

## PHIL 2 — Ethics

Spring 2010

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### *Instructor*

Dr. Jeremy Garrett, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy

- Office Location: Mendocino Hall #3012
- Office Hours: Tuesday 11-11:50 a.m. & 4:15-5:15 p.m.; Thursday 11-11:50 a.m.
- Office Phone: 916.278.2474

### *Teaching Assistant*

Kory Hakobian

### *Email*

Students with questions or concerns 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](mailto:garrettj@csus.edu).

### *Class Meetings*

Section 12: TR 1:30-2:45 p.m. in Mendocino #1015

Section 13: TR 3:00-4:15 p.m. in Sequoia #316

### *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 21<sup>st</sup> Century Ethical Toolbox*. Second Edition. Oxford University Press.  
(ISBN 0195309677) **[ET on Calendar]**

### *Additional Course Materials*

Some 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 to 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 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/UM400150.htm>.*

### ***Attendance and Participation Policy***

Punctual attendance and respectful 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 engage with the material. Disruptions, rudeness and private discussions, including cell phone or texting disruptions, will not be tolerated. This means while in class, you should be focused on classroom activities and material.

Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off and out of sight prior to class starting. 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.

### ***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***

#### ➤ **Reading Quizzes** (20%)

Each week there will be an *on-line reading quiz* (worth 10 points each) on SacCT under “Assessments”. These quizzes are designed to encourage careful reading of the course material prior to our in-class sessions. Each reading quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice and/or true/false questions based only on the material assigned for the upcoming week; students will have 20 minutes to complete the quiz and submit their answers. There will be 14 opportunities to take a reading quiz, of which, the top 10 scores will be counted. With the exception of the first and twelfth weeks, these quizzes will need to be completed by 1:20 p.m. each Tuesday and cannot be completed for any reason after the deadline has passed.

\*\*NOTE: SacCT maintenance is conducted at 12 a.m. every Tuesday morning. This means that students trying to complete their reading quiz between 11:30 and 11:59 p.m. on Monday need to be very careful, since quizzes cannot be submitted once the maintenance period has begun. I would highly recommend beginning reading quizzes either before 11 p.m. on Monday evenings or after 6 a.m. on Tuesday mornings.

#### ➤ **Reflection Papers** (20%)

There will be four reflection papers (worth 25 points each) assigned throughout the semester (due 2/11, 3/26, 4/22, and 5/5). An adequate paper will be 600-900 words in length and demonstrate thoughtfulness and clarity of expression. Each paper assignment will be posted on SacCT several weeks before it is due.

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

- 25 points → Outstanding
- 22 points → Above Average
- 19 points → Average
- 15 points → Substandard
- 0 points → Unsatisfactory

#### ➤ **Ethics Portfolio** (30%)

This class emphasizes personal reflection and interpersonal discussion. At every class meeting, students will be given a worksheet to complete during various stages of the class session. These worksheets will serve as a record of attendance, punctuality, and participation and will form the basis for the main component of course evaluation – the ethics portfolio (worth 150 points). At the end of the semester, each student will submit a notebook containing every worksheet and assignment they completed for the semester and these will be graded on both quality and quantity. One point will be deducted for every missing worksheet (due to an unexcused absence) and tardy (which will be marked by the TA when the worksheet is picked up late) and two points will be deducted for in-class distractions (e.g., talking or whispering without permission and playing with cell phones, MP3 players, or other electronic gadgets). More information on preparing the ethics portfolio will be given later in the semester.

#### ➤ **Midterm Exam** (15%)

The midterm examination will cover all material through March 25 and consist of true/false and multiple choice questions. It will be given in-class on Thursday, March 25 at the normal meeting time.

➤ **Final Exam** (15%)

The final examination will be comprehensive and consist of true/false and multiple choice questions. Section 13 will take the final in class on Tuesday, May 18 from 3-5 p.m.; Section 12 will take the final in class on Thursday, May 20 from 12:45-2:45 p.m.

