

PHIL 2 — Ethics

Fall 2009

Instructor

Dr. Jeremy Garrett, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy

- Office Location: Mendocino Hall #3012
- Office Hours: TR 10:20 – 11:50 a.m.
- Office Phone: 916.278.2474

Email

Students with questions or concerns about the course should pursue the following strategies (listed in order of priority):

- (1) For any questions that are not private or particularly urgent AND for which other students might either know the answer or likely be interested in knowing the answer, please post these under the first thread under SacCT “Discussions”. I will address the question or concern there within a reasonable amount of time for the benefit of all enrolled students.
- (2) For any questions that are private (i.e., concerning information that you do not wish to share with classmates), please contact me electronically through SacCT “Mail”.
- (3) If SacCT is down, or you have an emergency concern requiring an urgent reply, you can email me as a *last resort* at garrettj@csus.edu.

Class Meetings

Sec. 11: TR 12:00 p.m.-1:15 p.m. in Mendocino #3009

Catalog Description

“Examination of the concepts of morality, obligation, human rights and the good life. Competing theories about the foundations of morality will be investigated.”

Satisfies General Education Requirement Area C3: Introduction to the Humanities. 3 units.

Course Overview

The study of ethics is the study of how to live well and how to live rightly. As Socrates observed, this is “no small matter”, but ultimately the most important subject with which we can concern ourselves. For most people, ethical commitments and moral character give one’s life meaning and form the most significant portion of one’s identity. This course is designed so that each student will have the opportunity to think deeply and systematically about the primary components of living a good human life and begin a lifelong process of reflection and self-scrutiny regarding his or her own life.

Required Text

Weston, Anthony. (2008). *A 21st Century Ethical Toolbox*. Second Edition. Oxford University Press. (ISBN 0195309677) **[ET on Calendar]**

Additional Course Materials

A few of our readings are available as PDF files on SacCT **[SacCT on Calendar]**.

Course Technology Requirements

This course will make significant use of SacCT. Among other things, course materials such as PowerPoint slides, handouts, paper guidelines, announcements, quizzes, and a record of each student’s grades will be posted on our course page. *Students need to have a reliable way of accessing SacCT, either at home or somewhere on campus (or both). Students also need to check their SacCT and SacLink emails frequently. Students without reliable access to SacCT are advised to consider enrolling in another class.*

For students new to SacCT, here are the instructions for getting to our course page:

- (1) Go to <http://online.csus.edu> and click on the login button. Enter your SacLink ID & password.
- (2) Click on the link to “PHIL 2 Ethics”.

Course Goals

This course emphasizes the core competencies of written and spoken discourse, self-reflection, argumentation, critical thinking, and creative problem solving. Specifically, students will sharpen and improve their ability to engage in ethical reflection and reasoning by:

- Developing and refining a set of practical cognitive tools, including the abilities to clarify important terms, draw important distinctions, think critically and consistently about moral issues, engage in productive dialogue with others and especially those with whom we disagree, and reframe and creatively solve ethical problems.
- Identifying and distinguishing important ethical concepts, principles, and theories.
- Applying these concepts, principles, and theories both to controversial moral and social issues and everyday ethical decision-making.
- Engaging in substantive personal reflection about the relationship between moral obligations & values and living a good human life.

Additionally, students will be both prepared and motivated to engage in serious philosophical reflection beyond the subjects and themes of this course, including further coursework in ethics and philosophy.

Students with Disabilities or Other Special Needs

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me during my office hours early in the semester.

If you are a student athlete or participate in any other officially recognized student activity and need to miss a class or plan special arrangements in order to attend an event, please discuss your situation with me during my office hours early in the semester.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty will be taken very seriously in this course. So that all students are on the same page, all acts of cheating, most notably plagiarism and/or collusion, will be treated as acts of academic dishonesty. *Plagiarism* is the appropriation of another’s work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one’s own written work offered for credit, while *collusion* is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work for credit.

Possible punishments for academic dishonesty include a grade of ‘0’ or ‘F’ on the particular assignment, failure in the course, and/or recommendation for probation or dismissal from the university. ALL incidents of cheating and plagiarism will be reported both to the Department Chair and to the Judicial Officer in the Office of Student Affairs for possible further administrative sanction. *It is your responsibility to know and comply with the University’s Academic Honesty Policy:* <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/UMLA00150.htm>.

Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular attendance is expected from all class participants. Disruptions, rudeness and private discussions, including cell phone disruptions, will not be tolerated. This means while in class, you should be focused on classroom activities and material.

Cell phones should be turned off prior to class start. If you have an emergency purpose phone (parent/childcare, EMT) and require your phone to be on, please set it to vibrate and notify me that you must have it on during class period.

Additionally, no laptops may be open during class; despite their possible usefulness for some tasks, many of your classmates and I find them distracting and easily abused.

H1N1 Influenza Virus and Flu-like Symptoms

The H1N1 influenza virus (a.k.a. “swine flu”) presents a serious threat to the health and safety of our campus this year. The clear instruction from the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and our own Student Health Services is that anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms should NOT come to campus. Coming to class not only makes it harder for the individual to shake the illness, it risks spreading the virus to others. Please contact me via email if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms and we can work out alternatives to in-class participation. To learn more, see: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

Late Assignments

All assignments are due by the date and time specified in the assignment. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per calendar day (not merely per class period) beginning with the due date. After three late days, acceptance of the assignment is at my discretion.

No extensions, no exceptions. It is your responsibility to know the due dates and to plan accordingly. Leaving an assignment until the day or two prior is risky and makes you more vulnerable than you already are to factors and events in the universe beyond your control!

Course Requirements and Grading

➤ **Attendance/Participation** (6%)

Punctual attendance and regular participation is expected for every in-class meeting. The success of this class depends significantly on students being in class, on time, and prepared to discuss the day’s material.

Each student will begin the class with the full 30 points for attendance/participation. Deductions will be assessed for three different reasons throughout the semester (up until a student has 0 points).

1. Unexcused Absences: absences where no documentation can be provided to indicate that a student is ill or participating in an officially recognized university activity. A roll sheet will be available at the beginning of every class session and each student will be responsible for signing his or her name. For every day that a student’s name is missing from the roll sheet, a deduction of 1 point will be assessed to the attendance/participation grade.

**NOTE: Any student signing in for one or more absent classmates will result in both or all students receiving 0 attendance/participation points for the course.

2. Tardies: arriving after class has begun. Late arrivals are a significant distraction to your fellow students and to me. If a student arrives late to class, s/he will need to sign the roll sheet at the end of class. Tardies result in a deduction of 1 point from the attendance/participation grade.

3. In-class Distractions: talking or whispering without permission and playing with cell phones, MP3 players, or other electronic gadgets. Students will be given a single warning, after which any further distractions will be assessed a deduction of 2 points (per incident) from the attendance/participation grade.

➤ **Quizzes** (32%)

There will be *two* kinds of quizzes administered in the course.

First, for every reading assignment, there will be an *on-line reading quiz* (worth 5 points each) on SacCT under “Assessments”. There will be 26 opportunities to take a reading quiz, of which, the top 20 scores will be counted. These quizzes will be available on SacCT roughly 48 hours prior to each class meeting and cannot be taken after that class has met. Each reading quiz will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions based only on the material assigned for that class meeting.

Second, every three to four class meetings, there will be an *in-class group quiz* (worth 10 points each). Students will be divided into groups of 4-6 and will submit a single group answer for each of the questions. There will be 7 group quizzes, and the top 6 scores will count toward a student’s quiz scores.

On-line reading quizzes cannot be made up for any reason; again, there are 26 opportunities to record 20 quiz scores and these are available on-line for student convenience. In-class group quizzes can only be made up if a student has an excused absence, in which case the student will receive an essay question to answer instead.

➤ **Reflection Papers** (12%)

There will be three short reflection papers assigned throughout the semester (due on 9/13, 10/25, and 12/7). An adequate paper will be 500-600 words in length and demonstrate thoughtfulness and clarity of expression. More information will be posted on SacCT soon.

These papers are submitted through SacCT “Assignments” and graded on the following scale:

- 20 points → Excellent
- 16 points → Average
- 13 points → Substandard
- 0 points → Unsatisfactory

➤ **Argument Paper** (20%)

This paper will be a 1000-1500 word (typed, double spaced) essay due via email (garrettj@csus.edu) on or before Tuesday, December 1 at 11:59 p.m. Papers should be sent to me in electronic form, as an attachment to an email in Microsoft Word format (.doc). Guidelines, as well as specific topics, will be provided in class later in the semester.

