

Introduction to Ethics

PHIL-2030

Spring 2021 Section 01 3 Credits 01/09/2021 to 05/11/2021 Modified 02/26/2021

Description

An introduction to the central concepts in ethics and an exploration of such contemporary ethical issues as abortion, genetic engineering, euthanasia, and capital punishment. Required for the major in Philosophy.

Requisites

Prerequisites:

Corequisites:

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Robert Lane

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Phone: 678-839-4745

Website: https://www.westga.edu/administration/profile.php?emp_id=410 (https://www.westga.edu/administration/profile.php?emp_id=410)

Meeting Times

Lecture

Monday and Wednesday 9:30am–10:45am

Nursing Building Room 121/122

Materials

The Elements of Moral Philosophy

Author: James Rachels and Stuart Rachels

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Edition: The 9th edition (2019) is preferred, but you may also use the 8th edition (2015). When the online Lecture Notes cite a page from this book, citations will be of the 9th edition.

ISBN: 978-1-259-91425-6 (9th ed.)

Availability: Campus Bookstore and online book retailers. New printed copies are available from Amazon but are relatively expensive. However, you can purchase or rent an electronic copy from Amazon for under \$30.

Outcomes

Philosophy Program Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, each student should 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 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 views of at least three major historical figures of philosophy.
- critically analyze and explain a philosophical issue in written communications.

Core Curriculum Learning Outcome

This course fulfills Core Area C2, which has the following Learning Outcome: "Students will demonstrate knowledge of the foundational concepts of artistic, intellectual, or literary achievement, adapting written communication to specific purposes and audiences." A late semester learning assessment in this course (the third paper you will write) will require you to communicate your knowledge of some of the specific foundational concepts of philosophy covered in the course. You will do so in writing, in response to a specific prompt, for the purpose of demonstrating that you have understood those foundational concepts.

✓ Evaluation

A	90% - 100%	176 points – 196 points
B	80% - 89%	157 points – 175 points
C	70% - 79%	137 points – 156 points
D	60% - 69%	117 points – 136 points
F	< 60%	< 117 points

Criteria

Breakdown

☰ Assignments

Assignment name	Description	Due Date	Points
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Assignment name	Description	Due Date	Points
Quizzes on Readings and Lecture Notes	<p>Each quiz consists of 20 multiple choice questions. You will have 25 minutes to complete each quiz.</p> <p>One attempt per quiz.</p> <p>There are six quizzes total, and your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. So only your five best quiz grades will count toward your final course grade.</p> <p>5 quizzes x 20 points each = 100 points</p>	<p>Quiz 1: 11:59pm on Saturday January 30</p> <p>Quiz 2: 11:59pm on Saturday February 13</p> <p>Quiz 3: 11:59pm on Saturday February 27</p> <p>Quiz 4: 11:59pm on Saturday March 13</p> <p>Quiz 5: 11:59pm on Saturday April 10</p> <p>Quiz 6: 11:59pm on Saturday May 1</p>	100
Papers	<p>Three papers. See each Assignment Folder for instructions and the Grading Rubric for Papers for how you will be graded.</p> <p>3 papers x 32 points each = 96 points</p>	<p>Paper 1 due before 11:59pm on Saturday March 6</p> <p>Paper 2 due before 11:59pm on Saturday March 27</p> <p>Paper 3 due before 11:59pm on Monday May 3</p>	96
TOTAL	--	--	196

"EMP" refers to *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, the required textbook for this course.

Week 1

Monday January 11: Introduction to the course

Wednesday January 23: Philosophy, ethics and genuine inquiry

Required reading due: Lecture Notes for Week 1

Week 2

Monday January 18: MLK Holiday – classes do not meet

Wednesday January 20: The Minimum Conception of Morality

Required reading due:

1. EMP ch.1 (all)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 2

Week 3

Monday January 25: Moral Reasoning

Required reading due: Lecture Notes for Week 3

Wednesday January 27: Moral Reasoning

Required reading due: Lecture Notes for Week 3

Saturday January 30 (11:59pm): Deadline for completing online Quiz 1

Week 4

Monday February 1: Moral Skepticism

Required reading due: Lecture Notes for Week 4

Wednesday February 3: Moral Skepticism

Required reading due: Lecture Notes for Week 4

Week 5

Monday February 8: Cultural Relativism and King's Moral Law

Required reading due:

1. EMP ch.2 (pp.15-20 only)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 5

Wednesday February 10: Cultural Relativism and King's Moral Law

Required reading due:

1. EMP ch.2 (pp.20-32 only)
2. Martin Luther King, Jr., "[Letter from Birmingham City Jail](#)"
3. Lecture Notes for Week 5

Saturday February 13 (11:59pm): Deadline for completing online Quiz 2

Week 6

Monday February 15: Morality and Religion

Required reading due:

1. EMP ch.4 (pp.49–55 only)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 6

Wednesday February 17: Morality and Religion

1. EMP ch.4 (pp.58–63 only)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 6

Week 7

Monday February 22: Utilitarianism and Euthanasia

Required reading due:

1. EMP ch.7
2. Lecture Notes for Week 7

Wednesday February 24: Utilitarianism and Euthanasia

Required reading due:

1. James Rachels, "The Morality of Euthanasia" (in CourseDen)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 7

Saturday February 27 (11:59pm): Deadline for completing online Quiz 3

Week 8

Monday March 1: Utilitarianism and World Poverty

Required reading due:

1. EMP ch.8, secs.8.1 and 8.2 only (pp.118-120)
2. Robert Nozick, "The Experience Machine" (in CourseDen)
3. Peter Singer, "The Singer Solution to World Poverty" (in CourseDen)
4. Lecture Notes for Week 8

Wednesday March 3: Utilitarianism and World Poverty

Required reading due: Lecture Notes for Week 8

Saturday March 6 (11:59pm): Deadline for submitting Paper 1

Week 9

Monday March 8: Utilitarianism and the Pandemic

Required reading due:

1. Julian Savulescu et al., "Utilitarianism and the Pandemic" pp.620–626 (in CourseDen)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 9

Wednesday March 10: Utilitarianism and the Pandemic

Required reading due:

1. Julian Savulescu et al., "Utilitarianism and the Pandemic" pp.626–630 (in CourseDen)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 9

Saturday March 13 (11:59pm): Deadline for completing online Quiz 4

Week 10: Spring Break. Class does not meet on Mon March 15 or Weds March 17.

Week 11

Monday March 22: Kant and Absolute Rules

Required reading due:

1. EMP ch.9
2. Lecture Notes for Week 11

Wednesday March 24: Kant and Absolute Rules

Required reading due:

1. Kant, "The Categorical Imperative" (in CourseDen)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 11

Saturday March 27 (11:59pm): Deadline for submitting Paper 2

Week 12

Monday March 29: Kant and Respect for Persons

Required reading due:

1. EMP ch.10
2. Lecture Notes for Week 12

Wednesday March 31: Capital Punishment

Required reading due:

1. Louis Pojman, "Why the Death Penalty is Morally Permissible" pp.51–67 (in CourseDen)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 12

Friday April 2: Last day to withdraw from the course with a grade of "W"

Week 13

Monday April 5: Capital Punishment

Required reading due:

1. Louis Pojman, "Why the Death Penalty is Morally Permissible" pp.67–73 (in CourseDen)
2. Stephen Bright, "Why the U.S. Will Join the Rest of the World in Abandoning Capital Punishment" (in CourseDen)
3. Lecture Notes for Week 13

Wednesday April 7: Capital Punishment

Required reading due: Lecture Notes for Week 13

Saturday April 10 (11:59pm): Deadline for completing online Quiz 5

Week 14

Monday April 12: Abortion: Marquis's Pro-Life View

Required reading due:

1. Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral" (in CourseDen)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 14

Wednesday April 14: Abortion: Marquis's Pro-Life View

Required reading due: Lecture Notes for Week 14

Week 15

Monday April 19: Abortion: Judith Thomson's Pro-Choice View

Required reading due:

1. Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" pp.47–59 (in CourseDen)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 15

Wednesday April 21: Abortion: Judith Thomson's Pro-Choice View

Required reading due:

1. Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" pp.59–66 (in CourseDen)
2. Lecture Notes for Week 15

Week 16

Monday April 26: Abortion: Judith Thomson's Pro-Choice View

No required reading

Wednesday April 28: Summing Up / Review

No required reading

Saturday May 1: Deadline for completing online Quiz 6

Week 17

Monday May 3: Summing Up / Review—final in-person class meeting

No required reading

Monday May 3: Deadline for submitting Paper 3

* Course Policies and Resources

Late Work

Apart from extraordinary circumstances, there are no deadline extensions for Quizzes—all Quizzes must be completed by the due date, no exceptions.

Each of the three Papers will be accepted up to two days late, **but with a 20% grade penalty for each day that it is late**. For example, the first Paper is due on Saturday March 6. I will accept it on Sunday March 7 for a 20% penalty and on Monday March 8 for a 40% penalty. I might accept late papers without penalty in case of extraordinary circumstances.

Expectations of Students

You must be willing to devote at least 8.5 hours each week doing work for this course: attending class, working through the assigned readings, studying the Lecture Notes and your own notes, working on papers, etc.

You must stay on top of the schedule of work for this course and be aware of all deadlines.

Electronic Devices

You may use electronic devices—smartphones, laptops and tablets—while in class to view the electronic version of assigned readings.

