

UC 11833 12F

CBM003 ADD/CHANGE FORM

APPROVED APR 24 2013

Undergraduate Council
 New Course Course Change
 Core Category: Lang/Phil/Culture Effective Fall 2014

or
 Graduate/Professional Studies Council
 New Course Course Change
 Effective Fall 2013

1. Department: Philosophy College: CLASS
2. Faculty Contact Person: Cynthia Freeland Telephone: 3-3206 Email: cfreeland@uh.edu
3. Course Information on New/Revised course:
 - Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:
PHIL / 1305 / Intro to Ethics
 - Instructional Area / Course Number / Short Course Title (30 characters max.)
PHIL / 1305 / INTRO TO ETHICS
 - SCH: 3.00 Level: FR CIP Code: 38 .0103 .00 Lect Hrs: 3 Lab Hrs: 0

RECEIVED OCT 12 2012

4. Justification for adding/changing course: To meet core curriculum requirements
5. Was the proposed/revised course previously offered as a special topics course? Yes No
 If Yes, please complete:
 - Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:
 / /
 - Course ID: Effective Date (currently active row):

6. Authorized Degree Program(s): B.A.
 - Does this course affect major/minor requirements in the College/Department? Yes No
 - Does this course affect major/minor requirements in other Colleges/Departments? Yes No
 - Can the course be repeated for credit? Yes No (if yes, include in course description)

7. Grade Option: Letter (A, B, C ...) Instruction Type: lecture ONLY (Note: Lect/Lab info. must match item 3, above.)

8. If this form involves a change to an existing course, please obtain the following information from the course inventory: Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title
PHIL / 1305 / Intro to Ethics
 - Course ID: 38499 Effective Date (currently active row): 20120827

9. Proposed Catalog Description: (If there are no prerequisites, type in "none".)
 Cr: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: ENGL 1303 Description (30 words max.): A historical introduction to the main problems and questions of moral philosophy.

10. Dean's Signature: _____ Date: 10/18/12
 Print/Type Name: Dr. John Roberts

REQUEST FOR COURSES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM

Originating Department or College: Philosophy

Person Making Request: William Nelson

Telephone: 713 743 3203

Email: philb@central.uh.edu

Dean's Signature: _____

Date: Sept 10, 2012

Course Number and Title: Phil 1305 Introduction to ethics

Please attach in separate documents:

Completed CBM003 Add/Change Form with Catalog Description

Syllabus

List the student learning outcomes for the course (Statements of what students will know and be able to do as a result of taking this course. See appended hints for constructing these statements):

1. Students will understand some of the major ethical concepts and theories from the Western tradition.
2. Students will develop their ability to understand and analyze critically difficult philosophical texts and problems.
3. Students will develop their ability to write clearly and critically.

Component Area for which the course is being proposed (check one):

Communication

American History

Mathematics

Government/Political

Science

Language, Philosophy, & Culture

Social & Behavioral Science

Creative Arts

Component Area Option

Life & Physical Sciences

Competency areas addressed by the course (refer to appended chart for competencies that are required and optional in each component area):

Critical Thinking

Teamwork

Communication Skills

Social Responsibility

Empirical & Quantitative Skills

Personal Responsibility

Because we will be assessing student learning outcomes across multiple core courses, assessments assigned in your course must include assessments of the core competencies. For each competency checked above, indicated the specific course assignment(s) which, when completed by students, will provide evidence of the competency. Provide detailed information, such as copies of the paper or project assignment, copies of individual test items, etc. A single assignment may be used to provide data for multiple competencies.

Critical Thinking:

Students will write an analytical paper on an important moral issue or an important text in moral philosophy. The paper will be posted in an appropriate location on line.

Sample assignment:

Describe the two aspects of moral decision-making that Bennett discusses in "The conscience of Huckleberry Finn" and explain how they can come into conflict. Which kind of ethical theory—act-based or virtue-based—can best address the issue of internal moral conflict and why? Make your response as specific as possible by using concrete examples and choosing one act-based theory (e.g., utilitarianism or Kantianism) to contrast with the virtue-based approach.

Communication Skills:

In the same paper, students will demonstrate their skill at written communication.

Empirical & Quantitative Skills:

Click here to enter text.

Teamwork:

Click here to enter text.

Social Responsibility:

In the same paper, students will explore issues of social responsibility.

Personal Responsibility:

In the same paper, students will explore issues of personal responsibility.

Will the syllabus vary across multiple section of the course? Yes No

If yes, list the assignments that will be constant across sections:

A paper of the type described above will be assigned in each section.

Inclusion in the core is contingent upon the course being offered and taught at least once every other academic year. Courses will be reviewed for renewal every 5 years.

The department understands that instructors will be expected to provide student work and to participate in university-wide assessments of student work. This could include, but may not be limited to, designing instruments such as rubrics, and scoring work by students in this or other courses. In addition, instructors of core courses may be asked to include brief assessment activities in their course.

Dept. Signature: ____

Introduction to Ethics Course Syllabus

Instructor: Tamler Sommers
Office: 504 Agnes Arnold Hall.
Email: tssommers@uh.edu or tamlers@gmail.com
Office Hours: Mon 11-12, Tue 1:30-3 or by appointment.

