

## University of Houston-Downtown

**Course Prefix, Number, and Title:** PHIL 2305 Contemporary Ethical Issues

**Credits/Lecture/Lab Hours:** 3/3/0

**Foundational Component Area:** Language, Philosophy and Culture

**Prerequisites:** Completion of, or concurrent enrollment in, ENG 1302.

**Co-requisites:** None

**Course Description:** Introduction to the philosophical examination of contemporary moral issues. Emphasis on critical examination and comparison of different perspectives on the rightness and wrongness of various actions typically considered morally problematic in the contemporary world. Topics covered may include abortion, capital punishment, discrimination and prejudice, and environmental issues.

**TCCNS Number:** N/A

**Demonstration of Core Objectives within the Course:**

<b>Assigned Core Objective</b>	<b>Learning Outcome Students will be able to:</b>	<b>Instructional strategy or content used to achieve the outcome*</b>	<b>Method by which students' mastery of this outcome will be evaluated</b>
Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility	Describe how ideas, values, beliefs and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience.	Through lecture, class discussion and guided analysis of texts students consider and weigh cultural expression of human experience.	At least 6 pages of writing*
Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility	Analyze fundamental ideas that foster intellectual and aesthetic creation across human cultures.	Through lecture, class discussion and guided analysis of texts students learn how various aesthetic and intellectual ideas are formulated.	At least 6 pages of writing*
Critical Thinking Communication	Evaluate assumptions, concepts, and language to develop defensible conclusions based on analysis of information relevant to course content.	Through lecture, class discussion and guided analysis of texts students examine and critique the ethical conclusions drawn by various authors in regard to circumstances under investigation.	At least 10 pages of writing*
Critical Thinking	Synthesize and deliver well-constructed analyses and	Though lecture, class discussion and guided analysis of texts	Oral presentation or structured discussion (or

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Communication	arguments about course content using multiple modalities (including written, oral, and visual formats).	students will learn how arguments are constructed and organized.	other form of assessable oral communication), 6 pages of writing outside of class*
Social Responsibility  Personal Responsibility	Identify ethical dimensions of behavior and language use in different cultural contexts.	Through a survey of different cultural ethical constructs and guided analysis of texts students learn to identify, compare, describe and debate cultural similarities and differences.	At least 6 pages of writing outside of class*
Social Responsibility  Personal Responsibility	Connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making through the analysis of ethical dilemmas explored through literature, philosophical, or intercultural texts	Through lecture, guided reading and discussion students learn to apply theory to practical issues.	At least 15 pages of writing*

**Additional Course Outcomes:**

After completing this course, student will be able to:

- Read and interrogate philosophy texts on Ethics
- Construct and analyze philosophical arguments
- Apply ethical theories to everyday life situations
- Think critically by engaging in contemplation, analysis and evaluation
- Coherently articulate views verbally and in written form
- Engage in respectful debate with others and think through perspectives of others

**Course Outline:**

*Two day class schedule*

**Week 1:**

Introduction to the class

The Origin of Ethics

**Week 2:**

Ethics in small-scale societies

Aldo Leopold, The Land Ethic (ERES, UHD)

**Week 3:**

Nell Noddings, Care Ethics (ERES, UHD)

Carol Gilligan, Images of Relationship (ERES, UHD)

**Week 4:**

Student Presentations

Student Presentations

**Week 5:**

Indian Ethics

Buddhist Ethics

**Week 6:**

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Classical Chinese Ethics Jewish Ethics

**Week 7:**

Christian Ethics

Islamic Ethics

**Week 8:**

Student Presentations

Student Presentations

**Week 9: Spring Break**

**Week 10: MIDTERM**

Midterm Exam

Nietzsche, On The Genealogy of Morals, #4-11

<http://www.geocities.com/thenietzschechannel/onthe.htm#1e1>

**Week 11:**

Kantian Ethics

Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism" (ERES, UHD)

**Week 12:**

Egoism

John Stuart Mill, "What Utilitarianism Is"

<http://www.utilitarianism.com/mill2.htm>

**Week 13:**

Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality"

<http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/1972----.htm>

Garrett Hardin, "Life Boat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor"

[http://www.garretthardinsociety.org/articles/art\\_lifeboat\\_ethics\\_case\\_against\\_helping\\_poor.html](http://www.garretthardinsociety.org/articles/art_lifeboat_ethics_case_against_helping_poor.html)

**Week 14:**

Laurence Thomas, "Moral Deference"

<http://www.laurencethomas.com/>

Student Presentations

**Week 15:**

Student Presentations

Student Presentations

**Week 16: Reading Days**

Reading Day

**Paper Due**

**Week 17: Final Exams**

**Grading/Course Content which Demonstrates Student Achievement of Core Objectives:**

Grading Scale: 90-100 = A; 89-80 = B; 79-70 = C; 69-60 = D; 59 and below = F

Summary of Course Exams, Quizzes, Assignments and Final	
Midterm In-Class Exam	25%
Final Paper	35%
15 minute oral presentation (and written outline)	20%
Discussion and Attendance	20%

