

PHILOSOPHY 2: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

California State University, Sacramento; Spring 2008

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Office Hours:	TR 10:30-11:00am, Sequoia 314

Class Meets: TR 9:00-10:15am, Calaveras 141

Required texts: *Ethics for Life* (Fourth Edition), by Judith A. Boss (McGraw Hill: 2008)
Internet access to *PowerWeb* (www.dushkin.com/powerweb)

Others: You are required to have internet access and an active email address
You are required to purchase your own blue books for exams

Course Description:

The examination of the concepts of morality, obligation, human rights and the good life. Competing theories about the foundations of morality will be investigated.

Course Objectives:

- Understand and analyze various ethical themes and approaches to the foundation of ethics and moral decision making.
- Grasp moral theoretical content of the significant moral philosophers in the ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary periods of western philosophy.
- Understand the contributions and limitations of the application of moral philosophy to social ethics.
- Understand how traditional ethical theories and problems are possible foundations for moral issues in an age and society that is pluralistic, exceptionally diverse, and morally complex.
- Understand how informed and critical exploration of socially recognized issues of contemporary ethical concern might assist in developing a responsible moral decision-making procedure, thus equipping the student for participation in a democracy.
- Understand and evaluate the moral problems that appear contemporarily relevant by virtue of their arising out of a technological age.
- Develop critical thinking, reading, and writing abilities by analyzing one theory against another and/or moral alternative against another.

Class Structure:

This course is designed to enhance the learning experience by utilizing lecture, audio/visuals, and class discussion/debates. The semester is divided into two main sections. The first section will discuss ethical theories, and the second section will discuss practical issues. Reading assignments are given on a regular basis, and in-class quizzes will replace written homework. Details of these assignments are found in the following pages.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation:

Your brain is like a muscle. Just like it is with any athletic sport, regular exercise of the mind is vital in the area of academics. If you don't exercise it like you're supposed to, you will not be able to progress towards the next steps in your regimen, and there is a very high chance that you will not be able to get the kind of results that you were looking for. As a result, it is important to go to class, participate, and do your readings on a regular basis. Keep in mind that participation does not only mean that you speak in class. This also means that you listen with an open mind to what others have to say, even if you strongly disagree with them. Please be involved both by your speaking, and by your listening.

Some of the issues discussed in this class may be very important to you, and there may be times when you are passionate about what we are discussing. Please do not confuse that passion with emotional outbursts. Any comments or criticisms that are not made in the interest of academic pursuit will not be tolerated. For instance, note the difference between these statements:

- “Seriously, if you think that then you're a closed-minded fundamentalist dumbass!!”
 - “What idiot believes in *that* anymore?? Oh my gosh, what a damn bigot!”
- compared with -
- “I reason that your contention is wrong because...”
 - “I think you are misguided in your beliefs because...”

If you become a disruption or intentionally insult another person or the various affiliations that he/she may be a part of (religious, ethnic, cultural, political, etc.), you will be asked to leave the class.

Attendance:

Attendance & participation is required for each class period and will count as 5% towards your overall course grade (50 points). Please note that failure to participate in class (i.e., sleeping in class, failure to submit in-class assignments, failure to participate in group discussions) will count as absences. The following are the only excusable absences I accept: medical reasons for you or an immediate family member (such as a spouse or child); funeral attendance; court date; U.S. military service. *You must provide written proof in order for these absences to be excused.*

The university's attendance policy, as noted in the catalog, states the following:
(<http://aaweb.csus.edu/catalog/current/First%20100%20Pages/attendance.asp>)

Classroom attendance is generally necessary for academic success; therefore, regular attendance at class is expected. In some courses (for example, laboratories or seminars), attendance is absolutely critical to the work of the course. Students are advised that individual faculty may establish attendance policies in their courses and may link absences to their evaluation of students' performance in the course. Such policies must be stated in the course syllabus made available at the beginning of the semester. Excessive absences may lead a faculty member to assign a “WU” or “F” grade.

