

PHIL3302: ETHICAL THEORY

The University of Texas at El Paso

Semester: Spring 2016

Location: Hudspeth Hall, Rm. 300

Times: Tues. & Thurs., 3:00-4:20 pm

INSTRUCTOR: DR. CAROLINE T. ARRUDA

Office Hours:

- Tuesdays, 11:00 am-2:00 pm
- Other times by advance appointment

Office: Worrell Hall, Room 306

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Course Description: In this course, we will focus on both normative ethics, which seeks to explain how we ought act, and value theory, which investigates whether the things that we claim to be valuable—say, happiness—are in fact valuable and whether they ought play a role in determining how we ought act. Drawing on resources from both the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophy, we will consider the competing answers to the central questions of each of these subfields of ethics.

Course Objectives and Goals: The objectives of this course are fourfold: first, students will gain an understanding of the classical theories in normative ethics (deontology, consequentialism, contractarianism, virtue ethics, among others); second, students will become facile with the contemporary philosophical material on these classical theories with the aim of understanding how (or whether) the former seek to correct problems with the latter; third, students will develop their argumentation and reasoning skills in the evaluation of the various accounts under consideration.

Required Texts (available at the University Bookstore):

1. *Ethical Theory*, 2nd Edition, ed. Russ Shafer-Landau
2. Online course reserves accessible through the Blackboard site for this course.

COURSE RESOURCES:

(THESE LINKS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE UNDER THE 'WEBLINKS' SECTION OF OUR BLACKBOARD SHELL)

1. Blackboard site for this course
2. The Writing Center
 - Located in Library 227
 - Visit their website at:
<http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?alias=academics.utep.edu/writingcenter>
3. Jim Pryor's "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper":
 - <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>
4. Purdue University Library's Citation Guide:
 - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>
5. UTEP's Instructional Support Services Module "How to Avoid Plagiarism":
 - http://dmc.utep.edu/home/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=390:part-3-citations&catid=109:internet-research&Itemid=539

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES:

1. Any changes made to this syllabus will be announced in class.

2. If you contact me by email, I need *at least twenty-four hours* to respond.
3. If you want me to read a paper draft, I need *at least one week* to do so. Please plan ahead.

Grading:

Class Participation: 10% of semester grade
Take Home Essay Exam #1: 20% of semester grade
Take Home Essay Exam #2: 30% of semester grade
Term Paper: 40% of semester grade

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & REQUIREMENTS

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

- Students are expected to complete the reading for each class meeting, and they must bring their books (or a photocopy of the reading assignment) to class.
- They will be called upon in class to answer questions about the reading and are expected to make thoughtful comments or to ask well-formulated questions. No question is too simple or naïve to ask!
- Students are expected to maintain a respectful demeanor in class, although they should feel free to criticize and question one another as long as it is done in a respectful fashion.

TAKE HOME SHORT ANSWER ESSAY EXAMS:

- You will write **two** take home short answer essay exams for this course. The essay topics will vary from those that ask you to explain a particular philosopher's view of, say, moral obligation to those that ask you to compare and to evaluate two philosophers' views on a question or concept.
- Please see the section "Directions for Accessing and Handing in Take Home Exams" on this syllabus.
- In addition to the specific directions for each take home exam, you will be expected to meet all of the requirements for a traditional essay, as specified in the "General Requirements for Writing Assignments" on this syllabus.
- The start dates (the dates on which the exams become available on Blackboard) and the due dates for each exam are listed on the schedule on this syllabus.
- The exams are as follows:
 - **Essay Exam #1:** You must write a minimum of **800 words per essay and you will write two essays**. This assignment is worth **20%** of the semester grade.
 - **Essay Exam #2:** You must write a minimum of **800 words per essay and you will write two essays**. This assignment is worth **30%** of the semester grade.