Teaching Assistant: Justin Olaguer
Office: 508 Agnes Arnold Hall
Email: emailjustinsamuel@gmail.com
Office Hours: W 9-12 or by appointment

I. Course Description:

We all have strong beliefs about right and wrong, good and bad. Moral philosophy, or ethics, is the business of justifying these beliefs. As philosophers we can't say, for example: "We have to legalize abortion because women have the right to choose." We need to give reasons for why women have this right (or why they do not). We have to provide a basis for the whole concept of rights itself. This course will examine the different ways in which philosophers have attempted to carry out this project of justification. First, we will study some basic reasoning skills as well as the methods philosophers employ to evaluate arguments. Next, we'll examine a wide range of ethical theories and consider the obstacles moral philosophers have faced in defending them. Finally, we'll examine theories regarding the status of ethical beliefs and principles, exploring questions such as "can ethical judgments be objectively true?" and "does right and wrong vary from culture to culture, or individual to individual?" Throughout the course, we will apply the ideas and concepts we study to concrete issues, such as animal welfare, abortion, famine relief, the drug war, and the death penalty.

II Format

1. **Reading Assignments:** For each class, you will be assigned reading selected from one of three sources. *Note: Please bring readings to class. We will refer to them often.* Please prepare for lecture by doing the reading to be discussed beforehand. Books should be available at the university bookstore (pending a confusion about editions with the Shaffer-Landau text). Both books are also available at amazon.com.
 - a. *The Ethical Life*. R. Shafer-Landau ed. 2nd edition. 2011. Oxford UP.
 - b. *A Very Bad Wizard: Morality Behind the Curtain*. T. Sommers. 2009. McSweeney's.
 - c. Readings linked onto the course website.
2. **Writing Assignments.**
 - a. Two papers. Paper 1: 2-3 pages. Paper 2: 4-5 pages.
3. **Exams**
 - a. Midterm
 - b. Final Exam (cumulative)

Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

1. understand some of the major ethical concepts and theories from the Western tradition,
2. develop their ability to understand and analyze critically difficult philosophical texts and problems, and
3. develop their ability to write clearly and critically.

III Class Policies:

- *Students may not use any electronic devices during lecture.* This includes cell phones, pagers, headphones, and **laptop computers**. Students who engage in these activities will be asked to leave the class. If you believe you have a legitimate reason to use an electronic device, please contact me and submit a request. There is no attendance policy but you must come to class if you have any hope of keeping up with the material and doing well on the tests and papers.
- I will send out powerpoint slides after lecture, so you do not have to furiously write down everything you see on the screen. However, the slides will not be useful for students who did not attend the lecture.
- Extremely well-documented excuses are required to make-up a missed exam.
- All papers must be submitted to turnitin.com to receive credit. Late papers will be penalized. If you are having problems meeting a deadline, please come talk to me *before* the deadline, not after, and we can try to work something out. Instances of plagiarism will receive harsh penalties. If you have any uncertainty about what counts as plagiarism please talk to me or Mr. Olaguer before you submit the paper. Please refer to the Academic Honesty Articles in the Undergraduate Catalogue for more information about the nature of plagiarism and other forms of cheating and the process for handling such cases. <http://www.uh.edu/academics/catalog/policies/academ-reg/academic-honesty/>

IV. Grading.

- Paper 1: 15%
- Paper 2: 25%
- Quiz: 5%
- Midterm 25 %
- Final Exam: 30%

V. Readings (subject to plenty of revision)

All readings from the primary texts unless otherwise noted. The dates and readings will almost certainly change—*please check the course website for the reading schedule.* Course website is:

<http://www.class.uh.edu/faculty/tsommers/fall12%20intro.html>

Abbreviations: *The Ethical Life* (EL), *A Very Bad Wizard* (VBW), Linked from course website (WEB)

Week 1: Philosophical Methods.

- Pryor, “Philosophical Terms and Methods.” pp. 1-19 (web)

Week 2: Philosophical Methods and Ethics

- **Quiz**
- Huemer, “America’s Unjust Drug War” (EL)

Week 3 Egoism and Altruism

- Plato “The Ring of Gyges”
- Kavka “A Reconciliation Project.”

Week 4: Egoism and Utilitarianism

- De Waal/Sommers. “Lessons from our Primate Relatives: Interview with Frans de Waal” (VBW)
- Mill “Hedonism.”

Week 5 Utilitarianism

- Nozick “The Experience Machine.” (EL)
- Singer “The Singer Solution to World Poverty.” (EL)
- Harris “The Survival Lottery” (EL)

Week 6: Deontology and Kantianism

- Ross “What Makes Right Acts Right?” (EL)
- Shaffer-Landau. “The Kantian Perspective: Fairness and Justice.”

Week 7 Deontology and Autonomy

- Shaffer-Landau. “The Kantian Perspective: Autonomy and Respect” (WEB)
- Sommers/Strawson “You Cannot Make yourself the way you Are: Interview with Galen Strawson” (VBW)
- Strawson. “Luck Swallows Everything.” (WEB)

Week 8 Virtue Ethics

- **Midterm** 10/16
- Aristotle “Nicomachean Ethics.” (EL)

Week 9: Character, Emotions, and the Power of the Situation

- Sommers/Zimbardo. “The Power of the Situation: Interview with Philip Zimbardo” (VBW)
- Bennett, “The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn” (EL)

Week 10 Abortion

- Jarvis-Thomson “A Defense of Abortion.” (EL)
- Marquis “Why Abortion is Immoral.” (EL)

Week 11 Animal Welfare and the Environment

- Norcross, A. “Puppies, Pigs, and People.” (EL)
- Hill, T. “Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments.” (EL)

Week 12 Retribution

- Nathanson “Eye for an Eye?” (EL)
- Miller/Sommers “Codes of Honor: Interview with William Ian Miller.” (VBW)

Week 13 Metaethics

- Ayer, A.J. “A Critique of Ethics.” (EL)
- Haidt/Sommers “Comfortably Dumbfounded: Interview with Jonathan Haidt” (VBW)

Week 14 Metaethics

- Gensler. “Cultural Relativism.” (EL)
- Smith “Realism” (EL)

Week 15: Make-up Readings and Final Review.

**Final Exam:
Thursday December 13: 11am-2pm**