**Course Grading System**

The total number of points for the course is 500, calculated by summing 5 course components:

Reading Quizzes	100
Reflection Papers	100
Ethics Portfolio	150
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. If you would like to take action, or simply learn more, contact the CSUS Students for Quality Education:

- Email: [csus.sqe@gmail.com](mailto:csus.sqe@gmail.com)
- Web: <http://www.allianceforthecsu.org/signup.html>

## Overview of Important Dates for Course

<b>Ongoing</b>	Reading Quizzes
1/29 →	<i>Furlough Day #1 – Professor Garrett Unavailable</i>
2/5 →	<i>Furlough Day #2 – Professor Garrett Unavailable</i>
2/11 →	<u>Extra-Credit</u> Opportunity – Philosophy Lecture – 10:30-11:45 a.m. – Union Redwood Room <b>Reflection Paper #1 due</b> via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.
2/15 →	<i>Furlough Day #3 – Professor Garrett Unavailable</i>
3/4 →	<i>Furlough Day #4 – Professor Garrett Unavailable</i> Students participate in Statewide Day of Action for Public Education; no in-class meeting
3/9 →	<u>Extra-Credit</u> Opportunity – Ethics Lecture – 3-5 p.m. – Union Hinde Auditorium
3/25 →	<i>Furlough Day #5 – Professor Garrett Unavailable</i> <b>Midterm Exam</b> – In-Class at Normal Starting Time – Administered by TA Kory Hakobian
3/26 →	<b>Reflection Paper #2 due</b> via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.
3/27-4/4 →	CSUS Spring Break (No Classes on 3/30 or 4/1)
4/6 →	<i>Furlough Day #6 – Professor Garrett Unavailable</i> Teaching Assistant Kory Hakobian will lead in-class meeting
4/12 →	<u>Extra-Credit</u> Opportunity – Ethics Lecture – 3-5 p.m. – Union Foothills Suite
4/14 →	<u>Extra-Credit</u> Opportunity – Lecture by Tim Wise – 12-2 p.m. – Union Ballroom
4/20 →	Students attend Philosophy Symposium during normal class time – Hinde Auditorium, Union **Students can also earn <u>extra-credit</u> for attending an additional session of the symposium
4/22 →	<i>Furlough Day #7 – Professor Garrett Unavailable</i> No In-Class Meeting; TA Kory Hakobian available to assist with Reflection Paper #3 <b>Reflection Paper #3 due</b> via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.
5/5 →	<b>Reflection Paper #4 due</b> via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.
5/7 →	<i>Furlough Day #8 – Professor Garrett Unavailable</i>
5/13 →	<b>Ethics Portfolio due</b> in Class
5/14 →	<i>Furlough Day #9 – Professor Garrett Unavailable</i>
5/18 →	<b>Final Exam for Section 13</b> – 3-5 p.m.
5/20 →	<b>Final Exam for Section 12</b> – 12:45-2:45 p.m.

## Course Calendar and Schedule of Readings

### **PART ONE → THINKING ABOUT OURSELVES & OUR ETHICAL STARTINGPOINTS**

#### **Week #1 → Responsibility, Resistance, and the Good Life (January 26 & 28)**

- *Readings*: ET, Chap. 1, pp. 3-9; ET, Chap. 9, pp. 187-192
- *Reading Quiz #1*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Thursday, January 28

#### **Week #2 → Identifying and Overcoming Barriers to Ethical Growth (February 2 & 4)**

- *Readings*: ET, Chap. 2; Boss, “Overcoming Resistance”, SacCT; Tavis & Aronson, “Cognitive Dissonance: The Engine of Self-Justification”, pp. 11-25, SacCT
- *Reading Quiz #2*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, February 2

#### **Week #3 → Locating Our Blind Spots (February 9 & 11)**

- *Readings*: Tavis & Aronson, “Cognitive Dissonance: The Engine of Self-Justification”, pp. 25-39, SacCT; Tavis & Aronson, “Pride and Prejudice...and Other Blind Spots”, SacCT
- *Reading Quiz #3*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, February 9

**\*\*Thursday, February 11 → Reflection Paper #1 due via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.**

#### **Week #4 → Ethics and Religion (February 16 & 18)**

- *Readings*: ET, Chap. 3
- *Reading Quiz #4*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, February 16