In addition to academic consequences of non-attendance, some students will be subject to other penalties including ineligibility for or repayment of federal financial aid or educational benefits received on the premise of class attendance...

Grading Scale:

- 100%	A+ (Superhuman)	- 78% - 79%	C+ (Average)
- 93% - 99%	A (Outstanding)	- 73% - 77%	C (Average)
- 90% - 92%	A- (Excellent)	- 70% - 72%	C- (Average)
- 88% - 89%	B+ (Very Good)	- 68% - 69%	D+ (Below average)
- 83% - 87%	B (Good)	- 63% - 67%	D (Unsatisfactory, but passing)
- 80% - 82%	B- (Above Average)	- 60% - 62%	D- (Unsatisfactory, but passing)
		- 59% & below	F (Failure from course)

Breakdown of Points

- Reading Quizzes – 200 points (20%)
- Paper (and Prospectus) – 200 points (20%)
- Group Presentation – 150 points (15%)
- Debate Analysis Packet – 200 points (20%)
- Final Exam – 200 points (20%)
- Attendance/Participation – 50 points (5%)
- TOTAL – 1000 points

You are responsible for tracking your own progress in this course. This can be done through calculating the percentage by dividing the total number of points you have accumulated by the total number of points possible. For example, let's say you have accumulated 270 points out of a possible 325: $270 / 325 = 0.83$. In effect, you would be receiving 83% in the course so far, which is a B grade. You are more than welcome to ask me to verify that your calculations are consistent with mine.

You may use the following to help you tabulate your scores:

- Quiz #1 (02-07)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 20 points	= _____%
- Quiz #2 (02-14)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 40 points	= _____%
- Quiz #3 (02-21)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 60 points	= _____%
- Quiz #4 (02-28)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 80 points	= _____%
- Quiz #5 (03-08)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 100 points	= _____%
- Paper Prospectus	_____ / 25 points	_____ / 125 points	= _____%
- Quiz #6 (03-13)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 145 points	= _____%
- Quiz #7 (03-20)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 165 points	= _____%
- Paper (03-25)	_____ / 175 points	_____ / 340 points	= _____%
- Quiz #8 (03-27)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 360 points	= _____%
- Quiz #9 (04-10)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 380 points	= _____%
- Quiz #10 (04-17)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 400 points	= _____%
- Quiz #11 (04-29)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 400 points	= _____%
- Quiz #12 (05-06)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 400 points	= _____%
- Quiz #13 (05-13)	_____ / 20 points	_____ / 400 points	= _____%
- Group Presentation	_____ / 150 points	_____ / 550 points	= _____%
- Debate Analysis Packet	_____ / 200 points	_____ / 750 points	= _____%
- Final Exam	_____ / 200 points	_____ / 950 points	= _____%
- Attendance/Participation	_____ / 50 points	_____ / 1000 points	= _____%

Learning Difficulties:

If your methods of learning are unique and prevents you from learning in a manner consistent with the “average” or “general” student, please notify me as soon as possible so that I can make the proper modifications to better suit your learning abilities. Such differing learning styles include but are not limited to: Attention Deficit Disorder, Blindness, Deafness, Dyslexia, and an inability to take notes.

Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty will result in an immediate failure from your exam or paper, and, depending on the extent of your dishonesty, failure from the course. Flagrant plagiarism will result in an immediate failure from the course. Don't do it. It's not worth it, and you will be wasting your tuition and book money.

**Dishonesty includes but is not limited to the following:

Cheating - copying from another person's test or homework, using cheat sheets during exams, submitting work previously graded in another course, submitting work simultaneously presented in more than one course, altering or interfering with grading or grading instructions, sitting for an exam by a surrogate or as a surrogate, any other act that defrauds or misrepresents the student

Plagiarism – incorporating into one's own work the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs or parts thereof of another's work without giving credit to that other individual; and representing another's scholarly works as one's own.