➤ **Midterm Exam** (15%)

The midterm examination will cover all material through October 27 and consist of true/false and multiple choice questions. It will be given in-class on Tuesday, October 27 at the normal meeting time.

➤ **Final Exam** (15%)

The final examination will be comprehensive and consist of true/false and multiple choice questions. It will be given in class on Tuesday, December 15 from 12:45-2:45 p.m.

Course Grading System

The total number of points for the course is 500, calculated by summing 6 course components:

Attendance and Participation	30
Quizzes (Reading & Group)	160
Reflection Papers	60
Argument Paper	100
Midterm Exam	75
Final Exam	75

Final grades are determined by the total number of points earned on the following scale:

93% (465 pts)	A
90.0% (450 pts)	A-
87.0% (435 pts)	B+
83.0% (415 pts)	B
80.0% (400 pts)	B-
77.0% (385 pts)	C+
73.0% (365 pts)	C
70.0% (350 pts)	C-
67.0% (335 pts)	D+
63.0% (315 pts)	D
60.0% (300 points)	D-
59.9% or below (299 points or less)	F

Campus Employee Furloughs

For the past 10 years, the CSU system has suffered chronic under-funding. Each academic year, CSU campuses are asked to perform as well or better with significantly fewer resources than in the year before. This year, because of the state economic crisis, the budget cuts are the worst in decades – \$584 million. The CSU administration is attempting to manage these cuts in the 2009-10 academic year by dramatically increasing student fees (32% increase since last fall) and by furloughing almost all University employees, including faculty, staff, and administrators.

For faculty like me, a furlough day means a mandatory un-paid day off where any university work (including teaching, class preparation, grading, and email correspondence with students) is strictly prohibited; there are 18 of these furlough days between September 2009 and May 2010 for most faculty. In effect, faculty are *required* to do 10% less work for 10% less pay this academic year.

For students, furlough days mean many things (in addition to having professors that are required to do less work for less pay). On some days the campus will be closed. The library will have shorter hours and many campus support services will be decreased or eliminated. It may be more difficult to get signatures to meet deadlines. Some classes you need may have been cut from the class schedule or are full. And more.

The days when I'm forced to cancel class because of the furloughs are marked on your syllabus below. These days off are not holidays; they are a very concrete example of how budget cuts have consequences. While I have been asked to try to provide students with assignments and work on furlough days, the material assigned on these days will not be covered or discussed in class.

If you would like to take action, or simply learn more, contact the CSUS Students for Quality Education:

- Email: csus.sqe@gmail.com
- Web: <http://www.alliancefortheesu.org/signup.html>

Overview of Important Dates for Course

Ongoing	Attendance/Participation and Reading Quizzes
9/8 →	Group Quiz #1
9/13 →	Reflection Paper #1 Due via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.
9/17 →	Group Quiz #2
9/24 →	<i>Furlough Day #1</i> (No In-Class Meeting; Reading & Reading Quiz still assigned)
9/28 →	<u>Extra-Credit</u> Opportunity for Attending Stephen Schulman Lecture – 3-5 p.m.
10/8 →	Group Quiz #3
10/21 →	<u>Extra-Credit</u> Opportunity for Attending Manuel Vargas Lecture – 3-5 p.m.
10/22 →	Group Quiz #4
10/25 →	Reflection Paper #2 Due via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.
10/27 →	Midterm Exam – In-Class at the Normal Starting Time
10/29 →	<i>Furlough Day #2</i> (No In-Class Meeting; Reading & Reading Quiz still assigned)
11/9 →	<u>Extra-Credit</u> Opportunity for Attending Symposium on the Ethics of Food
11/10 →	Group Quiz #5
11/19 →	Group Quiz #6
11/24 →	<i>Furlough Day #3</i> (No In-Class Meeting; Reading & Reading Quiz still assigned)
11/26 →	Thanksgiving Day – Campus Closed
12/1 →	<i>Furlough Day #4</i> (No In-Class Meeting; No Reading Assignment or Reading Quiz) Argument Paper Due via Email by 11:59 p.m.
12/7 →	Reflection Paper #3 Due via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.
12/10 →	Group Quiz #7
12/15 →	Final Exam – 12:45-2:45 p.m.