### **PART TWO → THINKING ABOUT VALUES**

#### **Week #5 → Taking Values Seriously; The Ethics of the Person (February 23 & 25)**

- *Readings*: ET, Chap. 6, pp. 103-113; ET, Chap. 7, pp. 127-141
- *Reading Quiz #5*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, February 23

#### **Week #6 → Rights, Equality, and Justice (March 2 & 4)**

- *Readings*: ET, Chap. 7, pp. 141-144; Universal Declaration of Human Rights, SacCT; Bleich, “California’s Higher-Education Debacle” & Lakoff, “Privatization is the Issue”, SacCT
- *Reading Quiz #6*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, March 2

**\*\*\*Note that there is no in-class meeting on Thursday, March 4; students will participate in Statewide Day of Action for Public Education (or complete alternative assignment)**

#### **Week #7 → The Ethics of Happiness (March 9 & 11)**

- *Reading*: ET, Chap. 8
- *Reading Quiz #7*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, March 9

#### **Week #8 → The Ethics of Virtue (March 16 & 18)**

- *Reading*: ET, Chap. 9
- *Reading Quiz #8*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, March 16

#### **Week #9 → The Ethics of Relationship (March 23)**

- *Reading*: ET, Chap. 10
- *Reading Quiz #9*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, March 23

**\*\*Thursday, March 25 → Midterm Exam (No Reading Assignment; Bring Pencil & ScanTron 882E)**

**\*\*Friday, March 26 → Reflection Paper #2 due via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.**

**\*\*\*SPRING BREAK – No Class on 3/30 or 4/1\*\*\***

## **PART THREE → DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR A GOOD LIFE**

### **Week #10 → Ethical Talk; Evaluating Moral Arguments (April 6 & 8)**

- *Readings*: ET, Chap. 4; Vaughn, “Evaluating Moral Arguments”, pp. 43-53 only, SacCT
- *Reading Quiz #10*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, April 6

**\*\*\*Note that Teaching Assistant Kory Hakobian will lead class on Tuesday, April 6, as Professor Garrett will be on furlough that day**

### **Week #11 → Critical and Consistent Thinking about Ethics (April 13 & 15)**

- *Readings*: Vaughn, “Evaluating Moral Arguments”, pp. 53-56 only, SacCT; ET, Chap. 12
- *Reading Quiz #11*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, April 13

### **Week #12 → Symposium & Furlough Week (April 20 & 22)**

- *Readings*: None
- *Reading Quiz*: None

**\*\*\*Note that there is no normal in-class meeting either day this week:**

**Tuesday, April 20** → students will attend Nammour Philosophy Symposium during normal class time (the symposium will be held in the Hinde Auditorium in the University Union)

**Thursday, April 22** → students will work on Reflection Paper #3 and Teaching Assistant Kory Hakobian will be available in the normal classroom to assist students with their papers

**\*\*Thursday, April 22 → Reflection Paper #3 due via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.**

### **Week #13 → Managing Value Conflicts and Creatively Solving Ethical Problems (April 27 & 29)**

- *Readings*: ET, Chap. 14; ET, Chap. 15
- *Reading Quiz #12*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, April 27

## **PART FOUR → CHANGING OURSELVES AND OUR WORLD**

### **Week #14 → Changing Your Life (May 4 & 6)**

- *Reading*: ET, Chap. 18
- *Reading Quiz #13*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, May 4

**\*\*Wednesday, May 5 → Reflection Paper #4 due via SacCT “Assignments” by 11:59 p.m.**

### **Week #15 → Changing the World (May 11 & 13)**

- *Reading*: ET, Chap. 19
- *Reading Quiz #14*: must be submitted by 1:20 p.m. on Tuesday, May 11

**\*\*Thursday, May 13 → Ethics Portfolio due in class**

**\*\*Tuesday, May 18 → Final Exam for Section 13 → 3-5 p.m. (Bring Pencil & ScanTron 882E)**

**\*\*Thursday, May 20 → Final Exam for Section 12 → 12:45-2:45 p.m. (Bring Pencil & ScanTron 882E)**