I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand rather than with an electronic device. Typing notes with a laptop encourages you to simply transcribe what's being said without thinking about it, while taking notes by hand encourages you to think about what you're writing.

Masks / Food and Drink

You must wear a mask with your nose and mouth completely covered at all times while in the classroom as well as while you are anywhere else in the classroom building.

This means that you may not eat or drink anything while you are in the classroom: **food and drinks are strictly prohibited in class.**

Attendance

In order to distribute Title IV funding (federal student aid), all instructors are required to record student attendance for every class meeting, and so I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. However, **you will not be penalized for absences**. Your final grade in the class will be based on the grades that you earn on the assigned quizzes and papers.

From the Office of the Provost (email to all faculty, December 17, 2020):

“The University of West Georgia expects students to attend all regularly-scheduled classes for instruction and examination. ...

“When a student is compelled for any reason to be absent from class, the student should immediately convey the reason for the absence directly to the instructor. The student is responsible for all material presented in class and for all announcements and assignments.

“Extenuating circumstances for which an absence may be excused include, but are not limited to, participation in university-sponsored activities, hazardous weather conditions, personal hardship, extended illness or hospitalization, family emergencies, or death in the immediate family.

“Instructors may request documentation to verify the extenuating circumstances for illness or self-isolation related to COVID-19. Treatment Records are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) instead of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).”

Emergencies

If you have an emergency, you can reach me at my UWG email address: rlane@westga.edu, which I check multiple times each day, including on the weekend. Your email must come from your own UWG email account; UWG policy prohibits me from responding to student emails that come from non-UWG addresses.

Institutional Policies

Academic Support

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact [Accessibility Services \(https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php).

Center for Academic Success: The [Center for Academic Success \(http://www.westga.edu/cas/\)](http://www.westga.edu/cas/) provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu.

University Writing Center: The [University Writing Center \(https://www.westga.edu/writing/\)](https://www.westga.edu/writing/) assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu.

Online Courses

UWG takes students' privacy concerns seriously: technology-enhanced and partially and fully online courses use sites and entities beyond UWG and students have the right to know the privacy policies of these entities. For more information on privacy and accessibility for the most commonly used sites, as well as technology requirements visit the [UWG Online \(https://uwgonline.westga.edu/\)](https://uwgonline.westga.edu/) site.

Students enrolled in online courses can find answers to many of their questions in the [Online/Off-Campus Student Guide \(http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php\)](http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php).

If a student is experiencing distress and needs help, please see the resources available at the [UWG Cares \(http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/\)](http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/) site. [Online counseling \(https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/index.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/index.php) is also available for online students.

Honor Code

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the [Student Handbook \(https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/handbook-code-of-conduct.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/handbook-code-of-conduct.php).

UWG Email Policy

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email.

Credit Hour Policy

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of 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 fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

HB 280 (Campus Carry)

UWG follows University System of Georgia (USG) guidance: http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information# (http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information)

You may also visit our website for help with USG Guidance: <https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php> (<https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php>)

Mental Health Support

If you or another student find that you are experiencing a mental health issue, free confidential services are available on campus in the [Counseling Center](#). Students who have experienced sexual or domestic violence may receive confidential medical and advocacy services with the Patient Advocates in [Health Services](#). To report a concern anonymously, please go to [UWGCares](#).

ELL Resources

If you are a student having difficulty with English language skills, and / or U.S. culture is not your home culture, specialized resources are available to help you succeed. Please visit the [E.L.L. resource page](#) for more information.

COVID-19

Proctored Exams/Online Instruction: Students should be aware and plan ahead for the possibility of having to complete all courses and/or exams online or in a proctored environment. This means talking with your instructors about what minimum technical requirements (software and hardware) will be required should your class move online or a student's personal needs dictate. This also includes making plans for internet access at whatever location participation may occur.

Virtual or in-person proctored exams, if your instructor should require them, may result in an additional cost to the student. Please discuss these details with your instructor or see the information provided here.

Face Coverings: Effective July 15, 2020, University System of Georgia institutions, including the University of West Georgia, will require all faculty, staff, students, and visitors to wear an appropriate face covering while inside campus facilities/buildings where six feet social distancing may not always be possible. Face covering use will be in addition to and is not a substitute for social distancing.

Face coverings are not required in campus outdoor settings where social distancing requirements are met. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area.

Reasonable accommodations may be made for those who are unable to wear a face covering for documented health reasons.

Student FAQs: For more information about UWG COVID-19 guidance for students visit the [Student FAQ webpage](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/health/coronavirus-info/return-to-campus/students-faq-return-to-campus.php) (<https://www.westga.edu/student-services/health/coronavirus-info/return-to-campus/students-faq-return-to-campus.php>).