**Ethics and Society**

**PHIL 1400.001**

**Summer 2022, 6/6/22-7/8/22**

**Meeting times:** M/T/W/R, 1:00-2:50pm

**Location:** CHEM 253

**Instructors:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ben Larsen (he/him)  [Ben.larsen@unt.edu](mailto:Ben.larsen@unt.edu)  ENV 372A  Office hours: by appointment | Sara Louise Tonge (she/her)  [Saralouise.tonge@unt.edu](mailto:Saralouise.tonge@unt.edu)  ENV 372A  Office hours: by appointment |

**Course description:**

This 3-credit, 5-week course is a discussion-based survey of basic ethical theories and exploration of such issues as abortion, euthanasia, national security and civil liberties, affirmative action, the death penalty, extramarital sex, pornography, animal rights, world hunger, and the environment. There are no prerequisites for Ethics and Society.

**Course structure:**

We will be meeting face-to-face four times per week throughout the term. Each week, on average, students can expect to be responsible for completing two assigned readings and two Canvas quizzes. This class focuses on critical reading and thinking skills, and in-class discussions will model and provide practice in these skills. While some of the texts might be challenging, we expect all class participants to arrive prepared to discuss the reading for the day. (This may mean being prepared to identify difficult passages that you’re still struggling to piece together.) A final assessment for the course will ask students to demonstrate their knowledge of multiple ethical theories by composing an argumentative essay.

**Learning objectives:**

* Students will gain familiarity with basic ethical concepts and theories.
* Students will acquire skills to develop a philosophical argument orally, in written form, and in constructive debate to defend ethical positions in various contexts.
* Students will practice critical thinking about real-world societal challenges that have impacts on our daily lives.
* Students will develop an ethical awareness of the importance of moral reasoning and action.

**Communication expectations:**

Communication regarding course information will be handled through Canvas. If you have questions or concerns at any point during the term and wish to contact the instructors via email, please contact them using the addresses listed above. Instructors will do their best to respond within 24 hours Monday-Thursday and may take slightly longer to respond on days when class does not meet.

**Required materials:**

One text is required for the class: Shafer-Landau, R. (2012). *The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems* (4th ed). Oxford University.

Additional readings will be made available through the course Canvas page.

**Attendance expectations:**

Since our class depends on discussion and student involvement, your presence matters! Each person is offered two free absences. Beginning with the third absence, your final grade will be penalized 3 percentage points, up to a maximum penalty of 15% to your overall grade.

**Assignment/Grading breakdown:**

Total grades for this class will be comprised of the following:

15% Weekly Quizzes (on Canvas)

-2 reading quizzes per week, due every Sunday at 11:59pm.

-1 feedback poll per week, due every Sunday at 11:59pm.

15% Attendance

-You are allowed 2 absences throughout the semester. Each absence after that will take away 20% of your attendance grade.

25% Assignments

-Assignments may include reading reflections, elements relating to your final paper (outline, body paragraph, peer review etc.), and contributions of outside material to class discussion.

45% Final paper

-Final papers will be 4-5 full pages double spaced (not including footnotes), Times New Roman 12pt font, with appropriate references. In this paper, you will be asked to compare and contrast two ethical theories whilst applying each to relevant examples. Due on the 8th July (this is your final).

Assignment guidance sheets will be distributed throughout the semester ahead of each deadline.

**Grading scale:**

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: 0-59%

**Late work policy:**

No late work will be accepted for this course. If you expect that you will struggle to meet the deadline for any coursework, please contact the instructors in advance to arrange possible alternative deadlines.

**Note on Participation**

Physical presence is not equivalent to class participation. We recognize that some people find it more difficult to speak up in class and so we have designed our course to make it possible for everyone to feel comfortable and confident in discussions. We ask that, while in class, you keep your phone stowed away and refrain from wearing earbuds. If you find that you are having difficulty with class participation, please do not hesitate to send either of us an email or speak to us after class.

**If You’re Struggling/How to do Well in This Class**

If you are struggling with anything at all during the semester, please communicate with us. We each guarantee to respond to any emails sent Monday through Thursday within 24 hours, and we can set up Zoom meetings or face-to-face meetings before or after class Monday through Thursday. If you are struggling with readings, concepts, or worried about being able to meet deadlines, or even if you are interested in a topic and would like to explore it further, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

**Inclusivity Statement:**

UNT students represent a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity and inclusion.

**Drop/Withdrawal Information and other Academic Dates:** <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html>

**ODA accommodation statement:**

The University of North Texas is committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. Students with disabilities requiring accommodations in the classroom should contact UNT’s Office of Disability Access (ODA) which works in partnership with faculty and staff to eliminate or minimize barriers in the educational environment and facilitate inclusion on campus by determining reasonable accommodations that will enable every student to have equal access to the full range of UNT programs and services. Students with accommodations or services already coordinated by the ODA should contact the professor immediately via email or during scheduled office hours to ensure all necessary services are in place for their success.

**Academic integrity expectations:**

Students are responsible for reading, understanding, and following UNT’s Academic Dishonesty Policy, which can be found here: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>

**Schedule:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 6/6 | Welcome, going over the syllabus |
| 6/7 | Moral relativism: *Trying out a New Sword* (pdf on Canvas) |
| 6/8 and 6/9 | *Natural Goodness* (pdf on Canvas) |
| 6/13 and 6/14 | Social contract theory: *Leviathan* |
| 6/15 and 6/16 | Social contract theory in today’s world: TBD |
| 6/20 and 6/21 | Virtue ethics: *Nicomachean Ethics* |
| 6/22 and 6/23 | *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* |
| 6/27 and 6/28 | Deontology: *The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative* |
| 6/29 and 6/30 | *Utilitarianism* |
| 7/4, 7/5, 7/6, 7/7 | TBD (what you would like to focus on!) |