

PHIL 1400.004: ETHICS AND SOCIETY

INSTRUCTOR

- Bernardo R. Vargas, Ph.D. Candidate in Philosophy, MA in Philosophy
- Pronouns: He/His/Él/They
- **Office Hours: Via Zoom or in-person appointment**
- Email: bernardo.vargas@unt.edu
 - ***Due to the high volume of students, I will only respond to emails to communicate with you more efficiently. Please do not message me on Canvas, as I will not see it.**
 - I will respond to emails Monday through Friday before 5 PM. Feel free to send a friendly reminder if I don't respond within 24 hours of a workday.
 - ***Please format your message in the following email format (Use ChatGPT for professional email guidelines if you are unfamiliar.):**
 1. Salutation: "Hi Prof. Vargas, ...
 2. Introduction: This is Maria from PHIL 2600-X...
 3. Body: I am reaching out to ask if...
 4. Closing: Thanks! — Maria"

CLASS SCHEDULE

- Tue-Thurs 11 AM to 12:20 PM
- Room: Wh 317

READING MATERIAL:

- No required text needed. All material will be made available through Canvas as a PDF.
- Note: Although the PDFs will be provided, I highly recommend beginning to grow your library by purchasing the full text of each book for further.

OTHER REQUIRED MATERIAL:

- Scantrons
- Pencils
- Notebook paper (needs to be able to tear loose so you can submit it at times)

COURSE OVERVIEW

This 3-credit course is a discussion-based survey of basic ethical theories and exploration of such issues as abortion, national security and civil liberties, racial justice, environmental justice, sexuality, animal rights, world hunger, and technology. This course meets the university core requirement of examining how ideas, values and beliefs affect human experience. Through the careful study of materials concerning various moral themes fundamental to the human condition, this course also meets the university core requirement of fostering intellectual creation and developing critical thinking skills. Together we will be learning how to navigate moral

complexities and walk through life, inflicting no violence and cheering respect, kindness and justice towards other humans and other-than-human forms of life. There are no prerequisites for Ethics and Society.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

Learning outcomes

- Students will get an understanding of key ethical theories and their application;
- Students will develop communication skills necessary for effective interpretation and expression of ideas;
- Students will acquire critical thinking skills such as information synthesis, evaluation and creative inquiry;
- Students will be able to express their viewpoints clearly and engage in respectful conversations with peers.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Philosophy is a field of study that requires constant engagement with our peers. Students are expected to participate and voice their understanding of the course readings and their assessments of the arguments. Students are expected to come to class having read the material and prepared to discuss the readings. Students should engage with the material as much as possible.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

Students are expected to show respect to the instructor and their fellow classmates. Although we may not always agree on ethics and philosophy, disagreement should never invite disrespect or hostility.

- ***No headphones will be allowed without ODA permission (Participation grade deduction may occur).**

*GRADE ASSESSMENT:

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

Attendance & Class Participation	20%
Weekly Evaluation: Quizzes	20%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Final Presentation: Ethics in Action Project	20%
• Select a topic, receive approval, ad Group Rules	(5%)

• “Get involved!” plan deadline	(5%)
• Presentation/”Get Involved” assessment	(10%)

The final grade distribution is as follows:

100 – 90%	A
89 – 80%	B
79 – 70%	C
69 – 60%	D
60% > F	

1. ***Attendance & Class Participation:** Attendance will be taken every class session.
 - **Students are allowed three unexcused absences.** After three unexcused absences, students will lose 5% of their attendance grade for every additional absence. UNT policy defines an excused absence as an absence due to a university-sponsored event, passing of a family member, religious holiday, or documented illness. Documentation is required.
 - **Your quiz grade will be your verification of attendance in the class. If you arrive late for the quiz and have an excused absence (professor’s discretion), you will be assigned a make-up assignment.**
 - **If you arrive 10 minutes late, you will receive a deduction froma your daily participation grade.**
2. ***Quiz/Assignment: Each quiz will be taken at the beginning of class with a time limit of 10 minutes.** None of the quizzes/assignments are exhaustive; they ensure that students keep pace with the course, complete the assigned readings, and pay attention to the lectures. Quizzes are multiple-choice and true/false questions taken directly from the readings and lectures.
 - a. **Important details**
 - i. **Scantrons & Pencils: All of the quizzes will be graded on Scantrons. Please purchase a pencil and sufficient Scantrons for the 24 quizzes.**
 - ii. **Your worst grade will be dropped.**
 - iii. **Your quiz grade will be your verification of attendance in the class. If you arrive late for the quiz and have an excused absence (professor’s discretion), you will be assigned a make-up assignment.**
3. **Mid-Term Exam:**
 - a. The exam will also be graded on Scantrons.
4. **Final Exam:** The final exam will cover the assigned content, readings, and lectures since the mid-term, and the essay portion will consist of questions regarding your project.
5. **Class Group Presentation:** Students will give a 10-12-minute presentation on an ethical problem, followed by a friendly question-and-answer portion. This presentation will be in groups of 2-4 students. More information regarding the format of the presentation and the exact requirements will come before the mid-term. See the next section for more details.