TERM PAPER:

You will write a **2000 word term paper** for this course from a list of assigned topics. See the schedule below for due dates. Also see the section 'General Requirements for Written Assignments' on this syllabus. This paper will require that you do the following (**but please see the more detailed assignment directions posted on Blackboard**):

1. Choose a topic from a list that I provide (or get my approval for a topic).
2. **Read at least one reputable**, academic source on the topic (e.g., a recent journal article on the topic in an academic journal) and **include it in your paper**.
3. Use the relevant assigned course readings in the paper.
4. See the specific assignment directions under the 'Assignments' tab on Blackboard.

Directions for accessing and handing in all assignments:

- You must hand in your papers under the 'Assignments' tab on the Blackboard site for this course.
- They will be submitted to 'SafeAssign,' a database that checks your papers and exams for plagiarism.
- The due dates for each essay exam or paper are listed on the schedule on this syllabus.
- I will return graded assignments through Blackboard, where you can **view the comments and the grade**.

Grading Scale:

- A 90-100%
- B 80-89%
- C 70-79%
- D 60-69%
- F 59% and below

COURSE POLICIES

CLASS PROTOCOL AND CONDUCT:

- Students are expected to arrive on time to class. **Any students arriving to class more than 10 minutes late or leaving more than 10 minutes early will be considered absent.**
- Students must turn off all cell phones, iPads, etc. during class. If your cell phone rings during class, you will be asked to leave.
- Students are expected to refrain from chatting with their neighbors during class. If you do so, you will be asked to leave.

LAPTOPS, RECORDING DEVICES AND CELL PHONES:

- Using laptops, your cell phone (including text messaging), audio or video recorders or other digital devices during class **is prohibited**.
- **Lectures cannot be recorded** (except in individual cases where I have granted permission).

MAKE-UP POLICY:

- Students will be allowed to make up missed work, including quizzes, ONLY in the case of documented family emergency or illness.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

- I will deduct one letter grade for each calendar day that an assignment is late.

EMAIL:

- All class email correspondences will be conducted exclusively through our UTEP email addresses.

BLACKBOARD:

- We will be using the Blackboard shell for our class throughout the semester.
- If you have not done so, you should learn how to use Blackboard.
- I will be using Blackboard to post course materials, including the syllabus, essay topics and your grades for your assignments.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- Attendance is mandatory.
- To account for emergencies, illness, among other possibilities, you are allowed **2 absences**.
- Any absence(s) after your allowed absence will result in the **deduction of one full letter grade from your semester grade**.
- If you miss **4 or more classes, you will fail this course**.

CENTER FOR ACCOMODATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES (CASS) :

- “UTEP seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities. This university will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required affording equal educational opportunity. It is the student’s responsibility to register with the CASS Office in the East Union Bldg., Room 106 within the first two weeks of classes, and inform the faculty member to arrange for appropriate accommodations.”
- The CASS Office can also be reached in the following ways:
Web: www.sa.utep.edu/cass
Phone: (915) 747-5148 voice or TTY
Fax: (915) 747-8712
E-Mail: cass@utep.edu

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

UTEP’s Policy: “Scholastic dishonesty (which includes the attempt of any student to present the work of another as his or her own, or any work which s(he) has not honestly performed, or attempting to pass any examination by improper means) is a serious offense and will subject the student to disciplinary action. The aiding and abetting of a student in any dishonesty is held to be an equally serious offense. All alleged acts of scholastic dishonesty should be reported to the Dean of Students for disposition. It is the Dean of Students’ responsibility to investigate each allegation, dismiss the allegation, or proceed with disciplinary action in a manner which provides the accused student his or her rights of due process.” See the Dean of Students office for further information at <http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm> .

Students who violate the above policy will be reported to the appropriate academic office, may receive a zero or ‘F’ for the assignment in question and may receive a zero or ‘F’ for the semester.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

(IN ADDITION TO THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH ASSIGNMENT)

- Essays should be written using a formal tone, must be edited for spelling and grammatical errors, and should include a clear thesis statement that answers the assigned question.
- Essays must make use of the relevant assigned course readings.
- *Reputable, academic sources* may be used **ONLY FOR THOSE ASSIGNMENTS WHERE DOING SO IS EXPLICITLY ALLOWED**.
- **Some assignments for this course prohibit the use of outside sources. Please follow this requirement where applicable.**
- Essays must have internal citations and include a formal bibliography. Both MLA and Chicago Style formatting are acceptable.