You are also held responsible for the policies and procedures regarding academic honesty, as noted in the University Policy Manual: www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/UMA00150.htm . Please be aware that any attempts to be dishonest will result in a failure of the assignment or exam. Depending on the extent of your dishonesty, it could lead to failure from the course.

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Reading assignments are on the semester calendar located at the end of this syllabus. From January to March, readings will come from your textbook, *Ethics for Life* by Judith Boss. Beginning with April, readings will come primarily from the PowerWeb essays (<http://www.dushkin.com/powerweb>). I will provide for you the access to this website. You are strongly advised to read these PowerWeb essays several times, as the readings can be hard and may require much thought.

QUIZZES:

Quizzes are based on your reading assignments, and will replace written homework. They will cover the previous weeks' assigned reading. They are generally given on a weekly basis. Quizzes begin at the beginning of the class day (immediately after I take attendance). Its content will cover the material between the time of the previous quiz to the present. If you are late to class, you will still be given the same amount of time to finish as those who come to class on time. For example, if you are 5 minutes late, you will only have 10 minutes to complete your quiz. If you are 10 minutes late to class, you will only have 5 minutes to complete your quiz.

You will have a total of 13 quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes are worth 20 points each, which will accumulate to a total of 200 possible points for the course (20% of your grade). Please note that,

because there are 13 quizzes, you are eligible to either 1) take these three to receive extra credit; or 2) choose skip one, two, or three of these quizzes.

Makeup quizzes will not be given unless you are able to provide evidence for: 1) death in the family (please provide funeral program, obituary news, etc.); 2) an illness or injury that requires medical attention (doctor's note or medical records are required); or 3) military service (please provide notice). If you are simply sick, could not wake up in time for class, got stuck in traffic, had to babysit your child or sibling, etc., these are not eligible for makeup. If such a circumstance occurs, your missed quiz will count as one of the aforementioned allowable skipped quizzes.

CLASS PRESENTATION:

Your class presentation is an in-class debate that will take place sometime in April or May. You will work with up to 3 classmates on one of the presentation topics/positions, and will debate another team of 3-4 on the opposing position. Your group will be required to provide me with an outline or PowerPoint presentation of the material that you plan to discuss (it will be published online for classmates to view). The debate is worth up to 150 points, or 15% of your final grade.

You will be given the opportunity to choose which topic/position you would like to discuss. Because this course is designed for your own personal/intellectual development, I do prefer that you to pick a topic that either interests you or affects you in one way or another. Some may inevitably not get the presentation topic of their choice. If you don't, use it as an opportunity to learn something new!

The following is a list of the debate topics that we will be covering:

- Sexual Ethics – Is it morally permissible to engage in sexual activity with whomever we want, as long as both/all parties give consent?
- Affirmative Action – Should we implement affirmative action policies for school admissions and workplaces in order to compensate for past injustices? To promote equality & diversity?
- Ethics of Violence – Are we morally justified in resorting to violence (i.e., war, death penalty) to prevent, end, or “bring justice to” a [worse] violence or injustice?
- Euthanasia / Physician-Assisted Suicide – Does an individual have the right to end his/her own life if he/she is suffering? Do family members have the right to “pull the plug” on a loved one if the probability for success is slim-to-none?
- Abortion – Does a three-month old fetus deserve the same moral rights as an adult person?
- Environmental Ethics – Do we have a moral obligation to care for the long-term well-being of our earth's natural resources?

The format of the debate will follow as such:

- Each group takes their turn to give a 15-minute presentation on their position. Groups are more than welcome to use PowerPoint presentations, video clips, audio clips, object lessons, or other props to help explain and defend their position. The original presentation should include:
 - o Summary of your position
 - o Definition of relevant terms
 - o Detailed explanation of relevant philosophers' arguments (especially the philosopher who supports your position)
 - o Step-by-step analysis of why your position is stronger than the opposition
 - Remember to reference back to the arguments of the relevant philosopher(s)

- Use of various examples to help strengthen your position
- The opposing groups will then be given an opportunity to rebut by explaining/reasoning why their opposition's position is flawed.
 - There will be no interruptions by opposing group members or classmates during this rebuttal. The first group is given their free time to rebut, followed by the second group.
- We will then open up the discussion to the floor for an in-class discussion
 - The instructor will be moderating this discussion to ensure that it does not digress too much.