6. Ethics In Action Project

8. LATE WORK

- ***Each day an assignment is turned in late, there will be a 15-point deduction, unless excused. Please don't hesitate to talk to me about your situation—life happens but it must be communicated.**

Course Schedule:

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in-class or on **Canvas. It is your responsibility to obtain the amended schedule provided by instructor.*

(NOTE: The reading assigned for each day is discussed *that day* and should be read before the class meets):

(Next Page)

ALL READINGS ARE LOCATED IN CANVAS UNDER FILES & MODULES

WEEK	DATE	MODULES & TOPICS	EVALUATIONS
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Module 1 (M1): Introduction to Ethics and Society
What Is Philosophy? What Is Philosopher? What Does It Mean to *Do* Philosophy?
A Greek, African-American, Mexican-American, and Indigenous perspective.

WEEK 1	TUES 8/19	Intro. To Course & Syllabus Review MAIN MODULE QUESTION: What is <i>philosophy</i> according to the Socrates, Cornel West, Lori Gallegos de Castillo and Francisco Gallegos, Brian Burkart? AGENDA: • Introductions • Quiz 1: No prior reading necessary • Syllabus Overview • Intro to Plato & Aristotle • How to read philosophy & succeed in class HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS' Read ☐ Syllabus (part of the next quiz) Watch: ☐ Cornel West, "Examined Life" Video (watch all)	QUIZ 1 (Participation Grade)
	TR 8/21	What is Philosophy? According to Will Durant's and Cornell West's Perspective AGENDA: • Quiz 2 (covering previous homework assignment) • Review • Lecture/Discussion HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read ☐ Durant, <i>The Story of Phil.</i>, "To The Reader," pgs. 1-14 Resources • You can find audiobook versions of Plato's writing on YouTube to follow along as you read. • <u>SparkNotes</u> summaries will help with understanding the general ideas	QUIZ 2

		EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY: FIVE-MINUTE ANALYSIS (UP TO TWO PEOPLE): Lyrical Analysis: <u>David Penn, Roland Clark – The Power</u>	
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WEEK 2	TUES 8/26	What is Philosophy? According to the Greeks	
		AGENDA: - Quiz - Review - Lecture/Discussion HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read ☐ <i>On the Distinctive Value of Mexican American Philosophy: Beginning with the Concerns and Intuitions of Mexican Americans</i> by Lori Gallegos de Castillo and Francisco Gallegos	QUIZ 3
	TR 8/28	What is Philosophy? Mexican American Perspective	
		AGENDA: - Quiz - Review - Lecture/Discussion: HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read ☐ Brian Burkhardt, <i>Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land</i> , Introduction	QUIZ 4

(Next Page)

WEEK 3	T 9/2	M1: What is Philosophy? Indigenous Perspectives	
		AGENDA: • Quiz • Review • Lecture/Discussion HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read ☐ Angela Potochnik et. al, <i>Recipes for Science</i>, Intro (pgs.1-4) ☐ Angela Potochnik et. al, <i>Recipes for Science</i>, Ch. 1 “What is Science?” ☐ PROJECT: TEAM RULES DUE BY NEXT CLASS Watch ☐ <u>Philosophy of Science Part 1</u>	QUIZ 5
	Module 2 (M2): What is Ethics? What is Science?		
	TR 9/9	DUE: ☐ PROJECT: TEAM RULES DUE AGENDA: • Quiz • Review • Lecture/Discussion: HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read ☐ Adam Briggie and Carl Mitcham, <i>Ethics and Science</i>, Ch. 1 Watch ☐ TBD	QUIZ 6

(Next Page)

WEEK 4	T 9/11	Ethics & Science	
		AGENDA: • Quiz • Workshop Day: Finalize topic with Prof. Vargas & begin researching action HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read ☐ Adam Briggie and Carl Mitcham, <i>Ethics and Science</i> , Ch. 2, 23-46	QUIZ 7
	TR 9/16	Ethical Concepts & Theories	
		AGENDA: • Quiz • Workshop Day: ○ Identify topic ○ Identify case study ○ Finish team rules ○ Check in with Prof. Vargas • Review: Adam Briggie and Carl Mitcham Ch. 2 (Virtue Ethics) HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read ☐ Adam Briggie and Carl Mitcham, <i>Ethics and Science</i> , Ch. 2, 41-65	QUIZ 8

(Next Page)

WEEK 5	T 9/18	Ethical Concepts & Theories AGENDA: • Quiz • Project Workshop Day: Develop A Plan For “Get Involved” Section of The Ethics In Action Project ○ Meet with Prof. Vargas to discuss ▪ Identified an ethical action ▪ When Will You “Get Involved”? • Review: pg. 41-65 (Deontology, Consequentialist theories, etc.) • Workshop Day: Finalize topic with Prof. Vargas & Begin researching action HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read ☐ What is feminist ethics? by Hilde Lindemann, pp. 157-164 & Chapter 11 Feminist ethics and ethics of care, sections A-F, pp. 151-55 in Living Ethics by Shafer-Landau.	QUIZ 9
	TR 9/23	MORAL FOUNDATIONS: Feminist ethics AGENDA: Fleshing out the readings: What is the core concern of the feminist theory? How does feminist ethics differ from other theories? • Quiz • Discuss: Ch 3 HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read: No homework	QUIZ 10

Module 3: What is a Society? What is the Environment?