- Essays must be double-spaced, have a 1-inch margin, and be written using a 12 point font. They should include page numbers in the bottom right-hand corner of the page.
- Essays must include a word count underneath the author's name.
- Essays (excluding the in-class presentation) will be handed in on the Blackboard site for this course.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Reading assignments are listed on the day for which they should be completed.

SCHEDULE (Tentative)

*=Reading available on Blackboard

Week 1: Introduction

Jan. 19: Introduction to the course

Jan. 21: Preface to *Ethical Theory* (ed. R. Shafer-Landau)

“Introduction” to *The Fundamentals of Ethics* by R. Shafer-Landau*

Week 2: Ethics and Religion

Jan. 26: “Euthyphro” by Plato

Jan. 28: “Euthyphro” by Plato (read a second time)

Week 3: Value Theory

Feb. 2: “Hedonism” by J.S. Mill

Feb. 4: “The Experience Machine” by R. Nozick

Week 4: Value Theory

Feb. 9: “What Makes Someone’s Life Go Best” by D. Parfit

Feb. 11: “What Things Are Good?” W.D. Ross

Week 5: Consequentialism

Feb. 16: “Utilitarianism” by J.S. Mill

Feb. 18: “Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism” by J.J.C. Smart

-Take Home Short Answer Essay Exam #1 available on Blackboard at 9 pm

Week 6: Consequentialism

Feb. 23: “Rule-Consequentialism” by B. Hooker

Feb. 25: “What is Wrong with Slavery” by R.M. Hare

- **- Take Home Short Answer Essay Exam #1 DUE via Blackboard at 9 pm**

Week 7: Deontology

Mar. 1: “Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals” by I. Kant

Mar. 3: “Kant’s Formula of the Universal Law” by C. Korsgaard

Week 8: SPRING RECESS (NO CLASSES)

Mar. 8: Spring recess

Mar. 10: Spring recess

Week 9: Deontology

Mar. 15: “The Rationality of Side Constraints” by R. Nozick

Mar. 17: “The Golden Rule Rationalized” by A. Gewirth

--Take Home Short Answer Essay Exam #2 available on Blackboard at 9 pm

Week 10: Contractarianism and Contractualism

Mar. 22: “Leviathan” by T. Hobbes

Mar. 24: Psychological Egoism” by J. Feinberg

Mar. 25th : - Take Home Short Answer Essay Exam #2 DUE via Blackboard at 9 pm

Week 11: Contractarianism and Contractualism

Mar. 29: Why Contractarianism” by D. Gauthier

Mar. 31: “A Theory of Justice” by J. Rawls

Week 12: Virtue Ethics

Apr. 5: “The Nature of Virtue” by Aristotle

-Term Paper Topics Available on Blackboard

Apr. 7: **Class cancelled (Dr. Arruda away giving an invited lecture)**

Week 13: Virtue Ethics

Apr. 12: “Normative Virtue Ethics” by R. Hursthouse

Apr. 18: “Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach” by M. Nussbaum

Week 14: Why Be Moral?

Apr. 26: “The Immoralist’s Challenge” by Plato (**Guest Lecture by Prof. Pjevalica**)

Apr. 28: “Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives” by P. Foot (**Guest Lecture by Prof. Pjevalica**)

Week 15: Why Be Moral?

May 3: “Ethical Egoism” by J. Rachels (**Guest Lecture by Prof. Pjevalica**)

May 5: [Catch up day] (**Guest Lecture by Prof. Pjevalica**)

Week 16: Final Exam Week

May 9th: Term Papers Due by 9 pm via Blackboard