Unless you are quoting a phrase or short paragraph, try not to read directly off your papers/cheat sheets. If a student speaks too long, I will stop him/her so that we can move on. Your presentation will be graded by your classmates, with myself (the instructor) having the final say on total points). Here are the following standards of evaluation:

- Integration of course material (application of concepts)
- Ability to persuade through reason and rationality
- Clarity of thought
- Principle of charity (consideration of the opposing position)
- Absence of emotionally-charged language

Those who are part of the audience will also have to opportunity to give written feedback to their classmates.

Extra credit will be offered to those who choose to meet me during office hours (at least one week prior to their presentation). To receive the credit, you must set up an appointment with me, and come prepared to ask questions!

PAPER ASSIGNMENT:

Paper Prospectus

Two weeks before your paper is due (March 11, 2008), I will require you to submit a paper prospectus. In other words, you must write a paragraph explaining your intentions for your paper, and a basic outline and/or summary on what you plan to discuss. This prospectus does not have to be extremely detailed or long; but must show evidence that you have at least begun thinking about your paper topic. This prospectus is worth 25 points of your total paper grade.

Technical Details

Your paper is worth 175 points [prospectus (25 points) + paper (175 points) = 200 total points]. It will be due on March 25, 2008, and must be 5-6 pages long.

Your paper must be submitted *during class* on the due date. If you turn your paper in late, you will lose 5 points for each day that it is late. For example, let's say you submitted a paper that should receive 175 out of 200 points (the equivalent of a B+ grade). This paper was 5 days late, which means you lose 25 points, equaling to a total of 150 out of 200 points (the equivalent of a C grade). It may also be helpful to check out the "Grading Guidelines" to see the standards I'll use to grade your papers: <http://www.csus.edu/phil/req/grading.htm>.

If you come up to me during class and ask, "Can I email it to you tonight?" my answer will be "Yes. But your paper will be considered late" (a 5 point penalty). The only circumstances that

may excuse a late paper are 1) death in the family; 2) debilitating illness or injury of yourself or an immediate family member; such as your child or spouse or 3) U.S. military service. Documentation must be provided for these excuses. *Please note that computer problems are not legitimate excuses.* Be sure you have a backup plan for your work.

In addition to the above, your paper should be in accordance with the APA format. Please pay careful attention to the following:

- Double-spaced, typewritten with at least 1-inch margins, and a font equivalent to 12-points, Times New Roman. *Your font also must use normal character spacing* (you may not use expanded character spacing).
- If you quote the author, you must use quotation marks and reference the reading (footnote or endnote). If your quotation spans more than four lines, the quote needs to be *indented and single-spaced*.
- Please do not create additional space when making paragraph breaks (i.e., pushing “enter” twice when you want to start a new paragraph). For an example of what I mean here, come to this website: <http://scc.losrios.edu/~chungd/do-not.pdf>
- You may also use the following website to help you out in writing your paper (found at the CSUS website): <http://www.csus.edu/phil/req/writing.htm>.

Your paper **MUST FOLLOW THE REQUIREMENTS AS NOTED IN THIS SYLLABUS**. Otherwise, it will be counted as a “non-response,” resulting in a credit of zero. Examples of non-responses include, but are not limited to: papers that cover a completely different topic than the one assigned; papers that do not provide philosophical analysis; and papers that do not contain a personal story.

Content Details

This paper will require you to: 1) Develop at least one of the ethical theories that we have discussed in class; and 2) Use an example from your life – one that required some sort of moral response – to apply to that theory.

The situation you write about will be your choice. This can be as small as a decision to tell the lady at the checkout counter that she gave you too much change or an argument you had with your roommate about cleaning the dishes. You may also discuss more serious matters, such as a decision to leave an abusive relationship or a refusal to join your friends in participating in an illegal activity. You are certainly not required to disclose the more personal moral dilemmas in your life; but if you do, please know that they are kept confidential.

