

# UWG PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM

PHIL 2030 sec.25H

**INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS** (3 hours)

Spring Semester 2017

TR 11:00am-12:15pm, Pafford 309

Prerequisites: NONE

All online content available through CourseDen

Email: rlane@westga.edu\*

Instructor: **Dr. Robert Lane**, TLC 2247

*Office Hours:*

T: 8:40-9:20am

W: 8:40am-4pm

R: 8:40-9:20am; 12:30-1:50pm

*also by appointment*

My office telephone: (678) 839-4745

English/Philosophy telephone: (678) 839-6512

*\*All email communication must be conducted from your official UWG email account. Students are obligated to check their UWG email accounts on a regular basis and to ensure that their mailboxes do not become full.  
N.b., I am not allowed to disclose your grades over email.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Everyone has beliefs about morality, and to some extent we all agree about what actions are right and wrong; for example, we all agree that murder is wrong and that helping those less fortunate than us is right. But there are many moral questions about which people disagree: is abortion immoral? what about physician-assisted suicide? is it wrong to spend money on expensive cars and homes when people in other parts of the world are dying from malnutrition? do non-human animals have rights? This course will enable you critically to evaluate your own beliefs about concrete ethical issues like these. We'll also be dealing with more theoretical questions, such as: where does morality come from? (God? society? or somewhere else?); what makes an ethical argument good or bad?; and what general rules or principles ought we to live by? No prior experience in philosophy is necessary, so if you want to start thinking critically about morality, this course is a great place to begin.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** By the end of the semester, each student will be able to

- recognize and apply basic patterns of logical reasoning within ethical contexts;
- describe selected theories within meta-ethics and normative ethics, as well as selected arguments for and against those theories;
- describe positions and facts relevant to selected issues within applied ethics (such as abortion, physician-assisted suicide, capital punishment, world poverty, and animal rights);
- summarize the contributions of historically important figures (such as J. S. Mill and Immanuel Kant) to ethical thought;
- discuss in both oral and written discourse the ethical theories and issues explored in the course.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy Program by enabling students better to

- discuss the general historical development of the discipline of philosophy, including the views of at least three major historical figures of philosophy;
- incorporate a philosophical position in oral and written communications;
- critically outline and analyze philosophical issues;
- exhibit critical thinking skills.

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:** Although some course materials (syllabi, lecture notes, etc.) will be made available online, this is a traditional in-class course. It is primarily a lecture course, although we will regularly take time for class discussions. Reading assignments will be made on a regular basis. In order to benefit fully from lectures, **it is a must** that you do the reading when it is assigned, especially since you will have regular pop quizzes on your reading.

**TIME REQUIREMENTS:** UWG grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of (approximately) one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately sixteen weeks. For this three credit-hour course, students are required to spend **two and a half hours (150 minutes) in class each week and to conduct at least an additional 6 hours of work relevant to this course outside of class each week.** You should expect to work more hours than this outside of class during periods when you are preparing for an exam or a working on a major writing assignment.

## READING:

- *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (8<sup>th</sup> ed., 2015), by James Rachels and Stuart Rachels (**required**)
- *The Right Thing to Do: Basic Readings in Moral Philosophy* (7<sup>th</sup> ed., 2015), edited by James Rachels and Stuart Rachels (**required**)
- Online lecture notes (after most class meetings, I will post my own lecture notes for that day in CourseDen; you should read and study these notes on a regular basis).

## METHODS OF ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING:

- **Two regular in-class exams (50 points each).** Identification of argument forms; definitions; short answer questions; essays. Study guides will be provided at least ten days before each exam.
- **One comprehensive final exam (70 points).** Identification of argument forms; definitions; short answer questions; essays. A study guide will be provided at least ten days before the exam.
- **Unannounced pop quizzes on reading assignments and lecture material (10 quizzes x 2 points each).** We will have at least 14 pop quizzes over the course of the semester. Quizzes will occur at the very beginning of class, so don't be late! Questions will come both from daily reading assignments and from previous lecture material. These quizzes are intended to motivate you to keep up with assigned readings and to study the lecture notes on a regular basis. **Only the 10 quizzes on which you do best will count toward your grade (i.e., I will drop at least four quiz grades).** You will receive a grade of 0% for each quiz you miss; missed quizzes may not be made up, regardless of the reason for missing them (this is one reason why I will count only your best 10 quiz grades).
- **Three short papers (30 points each).** Length: 600-800 words each. Each paper will be a response to a specific assigned reading. You will state a philosophical thesis and then defend it by presenting reasons to support it. Instructions for each assignment will be posted in CourseDen.
- **Term paper (60 points).** Minimum length: 2000 words. You will state a philosophical thesis and then defend it by presenting reasons to support it. Instructions will be posted in CourseDen.
- **Class participation does not contribute to your final grade in any fixed way, but I will consider giving borderline students the next highest grade if their in-class questions and contributions to class discussions warrant my doing so.**

