance Policy:** This is a weekly class, which means that the normal class work you would do in a MWF or TTH is done on one day a week. **For this reason, you must attend class regularly. Students who miss two classes will be considered to have excessive absences. This will result in an FN for the final course grade. Attendance will be taken via a sign in sheet for the class.** Per the State of Texas, the only acceptable absences are religious holidays and military service. Please see your college handbook for additional information regarding class attendance.

**\*\*If you must miss a class CONTACT ME BEFORE THE CLASS TO LET ME KNOW!**

**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. For this reason, you will only be able to contact be via my COM email [amilam1@com.edu](mailto:amilam1@com.edu) or using the D2L email function.

<b>Student Learner Outcome</b>	<b>Maps to Core Objective</b>	<b>Assessed via this Assignment</b>
1. Demonstrate a knowledge of major arguments and problems on a given ethical topic by communicating with other students.	Communication skills (CS)	Discussions both in class and via Brightspace D2L
2. Demonstrate knowledge of Major philosophical terms and perspectives.	Critical Thinking Skills (CT)	Exam 1
3. Demonstrate knowledge of Major philosophical terms and perspectives.	Critical Thinking Skills (CT)	Exam 2
4. Define and appropriately use important ethical terms to analyze an ethical controversy.	Communication skills (CS) Critical Thinking Skills (CT)	Essay 1: Analysis of an issue that explains the various positions and reasons on an issue.
5. Define and appropriately use important ethical terms in order to argue and defend your own position.	Critical Thinking Skills (CT) Critical Thinking Skills (CT)	Essay2: Persuasive argument that explains the various positions and reasons on an issue in order to defend a particular position.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Any incident of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with college policy and the Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty – such as cheating on exams or any other assignment– is an extremely serious offense and will result in a grade of zero on that assignment and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for the appropriate discipline action. Any additional occurrence after the first instance of academic dishonesty will result in failure of the course.

**Plagiarism:**

Writing your own exams and doing your own work is mandatory; submitting anyone else's writing or other work as your own constitutes fraud and is illegal. If you turn in a piece of writing which has been plagiarized from another writer (and this includes fellow students), you will receive a 0 (zero) for that assignment. Possible referral to the Judicial Coordinator and other consequences are possible. College of the Mainland's definition of Academic Dishonesty and associated policies are available in the 2022-2023 Catalog or 2022-2023 Student Handbook in print form and online.

**HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT POLICY STATEMENT:**

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. To plagiarize is to steal the words or ideas of another and pass them off as one's own. Two forms of plagiarism are common. In the first form, the writer incorporates published or otherwise recorded material without properly acknowledging its sources. In the second form, the writer submits work actually done by someone else. (The student who allows his or her work to be used by others is also guilty.) Any student who plagiarizes will receive a grade of "0" on his or her plagiarized work and may, as a result, receive a failing grade in the course. Ignorance will not be an acceptable defense: all students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the rules of documentation. Violation of the Plagiarism Policy may result in a referral to the College of the Mainland Judicial Coordinator or further disciplinary actions as stated in the current Student Handbook.

**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 the Humanities Department Chair Brian Anderson at (409) 933-8186 or [banderson@com.edu](mailto:banderson@com.edu).

**Course outline:**

**\*\*Please note this schedule is subject to change\*\***

**Week 1 January 20-Ethics in America? What is systemic evaluation of Ethical positions?**

Introduction to the course, syllabus, and textbook.

What is ethics? How does it fit into Philosophy?

Read Chapter 1 "What is Morality?" and Chapter 2 "Moral Reasoning"

**Week 2 January 27- It's all relative unless it affects me.**

**Census day 1/31**

Chapter 3 "Skepticism about Morality" and Chapter 4 "The Good Life"

Read "Cultural Relativism" by Diane Jeske

Read "The Subjectivity of Values" by J.L. Mackie

Read "Hedonism" by John Stuart Mill

Read "The Experience Machine" by Robert Nozick

**Week 3 February 3-Do the ends justify the means? Or is there something good without condition?**

Chapter 5 "Consequentialism" and Chapter 6 "Kantian Ethics"

Read "Utilitarianism" by John Stuart Mill

Read "The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative"

Read Preface and Essay 1 from “Genealogy of Morals” by Friedrich Nietzsche

**Week 4 February 10-Nature abhors a vacuum.**

**Exam 1 due by noon!**

Chapter 7 “Social Contract Theory” and Chapter 8 “Natural Law”

Read “Leviathan” by Thomas Hobbes

Read “Natural Law” by Thomas Aquinas

**Week 5 February 17- Let’s take another look at relativity and our role models.**

Chapter 9 “The Ethic of Prima Facie Duties” and Chapter 10 “Virtue Ethics”

