

PHIL 1400.004: ETHICS AND SOCIETY

INSTRUCTOR

- Bernardo R. Vargas, Ph.D. Candidate in Philosophy, MA in Philosophy
- Pronouns: He/His/El/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 12:30 AM to 1:50 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 printing the material and 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, and 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 on 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:** We will discuss this topic in person the first week of class.

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):

UNT Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

Communities of trust and respect are integral to college education and academic research alike. I recognize that we all have many responsibilities that can bring a lot of pressure. If you are struggling, please reach out to me for support – don't make bad choices!

Students using other people's work without citation, or using generative AI without permission of the instructor will be in violation of UNT's Academic Integrity Policy. Please read and follow this important set of guidelines for your academic success (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>). If you have questions about this please email me or come discuss this with me during my office hours.

Accommodations

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of

Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323. Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills,

fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.