GRADING SCALE:	A	340 – 306 pts	D	237 – 204 pts
	B	305 – 272 pts	F	203 – 0 pts
	C	271 – 238 pts		

## MISSED EXAMS / EXTRA CREDIT:

- If you know that you will need to miss class on a day on which an exam is scheduled (for example, due to a UWG sponsored event), you must let me know about your absence as far in advance as possible so that we can schedule another day and time for you to take the test (or a make-up test). If you miss a test without receiving my explicit permission beforehand and making arrangements for a make-up test, you will be permitted to take a make-up test if and only if one of the following conditions applies: (a) Your absence was due to illness or injury serious enough to require professional medical care and which prevented you from contacting me before the test; or (b) Your absence was due to other extenuating circumstances beyond your control. I will determine on a case-by-case basis what constitutes "extenuating circumstances beyond your control." You may be required to provide documentation pertaining to your absence before you are allowed to take a make-up exam. **Make-up exams will usually be longer and potentially more difficult than the original exam that you missed.**
- **Extra-credit work will not be given under any circumstances.**
- **Work completed for other courses will not be accepted in this course.**

## ATTENDANCE, LATE ARRIVAL, EARLY DEPARTURE

- **You may miss four class meetings (two weeks of class) with no effect on your grade. Beginning with your fifth absence, you will lose 15 points (about 4% of your total course grade) from your final average for every class meeting you miss. This policy takes effect on the day of our second class meeting (Thursday January 12).** I will make exceptions for absences necessitated by UWG-sponsored events or by other circumstances that were absolutely outside your control. However, I will make these exceptions **only if ALL of your absences can be accounted for in one of these ways** (e.g., if you miss seven classes and you have documented, acceptable reasons for missing only six classes, then your seventh absence will still count against you). Documentation will be required in all cases in which I make an exception to this attendance policy.
- **Students who miss 8 or more class meetings (four weeks, or one month, worth of classes) will not earn a passing grade in this course.** In this case the reason for your absences is irrelevant. If you are unable to attend class for a month due to medical reasons, a family emergency, or any other reason, you should withdraw from the course; if the withdrawal date has passed, you should apply for a hardship withdrawal.
- An early departure or late arrival may be counted as an absence, depending on the circumstances. I will decide in each case whether an early departure or a late arrival counts as an absence. If you know before class that you will not be able to stay for the entire class session, please inform me of this before class and sit as close to the door as possible, so as to cause as small a distraction as possible when you leave.

### **From the *UWG Undergraduate Catalog*:**

- “Instruction begins the first day of class. In face-to-face courses, if students fail to attend the first day and have not contacted the instructor to explain their absence, they may be dropped during the Drop/Add Period to make room for other students.”
- “Class attendance policies are determined by each instructor for his or her courses and may be found in the syllabus. Since course policies differ, students are responsible for understanding attendance requirements for each course. Failure to comply with those requirements may significantly affect grades.”
- “**Students are expected to attend each class meeting.** Students absent from class while officially representing the University or observing religious holidays should generally not be penalized in the calculation of final grades, as long as they provide advance notice and expeditiously make arrangements to complete any missed work.
- “University-sponsored activities include but are not limited to the following: intercollegiate athletic competitions; musical/theatrical/art performances or exhibitions associated with a degree program; debate competitions; and research conferences. Activities not considered to be university-sponsored include participation in clubs, even if they are affiliated with UWG, or events associated with social organizations such as fraternities or sororities.
- “Regardless of the reason for the absence, each student is responsible for the material covered in class, for completing any assignments, and for making specific arrangements with the instructor for any work missed. The degree to which missed work can be made up will depend upon the nature of the work and its intended purpose. Make-up is at the discretion of the instructor.
- “Any student who must be absent for more than one week of class should notify the Patient Advocates in Health Services, telephone 678-839-6452. The student should also notify the instructor or department.”

