



Philosophy 105 01-1: Ethics

TR 9:30–10:50am	Henry 202	Office:	Henry 206-C
Instructor:	Carl M. Johnson	Office Hours:	By appointment
Email:	carl.johnson@adjunct.chaminade.edu		

Course Description:

The study of the concepts of good and bad, right and wrong, has a long history. This course will study the origins and legitimacy of our standards of conduct and character and will discuss modern studies which consider the compelling and unconditional overtones of ethical demands. The course will also discuss the ways in which we talk to children and young people about what is right and wrong.

Course Objectives:

Students who complete this course should:

- Come away with an appreciation for the history of the study of ethics.
- Attain mastery of various ethical frameworks commonly employed today.
- Improve their ability to work out thoughts clearly in a group discussion.
- Gain competence at directing a group inquiry.
- Sharpen their ability to express their thoughts in writing.
- Become better able to read complex primary and secondary texts.
- Realize the importance of embodying ethical values in their own lives.

Course Text:

Shafer-Landau, Russ. *The Fundamentals of Ethics*. Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-19-532086-2.

Course Website:

As part of the materials for this course, students are expected to purchase a subscription to <livetext.com>. Additional reading material for the course will be distributed there in the form of PDF files (on some computers, this may require the installation of additional software). Various assignments will be collected there as well. Students who have technical difficulties should contact the instructor immediately.

Assessment:

Students will be graded on the basis of their work in the follow areas with the grades weighted by the percentage shown.

Vocabulary Quizzes (5%)

The instructor will periodically give a short vocabulary quiz to test whether students have mastered the terms covered in the readings and lectures.

Reading Response Questions (15%)

Before each class, students will do the reading assigned by the instructor the previous class and write down any question or questions it inspires. These questions will be collected at the beginning of class and sent to the class discussion leaders for use as the basis for the next class's discussion (see below). Questions clearly unrelated to the reading will be rejected and returned to the student.

Discussion Leading (15%)

Each class will begin with a period of student discussion approximately thirty minutes in length. For each discussion, several student will be designated as leaders of particular discussion groups. The discussion leader will use the questions submitted last class to craft an group inquiry that will delve deeper into the reading. At the end of the discussion, the other students will anonymously evaluate the performance of the discussion leader.

Summary (15%)

Students must write one summary paper during the course. Summaries should be around two pages long (300 to 600 words). Summaries will be given an overall grade on the basis of mastery of content, style, and grammar/usage. Summaries are tentatively due in class on **Thurs., Feb. 3**.

Argumentative Papers (15% each, 30% total)

Students must write two argumentative papers. Papers should be around 5 pages (1,200 to 2,000 words). Papers will be given an overall grade on the basis of strength of argument/originality, mastery of content, structure/coherence, style, and grammar/usage. The first argumentative paper is tentatively due in class on **Thurs., Feb. 24**. The second is tentatively due in class following spring recess on **Tues., March 29**.

Final Paper (20%)

The final paper will be a culminating paper in which students synthesize all of the material in the course. Students are responsible for creating their own topic for the final paper. Final papers should be around 7 pages (1,800 words) in length. Final papers will be due in class on the last day of the course, **Thurs., April 28**.

Lateness Policy:

Assignments must be turned in by the start of class on the due date. Reading response questions are meant to measure class participation and so will not be accepted after the class in which they are due. Failure to turn in a summary or paper on time will result in a five percent penalty per day with a maximum penalty of twenty percent. If you know ahead of time that you will need to miss a class due to work, sports, illness, or some

other extracurricular activity, you may email an assignment in order to meet the deadline or be excused from a class discussion. In general, exceptions to the lateness policy are possible only with a doctor's note detailing serious illness. In the event of a serious family emergency, please email your telephone number to the instructor in order to discuss the situation over the phone.

Returns and Revisions Policy:

After being graded, the summaries and papers will be returned to students in a one-on-one conference in which the strengths and weakness of the writing will be discussed. These conferences are mandatory, and grades for the writing will not be recorded in the gradebook for students who fail to attend. Following a conference, students have one week to revise their papers to have it re-graded. The score recorded in the gradebook will be the average of the initial and final grade a paper receives.

Disability Statement:

I am happy to accommodate any students with disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to self identify with the Director of Personal Counseling in order to receive accommodations. Only those students with appropriate documentation will receive services. Contact the Director of Personal Counseling at (808) 739-4603 or email: <jyasuhar@chaminade.edu>.

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, will not be tolerated.

The instructor is not hesitant about failing any student suspected of engaging in academic dishonesty. Failure to properly quote and cite sources used in a paper is one of the many forms of academic dishonesty. All materials turned in by students must reflect their own work and not that of any other person.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Weeks 1–3. Introduction, Religion and Morality, Moral Relativism

Weeks 4–6. Hedonism, Consequentialism, Utilitarianism

Weeks 7–10. Kantianism, Virtue Ethics

Weeks 11–15. Practical Problems in Ethics

Course Motto:

“I learned in my college days
that one cannot imagine anything so strange or so little believable
that it had not been said by one of the philosophers.”

— René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*