Week 6	T 9/25	Regarding the Anthropocene Agenda • Quiz • In-class discussion. HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS ☐ Crist, Eileen. 2017. “The Affliction of Human Supremacy.” The Ecological Citizen 1 (1): 61-64.	QUIZ 11
	TR 9/30	Climate Justice Agenda • Quiz • Review • Lecture/Discussion: HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS ☐ Kyle Whyte. 2018. “Way Beyond the Lifeboat: An Indigenous Allegory of Climate Justice.”	QUIZ 12

(Next Page)

Week 7	T 10/2	AGENDA • Quiz • Review Lecture/Discussion: HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS ☐ Indigenous realism and climate change by Kyle Whyte pp. 69 - 81 in Climate Realism: The Aesthetics of Weather and Atmosphere in the Anthropocene by Lynn Badia, Marija Cetinić, and Jeff Diamanti (eds.)	QUIZ 13
	TR 10/7	Science, Ethics, and Public Policy: From Ethics to Politics And Policy AGENDA • Quiz • Review • Lecture/Discussion: • PROJECT CHECK- IN	QUIZ 14

Week 8	T 10/9	AGENDA: ○ Quiz ○ MIDTERM REVIEW HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS ☐ Bring Scantron ☐ Bring Blue Book ☐ Pencils ☐ You may fill one 3X4 notecard with handwritten notes to help you in the exam.	QUIZ 15
	TR 10/14	 MIDTERM EXAM (Midpoint of the semester) HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS ☐ Quick read: Dorothy Roberts, Fatal Invention, “ <i>Invention of Race</i> pgs. 3-25”	

(Next Page)

MODULE 4: Race, Society, and the Environment

What is race? Is race “real”? How can philosophy help us understand the concept of race?
What is the relationship between race, society, and ethics?

Week 9 SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS	T 10/16	HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS ☐ Charles Mills, Blackness Visible, “ <i>But What Are You Really?</i> ” <i>The Metaphysics of Race</i> (Part 1) Pgs. TBD
	TR 10/21	HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS ☐ Charles Mills, Blackness Visible, “ <i>But What Are You Really?</i> ” <i>The Metaphysics of Race</i> (Part 2) Pgs. TBD

Week 10	T 10/23	Philosophy Of Race, Race, and Science AGENDA: - Lecture/Discussion: <i>"Mills and Roberts on the Metaphysics and Invention of Race: Unpacking Social Constructs and Lived Realities" Part 1</i> - Quiz - Review HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read ☐ Naomi Zacks, Philosophy of Race, <i>Social Construction and Racial Identities</i>	QUIZ 16
	TR 10/28	Philosophy Of Race, Race, and Science AGENDA: - Lecture/Discussion: “Zack and Roberts on the Social Construction of Race and Racial Identity: Philosophical and Historical Perspectives” - Quiz - Mills - Zacks - Roberts - Review HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read : ☐ Laura Pulido, <i>Rethinking Environmental Racism</i> Watch: ☐ <u>Environmental Racism: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver</u> ☐ <u>The Bath Riots of El Paso, TX</u>	QUIZ 17

(Next Page)

Week 11		Contemporary Ethical Issues in Science: Philosophy Of Race, Science, and the Environment	
	T 10/30	AGENDA: - Lecture/Discussion: “Pulido and the Bath Riots: Rethinking Environmental Racism and Historical Resistance” - Quiz - Review HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS Read ☐ W.E.B. Du Bois “ <i>Of Our Spiritual Strivings</i> ,” <i>Souls of Black Folk</i> , ☐ <u>Manifesto El Paso Massacre</u>	QUIZ 18
		Race & Environmental Racism	
	TR 11/4	AGENDA: - Lecture/Discussion: - Du Bois and the El Paso Manifesto: Race, Identity, and the Legacy of Violence - Quiz - Review HOMEWORK DUE FOR NEXT CLASS - No homework	QUIZ 19

Final Presentations

Week 12		Presentations	
	T 11/6	- Finish remaining lectures Last project workshop day	QUIZ 20
		Presentations	
	TR 11/11	CLASS PRESENTATIONS BEGIN: Groups TBA	QUIZ 21:

(Next Page)

Week 13	T 11/13	Presentations	
		CLASS PRESENTATIONS:	QUIZ 22
	TR 11/18	Presentations	
		CLASS PRESENTATIONS:	QUIZ 23

Week 14	T 11/20	Presentations	
		CLASS PRESENTATIONS:	QUIZ 23: LAST WEEK'S PRESENTATION CONTENT
	TR 11/25	Presentations	
		THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Week 15	T 11/27	Presentations	
		THANKSGIVING BREAK	
	TR 12/2	Presentations	
		Final Exam Review TBD	

(Next Page)

Week 16	T 12/4	
		FINAL EXAM Time: Same as regular class schedule Location: Same as regular classroom