The required content of your paper is to: 1) Tell me what you’re going to tell me; 2) Tell me; and 3) Tell me what you just told me. To be more specific, it should include the following:

- The introduction, or thesis statement
 - o The first paragraph should be an abstract of your paper. It should include a basic description of the theory you will analyze and evaluate, a basic description of the moral dilemma you faced, and a brief explanation of the conclusions you had come to regarding the morality of your action.
- The body
 - o Provide a detailed explanation (3-4 pages) of the particular theory or theories you are using to evaluate that situation.

- Who is/are the major philosopher(s) supporting this ethical theory (*You must reference the text for this aspect*)?
 - Why should this theory be the foundation of our moral decisions? In other words, what makes this theory better than others?
- To better explain the moral theory, use an example from your own life (1 page or less). What was situation that required a moral response? How did you respond to that situation? How did you act, or what did you say?
 - Note that your paper should focus primarily on the development of the moral theory as it applies to your circumstance. It should not focus primarily on autobiographical content. As a result, do not spend the bulk of the paper discussing your situation. The description of your personal dilemma ought to be only ½ to 1 page long.
- Based on this ethical theory, did you respond morally (1-2 pages)? Why or why not? If you did not, what would have been a better response to this situation?
 - Don't forget to use different arguments from the particular ethical theory to determine the "goodness" or "badness" of your response.
 - Remember to *apply* the various details of the moral theory to your circumstance!
- The conclusion
 - A summary of your paper
 - Any other concluding remarks about your final position

Your paper will be graded strictly on your application of the moral theory to your circumstance, and will not consider the intensity of the moral situation you faced. As a result, please do not feel personally attacked or offended if you wrote about a very personal topic and subsequently received a low grade. If you received a lower grade, it is not because I am insensitive to your life and struggles. Rather, a lower grade is a direct result of your failure to fulfill the above necessary requirements for this assignment.

DEBATE ANALYSIS PACKET

Your final assignment (with the exception of your final exam) will be to submit a debate analysis packet, due on the last day of lecture (May 5, 2008). There will be a total of 6 debates in class: your own debate (worth 50 points), and the additional 5 debates (worth 30 points each). To prepare you for the analysis and evaluation write-up, I will post the debate outlines online for your reference. If you have an excused absence during a day that a debate presentation occurred, please complete a peer evaluation form and written analysis, both based upon the outline that is provided.

Peer Debates Analyses:

The technical requirements should include the following:

- A copy of your completed peer evaluation form, from each presentation debate
- A philosophical analysis and evaluation of each debate presentation. Each analysis should be one to two pages long, single to 1.5 spaced (you choose)

Your philosophical analysis and evaluation should include the following:

- A brief analysis of the presentation topic and basic arguments set forth by both sides of the debate.

- An evaluation of who you think ‘won’ the debate. In other words, explain how and why the presenters succeeded or failed in arguing for/against the topic. Which presenters provided the best reasons for supporting their claim? At what points were they flawed in their reasoning? How could the presenters have improved in their argument? What conclusions do you come to regarding this matter?
 - o Note that your discussion here is not meant to be an autobiographical or descriptive analysis of the presenters (for example, “I felt Presenter A seemed nervous. He said “um” 32 times and “uh” 18 times. That was distracting. Also, they had a lot of slides that didn’t make sense, and the pictures were ugly.”).
 - o Note that your discussion here is meant to be a prescriptive analysis of the presentation’s content (for example, “Presenter A did not provide a sufficient response to the question. Their first premise falls short because they did not consider X, Y, and Z...”).
- Finally, some personal thoughts on the issue. What do you think about this topic now? Have you changed your mind regarding your position (if you had one at all)?

