

# PHIL 2306-072: Intro to Ethics

*Spring 2016*

Instructor: Daniel Padgett

Office: Pecan Hall 102

Office Hours: MW 9–12 (in PH 102), 2–3 (PH 102), 4:45–5:30 (LOH 215)

Email: [dpadgett3@alamo.edu](mailto:dpadgett3@alamo.edu)

## 1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Classical and contemporary theories concerning the good life, human conduct in society, and moral and ethical standards. This course fulfills the Language, Philosophy, and Culture foundational component area of the core, and addresses the following required objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility.

## 2. COURSE OVERVIEW

Ethics aims to answer the question “How should I live my life?”. This course examines that question in four different ways. First, we consider how philosophers assess and offer answers to that question, i.e., we consider the methodology of philosophy. Second, we look at three ways to explain what makes an action right (or wrong): consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics. Third, we will investigate the claim that there are no objectively correct answers about how one ought to live. Finally, we will turn to applied ethics and focus on more specific questions about how we ought to live our lives.

## 3. REQUIRED TEXTS

This course has one required texts:

- *Doing Ethics*, 4th Edition, by Lewis Vaughn

There will be occasions on which the reading for class will not come from the required text. I will distribute electronically the reading for those courses at least one week prior to discussion, when it is possible to do so.

## 4. COURSE POLICIES, ATTENDANCE, AND GRADING

**4.1. Course Policies.** This syllabus is a supplement to the one found on Concourse. If there is a conflict between this syllabus and the one listed on Concourse, the policies on Concourse over-rule the ones listed here. Please refer to the concourse syllabus for official NVC course policies.

**4.2. Syllabus Revisions.** I am open to modifying the schedule (listed below) to help you better understand the material. On the first day of class (and perhaps at several points during the course) we will assess how the course is going and may make changes to the syllabus as necessary. Any changes will be communicated both in class and via Canvas (through an announcement or an email).

**4.3. Attendance.** This course is discussion-based. There will be times that I lecture for extended periods, but I aim for collaborative learning as much as possible. Because of that, attendance is expected and may affect your grade. As per Alamo College's Attendance Policy, I may drop you if you miss more than 12.5% of scheduled contact hours (which is just under four (4) classes). If you miss more than seven (7) classes, you will automatically fail the course. If you need to miss a class, send me an email stating the reason for the absence; I will decide whether it is a permissible absence. (Just so you know: "missing class" does not mean "missing the entire class"; showing up late or leaving early may warrant counting you absent for the day.)

**4.4. Grading.** Your final grades depends on your assignment, test, and final grades, provided you meet the attendance policy. Your grade is weighted as follows:

- Assignments: 25%
- Test 1: 25%
- Test 2: 25%
- Final: 25%

*Assignments.* There will be eight (8) assignments given throughout the course. The first assignment is due at the end of the day on 9/9. The remaining four will be due on 10/3, 10/24, 10/31, 11/7, 11/14, 11/21, and 11/28. Assignments will be submitted via Canvas. **Your assignment grade will be the average of the first three assignments and your best two of the remaining five.** (In other words, you have to complete the first three assignments, but of the last five you need only do two.)

*Tests.* There are two tests, which will be given on 10/5 and 10/26. The tests are not cumulative, though the second test will presuppose familiarity with material covered up to that point.

*Final Paper.* Details will be discussed in class and made available on Canvas.

**4.5. Late or Missing Assignments.** You are expected to turn in graded work by the due date. In general, late assignments will not be accepted and will be given an automatic zero. If you need an extension, you must ask at least 24 hours *before* the deadline and explain why you need an extension; I will determine whether to grant an extension on a case by case basis. (Don't assume you will be given an extension just because you asked for one.) With the exception of the final, I will allow you to submit one assignment late and without penalty for up to two days past the deadline; after that, you will lose 10% off of your grade for that assignment for each day it is late (i.e.: no penalty for submitting the assignment 0 to 2 days after the deadline, 10% off if it's 2 to 3 days late, 20% off if it's 3 to 4 days late, and so on).

**4.6. Grading Scale.**

- A 90–100%
- B 80–89.9%
- C 70–79.9%
- D 60–69.9%
- F Below 60% or by non-attendance

**4.7. Academic Integrity.** Discussion with others is encouraged: answering questions about a topic is often the best way to learn. However, assignments and tests are to be done individually. Collaborating on tests and assignments will be considered cheating. The appropriate steps will be taken for those suspected of cheating. For more information, see the Student Code of Conduct [here](#).

## 5. COURSE OUTLINE

Prior to class you should complete the assigned reading so that the terms we discuss are not entirely unfamiliar, and so that you can bring questions about the material as well. Chapter numbers refer to the chapters in *Doing Ethics*. Note: *If any changes to the below schedule are necessary, I will communicate them to you in advance by email and in class.*

Week Of	Subject	Reading
	<i>Moral Reasoning</i>	
8/22	Introduction, Moral Reasoning	Ch 1
8/29	Moral Reasoning	Ch 3, Foer (On Canvas)
	<i>Moral Theories</i>	
9/5	<b>No Class Monday</b> , Intro to Moral Theories	Ch 4
9/12	Consequentialism	Ch5
9/19	Deontology	Ch 6 (pp. 102–109, 116–124)
9/26	Virtue Ethics	Ch 7,
10/3	Review and <b>Test 1</b>	
	<i>Moral Truth</i>	
10/10	Relativism	Ch 2
10/17	Emotivism	Ch 2
10/24	Review and <b>Test 2</b>	
	<i>Applied Ethics</i>	
10/31	Abortion	Ch 8 (including the article by Thomson)
11/7	Euthanasia	Ch 10 (including the article by Hardwig)
11/14	Environmental Ethics	Ch 15
11/21	Equality	Ch 18, Berry (On Canvas)
11/28	Paper Workshop	

**FINAL PAPER: CHECK CANVAS**