Philosophy 360.01E, 02E—General Ethics  Spring 2015
Dr. Bill Bolin
Office & Hours: HL 324, MW 2:30p—5:00p and by appt.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will allow you many opportunities to explore important ethical issues that people have pondered over the centuries. We will read a number of essays that explore different ideas about ethics and moral behavior, paying attention to the various systems of ethics that have been described historically. The course is organized so that conflicting, competing, and even complementary theories will be investigated and can be discussed in interesting and civil ways. Assignments include two essay exams, two short written responses to the reading, and a few short quizzes over the reading. One textbook is required:


STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
- Students will write response papers that demonstrate an understanding of established approaches to defining and understanding ethics.
- Students will write two exams that demonstrate understanding of the main schools of thought in ethics.
- Students will be able to view themselves as engaged citizens within an interconnected and diverse world, and this ability will be assessed through a response paper.

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
**Exams**: You'll have a mid-term and a final, each covering roughly half of the semester. These exams will solicit short answers of 3 or 4 sentences, as well as longer, more richly detailed essay responses. Submit two blank blue books with your name on them before the midterm.

**Response papers**: In addition, you'll turn in two written 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, they serve as opportunities for you to comment on one or two points in the reading, connecting those points to other reading and/or experiences. Each response paper will be evaluated according to the level of detail in your insightful commentary and sensible connections to other reading and/or experiences or observations. Specific assignments are forthcoming in eCollege.
Quizzes: You’ll take eight quizzes to test your comprehension of some of the reading. These timed quizzes will be in eCollege and cannot easily be made up. Each quiz will be announced as the semester progresses, so be attentive to their deadlines.

As a rule I do not accept late assignments.

EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Values</th>
<th>Final Grade Ranges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam</strong> 50 pts.</td>
<td>A=180--200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong> 50 pts.</td>
<td>B=160--179</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Response Papers</strong> 20 pts. (2 @ 10 pts. each)</td>
<td>C=140--159</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quizzes</strong> 80 pts. (8 @ 10 pts. each)</td>
<td>D=120--139</td>
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<td>F=0--119</td>
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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 include your emailing the assignment to me as an attachment 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]). Plagiarism on one assignment in this course will most likely lead to a failing grade for the course.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR (All reading assignments are from the textbook unless otherwise indicated. A few other readings will likely be assigned as the semester progresses.)

Jan. 21 Overview: Intro to class; reflective writing
Jan. 23 Introduction: Frankena, “Morality and Moral Philosophy”; Lecture on Socrates

Jan. 26 Introduction: Plato, from *Crito* and from *Phaedo*
Jan. 28 Introduction: Plato, from *Crito* and from *Phaedo*, continued
Feb.  2  Challenges to Morality: Regan, “How Not to Answer Moral Questions”
Feb.  4  Challenges to Morality: Cahn, “God and Morality”
Feb.  6  Challenges to Morality: Rachels, “The Challenge of Moral Relativism”
Feb.  9 Challenges to Morality: Nagel, “Right and Wrong”; RP1 due
Feb. 11 Challenges to Morality: Rachels, “Egoism and Moral Scepticism [sic]”
Feb. 16  Moral Theories: Kant, “The Categorical Imperative”
Feb. 27  Moral Theories: Mayo, “Virtue Ethics”; Lecture on Anscombe
Mar.  2  Moral Theories: Held, “The Ethics of Care”
Mar.  6
Mar. 11 Midterm Exam

Spring Break

Mar. 23 World Hunger: Singer, “Good Charity, Bad Charity”
Mar. 27 Philanthropy: McGugan, “The Ice Bucket Racket:
  http://nyti.ms/1x1m52g

Mar. 30 Terrorism: Walzer, “Terrorism”
Apr.  1  Terrorism: McPherson, “Is Terrorism Distinctively Wrong?”
Apr.  3 GoFr
Apr.  6  Torture: Shue, “Torture”
Apr. 10 Torture: RP2 due
Apr. 13 Animal Rights: Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights”
Apr. 15 Animal Rights: Cohen, “Why Animals Have No Rights”
Apr. 20 The Environment: Regan, “We Are What We Eat”
Apr. 22 The Environment: Sober, “Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism”
Apr. 24 Euthanasia: Rachels, “Active and Passive Euthanasia”

Apr. 27 Euthanasia: Steinbock, “The Intentional Termination of Life”
Apr. 29 Life/meaning: Taylor, “The Meaning of Life”

May 6 Review: “In Life and Business, Learning to Be Ethical” http://nyti.ms/1a6zZ8d
May 8 Exam review

Monday, May 11 @ 8:00a—10:00a Final Exam for .01E
Wednesday, May 13 @ 8:00a—10:00a Final Exam for .02E

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**Students with Disabilities:**
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 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)¹

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¹ In other words, don’t be a distraction during class.