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Description automatically generated**PHIL 1400: Ethics and Society**

Spring 2025.1400.002

**Instructor**

Atoosa Afshari

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Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30 PM to 01:50 PM, HKRY 252

Office Hours: Online, By Appointment

**Course Overview**

Ethics fundamentally derives its meaning and significance from our existence in society and our collective interactions, whether with humans or other beings. This interconnection between ethics and society is so profound that ethical principles might lose their relevance if we were to exist in isolation. Together, we aim to learn about the practical applications of ethics in our daily lives and explore ethics' potential for change over time. We'll examine whether ethical principles are immutable or can change with societal shifts. This exploration goes into various philosophical perspectives, considering the views of thinkers throughout history on nature and the role of ethics in human society. By understanding ethics in this societal context, we gain insights into how moral frameworks shape our world and vice versa. Through reading, discussion, and watching movies together, we'll engage with these concepts dynamically and interactively.

💡📣: Never ignore the class's Announcements on Canvas. When you receive an email notifying you of an Announcement to read, please make sure to read it.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, you will develop:

* Gain familiarity with the foundational ethical principles and their relationship with society and an understanding of how they have changed over time.
* Ethics in all aspects of society: interpretation, analysis, and evaluation.
* Apply improved reading and critical thinking skills.

**Prerequisite(s): Nope. 😎**

**Evaluation**

Your performance in the Ethics in Science course will be assessed using various assignments, each contributing to your final grade as follows:

1. **In-class Short Quizzes (25%):** Throughout the course, you will participate in quizzes that are vital for your regular assessment. These quizzes are designed not just to test your knowledge but also to evaluate how well you can develop your answers, consider multiple perspectives, and apply critical thinking. You will be assessed on your ability to write and describe your answers in a well-organized and thoughtful manner. This component will account for 25% of your final grade.
2. **Group presentation projects (25%):** A mid-term exam will be administered to evaluate your comprehension and application of the concepts learned during the first half of the course. This exam will account for 25% of your final grade.
3. **Final Exam (25%):** You can choose the format for your final exam, whether it is a paper, an artwork, or any other creative thing that aligns with what we have covered in class. This flexibility allows you to express your strengths and demonstrate your

understanding in a way that resonates with your personality and major. This exam will account for 25% of your final grade.

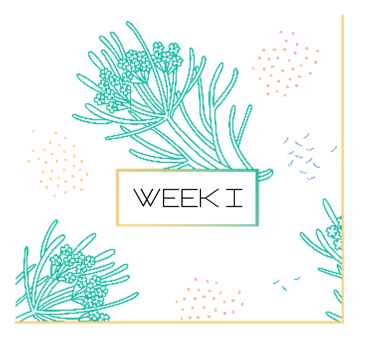
1. **Attendance (25%):** I will be checking attendance at every class. You get a free pass for up to **Four classes**, but after that, you will lose 5% of your attendance grade for every further unexcused absence. If you're missing class for a university event, a family loss, a religious holiday, or if you're feeling under the weather (with a doctor's note), don't worry – that's considered an excused absence. Please just make sure to provide the necessary documentation. (Good news: At the end of the semester, up to 4 unexcused absences will be waived. This means they will not negatively impact your attendance record.)

***Total*: 100%**

**Grading Scale:** Grades will be assigned based on the traditional A-F scale as follows:

* A: 90-100%
* B: 80-89%
* C: 70-79%
* D: 60-69%
* F: 59% and below

**Course Schedule**

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* **Ethics and Society**

**Tue Jan 14:** Syllabus & Starting Introduction

**Thu Jan 16:** Introduction

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* **Ethical Dos and Don’ts for Society**

**Tue Jan 21: Movie:** The National Anthem (Black Mirror) & Discussion: Kant’s Categorical Imperative

**Thu Jan 23:** continuation of the discussion (deontology and consequentialism)

* ** Human Nature and Ethics in Society**

**Tue Jan 28**: In-class Short Quiz & Discussion: Is there such a thing as human nature? Mencius, Xunzi, Hobbes or and Yin Yang, Sartre & Movie: The Lobster

**Thu Jan 30**: continuation of The Lobster

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* **Ethics of Education in Society**

**Tue Feb 4**: Discussion: What do we consider education?

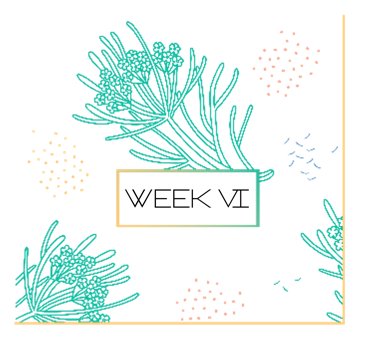
**Thu Feb 6:** Continuation of the Discussion

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* **The Concept of Ambiguity in Society**

**Tue Feb 11**: In-class Short Quiz & “The Ethics of Ambiguity” by Simone de Beauvoir)

**Thu Feb 13:** Guest Lecturer (The matter of ambiguity in your academic major)

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* **Continuation: The Concept of Ambiguity in Society**

**Tue Feb 18:** Movie: Force Majeure

**Thu Feb 20:** continuation of Force Majeure, Discussion & In-class Short Quiz



* **The Relation Between Ethics and Religion**

**Tue Feb25:** Morality and Moral Controversies (Steven Scalet, John Arthur)

**Thu Feb 27**: Movie: Melancholia



* **Universal constants?!**

**Tue Mar 4:** continuation of melancholia & Discussion

**Thu Mar 6**: Questioning universal constants “On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral

Sense” (Friedrich Nietzsche)

*  **Environmental Ethics and Society**

**Tue Mar 18**: In-class Short Quiz & what is environmental ethics? (Joseph R. DesJardins) & Human accountability towards the environment (Steven Scalet, John Arthur)

**Thu Mar 20**: What Is Philosophy of Food? Have you ever thought about the role of animals in this regard? (David, M Kaplan)

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* **Start of the Mid-Term Presentations**

**Tue Mar 25:** Watching a video (Grandin) & In-class Short Quiz

**Thu Mar 27:** The First Group Presentations

* **The Continuation of the Group presentations**
* **First group presentation**. *The first group will receive a* ***bonus***. 🙌

**Policies**

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

Let's remember to always treat our instructors and each other with kindness and respect. Studying philosophy means we might have different viewpoints, which is entirely more than okay! Let's make sure our discussions stay friendly and respectful. 😊📚

**Academic Integrity**

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with UNT’s policy on Academic Integrity: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in academic penalties or sanctions ranging from failing an assignment to expulsion from the University.

**Disability Accommodations**

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. If you require accommodation for disabilities, please register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and communicate with the instructor as soon as possible. For additional information, see the ODA website at [disability.unt.edu](http://disability.unt.edu/).