### **COMMON COURTESY**

- **You may not use electronic devices, including smart phones and laptops, while class is in session, for any reason (talking, texting, Tweeting, catching Pokemons, etc.). Cell phones, laptops, etc., must be turned off and put away at the beginning of each class. I will make an exception to this policy ONLY IF you have purchased or rented electronic copies of our textbooks and need to access them during class; in this case, you must disable Internet connectivity on your device for the duration of the class.**
- **Do not leave the room during class unless it is absolutely essential that you do so.** Leaving the classroom while class is in session (e.g., to visit the restroom) is both disrespectful and distracting. So when you come to class, be prepared to remain in the classroom for the full duration of the class period.
- **Do not study material from other classes while this class is in session.** While you are in this class, I expect your attention to be focused on it rather than on your other courses.
- **Students may be dismissed from any class meeting at which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others.** Such behavior includes – but is not limited to – arriving late for class, allowing cell phones to ring, speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students, and using personal audio or visual devices. **Each dismissal of this kind will count as an absence and will be applied toward the attendance policy above.**

For the Americans with Disabilities Act, UWG Email, Credit Hour, and UWG Honor Code policies as well as information on Academic Tutoring, Student Services, and Technical Requirements, Privacy Policy, and Accessibility Statements, please see <http://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/>

**COURSE SCHEDULE.** THIS SCHEDULE IS **TENTATIVE** AND MAY CHANGE AS THE SEMESTER PROGRESSES. THIS INCLUDES TEST DATES, WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up with test dates, due dates, and reading assignments.

"RTD" refers to *The Right Thing to Do*; "EMP" refers to *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. All readings are fair game for pop quizzes at the beginning of that day's class, as are the lecture notes from the previous class.

Jan.	Topic	reading due	tests/papers
T 10	Introduction to philosophy and ethics	--	--
R 12	Logic and ethical arguments	EMP ch.1 (all)	pop quiz possible
T 17	Logic and ethical arguments	RTD ch.2 (pp.19-21 only)	pop quiz possible
R 19	The Cultural Differences Argument	RTD ch.2 (pp.21-24 only)	pop quiz possible
T 24	The Provability Argument	RTD ch.2 (pp.25-28 only)	pop quiz possible
R 26	Cultural Relativism	EMP ch.2 (pp.15-20 only)	pop quiz possible
T 31	Moral-Cultural Relativism; King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"	RTD ch.32 (all); EMP ch.2 (pp.20-32 only)	pop quiz possible

Feb.	Topic	reading due	tests/papers
R 2	Catch-up & review	--	pop quiz possible
T 7	--	--	<b>exam 1</b>
R 9	Morality and Religion: DCT	EMP ch.4 (pp.49-55 only)	pop quiz possible
T 14	Morality and Religion: DCT	EMP ch.4 (pp.58-63 only)	pop quiz possible
R 16	Abortion: Marquis	RTD ch.13 (all)	pop quiz possible
T 21	Abortion: Marquis	--	pop quiz possible
R 23	Abortion: Thomson	RTD ch.14 (pp.106-116 only)	pop quiz possible
T 28	Abortion: Thomson	RTD ch.14 (pp.116-122 only)	pop quiz possible

Mar.	Topic	reading due	tests/papers
<b>Thursday March 2: Last Day to Withdraw with a Grade of "W"</b>			
R 2	Abortion: Thomson	--	pop quiz possible
T 7	Utilitarianism; Euthanasia: Rachels	EMP ch.7 (all); RTD ch.37(all)	<b>short paper 1</b> pop quiz possible
R 9	Catch-up & review	--	pop quiz possible
T 14	--	--	<b>exam 2</b>
R 16	World Poverty: Singer	RTD ch.18 (all)	pop quiz possible
T 21	<b>Spring Break</b>		
R 23	<b>Spring Break</b>		
T 28	Animal Rights: Singer	RTD ch.15 (all)	<b>short paper 2</b> pop quiz possible
R 30	Animal Rights: Norcross	RTD ch.16 (all)	pop quiz possible

Apr.	Topic	reading due	tests/papers
T 4	<b>This class does not meet; Dr. Lane is attending a conference</b>		
R 6	<b>This class does not meet; Dr. Lane is attending a conference</b>		
T 11	Criticisms of Utilitarianism	RTD ch.5 (all); EMP ch.8 (pp.111-118 only)	<b>short paper 3</b> pop quiz possible
R 13	Kant & Absolute Rules	EMP ch.9 (all)	pop quiz possible
T 18	Kant & Absolute Rules	RTD ch.8 (all)	pop quiz possible
R 20	Kant & Respect for Persons	EMP ch.10 (all)	pop quiz possible
T 25	Capital Punishment: Pojman	RTD ch.20 (all)	pop quiz possible
R 27	Catch-up & review; course evaluations	--	<b>term paper</b> pop quiz possible

**final exam: Tuesday May 9, 11am-1:30pm**