Course Calendar and Schedule of Readings

9/1 – Introduction to Course

9/3 – What is Ethics and Why Be Ethical?
(ET, Chap. 1)

9/8 – Ethics-Avoidance Disorders
(ET, Chap. 2, pp. 20-27 only; Boss, “Overcoming Resistance”, SacCT)
****Group Quiz #1**

9/10 – Ethics and Culture
(ET, Chap. 2, pp. 27-32; Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism”, SacCT)

9/13 – **Reflection Paper #1 Due via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.

- 9/15 – Ethics and Religion, Part 1**
(ET, Chap. 3, pp. 37-49 only)
- 9/17 – Ethics and Religion, Part 2**
(ET, Chap. 3, pp. 49-50; Rachels, “The Divine Command Theory”, SacCT)
****Group Quiz #2**
- 9/22 – Ethical Talk**
(ET, Chap. 4)
- 9/24 – Furlough Day #2 – No In-Class Meeting; Reading and Reading Quiz still Assigned**
Taking Values Seriously
(ET, Chap. 6)
- **9/28 – Extra-Credit Opportunity for Attending a Philosophy Lecture**
Stephen Schulman, Elon University, Topic TBD, 3-5 p.m., Hinde Auditorium, Union
- 9/29 – The Ethics of the Person**
(ET, Chap. 7, pp. 127-141)
- 10/1 – Rights, Equality, and Justice**
(ET, Chap. 7, pp. 141-144; Universal Declaration of Human Rights, SacCT)
- 10/6 – The Ethics of Happiness**
(ET, Chap. 8)
- 10/8 – Utilitarianism and the Demands of Morality**
(Singer, “The Singer Solution to World Poverty”, SacCT)
****Group Quiz #3**
- 10/13 – The Ethics of Virtue – Aristotle and the Western Perspective**
(ET, Chap. 9, pp. 171-179)
- 10/15 – The Ethics of Virtue – Eastern Perspectives**
(ET, Chap. 9, pp. 179-193)
- 10/20 – The Ethics of Relationship – Care Ethics**
(ET, Chap. 10, pp. 197-204)
- **10/21 – Extra-Credit Opportunity for Attending a Philosophy Lecture**
Manuel Vargas, University of San Francisco, “Building Better Beings: Responsibility in a World of Causes”
3-5 p.m., Hinde Auditorium, University Union
- 10/22 – The Ethics of Relationship – Community and the Expanding Circle**
(ET, Chap. 10, pp. 204-215)
****Group Quiz #4**
- 10/25 – **Reflection Paper #2 due via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.**
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|---|
| 10/27 – Midterm Exam (No Reading Assignment) |
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- 10/29 – Furlough Day #2 – No In-Class Meeting; Reading and Reading Quiz still Assigned**
Critical Thinking about Ethical Issues
(ET, Chap. 11)

11/3 – The Nature of Moral Concepts, Statements, and Arguments

(Harris, “Three Types of Claims made in Moral Arguments” & “The Nature of Moral Statements”, SacCT)

11/5 – Evaluating Moral Arguments

(Vaughn, “Evaluating Moral Arguments”, SacCT)

****11/9 – Extra-Credit Opportunity for Attending Symposium on the Ethics of Food**

(More details on the schedule of talks will be presented later in the semester; all sessions will be held in the Hinde Auditorium in the University Union.)

11/10 – Judging Like Cases Alike

(ET, Chap. 12, pp. 245-253)

****Group Quiz #5**

11/12 – Critical and Consistent Thinking: Animals as a Case Study

(ET, Chap. 12, pp. 253-258)

11/17 – When Values Clash

(ET, Chap. 14)

11/19 – Creative Problem-Solving

(ET, Chap. 15)

****Group Quiz #6**

11/24 – Furlough Day #3 – No In-Class Meeting: Reading and Reading Quiz still Assigned

Reframing Problems

(ET, Chap. 16)

THANKSGIVING BREAK – No Class on 11/26

12/1 – Furlough Day #4 – No In-Class Meeting

****Argument Paper Due via Email by 11:59 p.m.**

12/3 – Moral Vision

(ET, Chap. 17)

12/7 – **Reflection/Activity Paper #3 Due via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.

12/8 – Changing Your Life

(ET, Chap. 18)

12/10 – Changing the World

(ET, Chap. 19)

****Group Quiz #7**

12/15 – Final Exam for Section 11 → 12:45-2:45 p.m.