Your Own Group Debate Analysis:

The requirements should include the following:

- A philosophical analysis and evaluation of your own debate presentation, alongside your opposing group. This analysis should be two to three pages long, single to 1.5 spaced (you choose)
- Please use the same guidelines above to complete your self-evaluation.

TESTS:

You will only have one test in this course, which is the final exam. The final exam will be cumulative and will comprise 20% of your grade (200 points). Note that this exam will be in the format of short answers and essays (no multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks, etc.). Study hard!

READING SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE):

The tentative schedule for the class is outlined in the following pages. Readings are noted underneath the topic of the day. Please keep in mind that this schedule and the assigned readings are subject to change due to any unforeseen circumstances.

January 2008

29 (T) – Welcome and Introductions

31 (R) – Philosophy and Ethics
Boss, p. 3-17, 26-30

February 2008

05 (T) – Moral Reasoning
Boss, p. 33-49

07 (R) – Quiz #1 on Readings from Jan 31-Feb 5
Subjectivism
Boss, p. 76-84, 93-98

12 (T) – Relativism
Boss, p. 100-105, 118-125, 137-142

14 (R) – Quiz #2 on Readings from Feb 7-12
Virtue Ethics
Boss, p. 400-414

19 (T) – Virtue Ethics
Boss, p. 400-414

21 (R) – Quiz #3 on Readings from Feb 14-19
Divine Command
Boss, p. 147-158, 184-187

26 (T) – Altruism, Conscience, & Care Ethics
Boss, p. 419-425; 200-208

28 (R) – Quiz #4 on Readings from Feb 21-26
Egoism
Boss, p. 237-258

March 2008

04 (T) – Egoism
Boss, p. 237-258

08 (R) – Quiz #5 on Readings from Feb 28-Mar 4
Utilitarianism, Bentham
Boss, p. 271-283

11 (T) – **Paper Prospectus Due!**
Utilitarianism, Mill
Boss, p. 284-289; 304-308

13 (R) – Quiz #6 on Readings from Mar 8-11
Deontology, Kant
Boss, p. 311-313, 318-336

18 (T) – Deontology, Ross
Boss, p. 338-343, 351-353

20 (R) – Quiz #7 on Readings from Mar 13-18
Rights Ethics
Boss, p. 362-363, 376-381, 384-388, 396-397

25 (T) – **Paper Assignment #1 Due!**
Sexual Ethics, PowerWeb #59:
“Sexual Morality and the Concept of
Using Another Person” (Mappes)

27 (R) – Quiz #8 on Readings from Mar 25
Sexual Ethics Debate

April 2008

- 01 (T) – *Spring Break – No School*
- 03 (R) – *Spring Break – No School*
- 08 (T) – Affirmative Action PowerWeb # 23:
“Affirmative Action” (Boxill)
[Boss, p. 345-350]
- 10 (R) – Quiz #9 on Readings from Apr 8
Affirmative Action Debate
- 15 (T) – Ethics of Violence, PowerWeb # 67:
“Morality and Violence” (Narveson)
- 17 (R) – Quiz #10 on Readings from Apr 15
Violence Debate
- 22 (T) – Special Event: Nammour Symposium
- 23 (W) – Special Event: Nammour Symposium
- 24 (R) – Euthanasia, PowerWeb # 49:
“A Moral Principle About Killing”
(Brandt)
[Boss, p. 298-302]
- 29 (T) – Quiz #11 on Readings from Apr 24
Euthanasia Debate

May 2008

- 01 (R) – Abortion, PowerWeb #20:
“On the Moral and Legal Status of
Abortion” (Warren)
[Boss, p. 391-395]
- 06 (T) – Quiz #12 on Readings from May 1
Abortion Debate
- 08 (R) – The Environment, PowerWeb #48:
“A Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric
Biocentrism” (Watson)
[Boss, p. 180-183]
- 13 (T) – Quiz #13 on Readings from May 8
Environmental Ethics Debate
- 15 (R) – **Paper Assignment #2 Due!**
Final Thoughts
Boss, p. 441-443
- 20 (T) – Final Exam (8am-10am)