Read “What Makes Right Acts Right”

Read “Nicomachean Ethics” by Aristotle

**Week 6 February 24-Why should we care?**

Chapter 11 “Feminist Ethics and Ethics of Care”

Read “What is Feminist Ethics?” by Hilde Lindermann

Read “Towards a Decolonial Feminism” by Maria Lugones

**Week 7 March 2-Abortion in the state of Texas**

**Exam 2 due by noon!**

Chapter 12 “Abortion”

Read “An Almost Absolute Value in History” by John Noonan

Read “A Defense of Abortion” by Judith Jarvis Thomson

Read “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion” by Mary Anne Warren

Read “Why Abortion is Immoral” by Don Marquis

**Week 8 March 9-Save the planet, the power is yours?**

Chapter 14 “Environment”

Read “The Ethics of Respect for the Environment” by Paul Taylor

Read “Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments by Thomas Hill, Jr.

Read “The Public and Private Morality of Climate Change” by John Broome

Read “It’s not my Fault: Global Warming and Individual moral Obligations” by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

**Week 9 March 23-Should we eat the rich or would they cost too much?**

Chapter 16 “Economic Justice and Economic Inequality”

Read “A Theory of Justice” by John Rawls

Read “Why Does Inequality Matter? By T.M. Scanlon

Read “A Bleeding Heart Libertarian View of Inequality” by Andrew J. Cohen

Read “How not to complain about Taxes” by Elizabeth Anderson.

Read “The World House” By Martin Luther King Jr.

**Week 10 March 30-GATTACA**

**Essay 1 Analysis of an ethical issue due by noon!**

Chapter 22 “Genetic Engineering”

Read “The Case Against Perfection” by Michale Sandel

Read “Genetic Interventions and the Ethics of Enhancement of Human Beings” by Julian Savulescu

Read “Transhumanist Values” by Nick Bostrom

Read “Paternalism in the Age of Cognitive Enhancement: Do Civil Liberties presuppose roughly Equal mental ability?” by Daniel Wilkler

**Week 11 April 6-Where are you from? No, like where are you from? No, I mean...**

Chapter 17 “Globalization and Immigration”

Read “The Singer Solution to World Poverty” by Peter Singer.

Read “A Kantian Approach to Famine Relief” by Onora O’Neill

Read “Human Rights and Global Wrongs” by Thomas Pogge

Read “International Aid: Not the Cure you Were Hoping for” by Jason Brennan

Read “Refugees and the Right to Control Immigration” by Christopher Heath Wellman

Read “Open Borders” by Javier Hildalgo

**Week 12 April 13-Is Racism permanent?**

Chapter 18 “The Legacy of Racism”

Read “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” by Martin Luther King Jr.

Read “Time for a New Black Radicalism” by Chris Lebron

Read “The New Jim Crow” by Michelle Alexander

Read “Affirmative Action: Bad Arguments and Some Good Ones” by Daniel M Hausman

Read “The Future of Racial Integration” by Elizabeth Anderson

Read “Racial Realism” by Derrick Bell

**Week 13 April 20-Huntsville, Tx Polunsky and Mountain View Units**

**Spring W-day 4/22**

Chapter 20 “The Death Penalty”

Read “On Deterrence and the Death Penalty” by Ernst Van Den Haag

Read “Civilization, Safety, and Deterrence” by Jeffery H. Reiman

Read “Justifying Legal Punishment” by Igor Primoratz

Read “An Eye for an Eye?” by Stephen Nathanson

**Week 14 April 27-Let’s talk about all the good things and the bad things that could be.**

Chapter 23 “Sexual Morality”

Read “Why Shouldn’t Tommy and Jim have sex? A Defense of Homosexuality” by John Corvino

Read “The Harms of Consensual Sex” by Robin West

Read “Sex, Lies, and Consent” by Eizabeth Brake

Read “Whether from Reason or Prejudice” : Taking Money for Bodily Services” by Martha C. Nussbaum

Read excerpts from “The History of Sexuality” by Michel Foucault TBD

**Week 15 May 4-Conclusions**

**Essay 2 Argumentative analysis of an ethical issue due by noon!**

**Class evaluations**

**Conclusions**

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## 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\\_2023-2024\\_v2.pdf](https://www.com.edu/student-services/docs/Student_Handbook_2023-2024_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 at 409-933-8919 or [klachney@com.edu](mailto:klachney@com.edu). The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in the 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 1<sup>st</sup> 8-week session is February 28. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is April 22. The last date to withdraw for the 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-week session is May 1. The last date to withdraw for spring mini session is May 29.

**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](mailto:deanofstudents@com.edu) or [communityresources@com.edu](mailto:communityresources@com.edu).