

**SAMPLE SYLLABUS**  
**Introduction to Ethics**  
**PHI 223**

**Name:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Office:**

**Office Hours:**

**Department: Division of Multidisciplinary Programs**

**Class meeting time and place:**

**Course Description:**

An exploration of ethical theories regarding both what actions are right and wrong and what makes persons of good and bad moral character; application of ethical theories to contemporary moral issues.

**Core Objectives:**

- Critical Thinking – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- Communication – to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
- Personal Responsibility – to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
- Social Responsibility – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

A. Act Ethics (Core Objectives: Critical Thinking and Communication)

1. Students will acquire factual knowledge concerning several theories of act ethics and **be able to critically discuss and analyze said theories through both verbal communication and the written word.**
2. Students will acquire familiarity with critiques of these theories
3. Students will acquire facility in the practical application of these theories

B. Students will recognize the importance of basic ethical principles and distinctions in their own lives and will analyze and evaluate the choices they make regarding ethical issues. (Core Objectives: Social Responsibility and Personal Responsibility).

**Text and Materials:**

James Rachels and Stuart Rachels. *Elements of Moral Philosophy* 7<sup>th</sup> Ed. McGraw-Hill, 2011. ISBN: 978-0078038242

James Rachels and Stuart Rachels. *The Right Thing to Do* 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. McGraw-Hill, 2011. ISBN: 978-0078038235

Or a professor may choose another text such as the following:

Russ Shafer-Landau. *The Fundamentals of Ethics* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Oxford UP, 2011. ISBN: 978-0199773558

Russ Shafer-Landau. *The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Oxford UP, 2011. ISBN: 978-0199773527

Nina Rosenstand. *The Moral of the Story: An Introduction to Ethics* 7<sup>th</sup> Ed. McGraw-Hill, 2012. ISBN: 978-0078038426

Self-designed course packet with appropriate primary and secondary readings.

*Textbook choices will be reviewed periodically in light of new editions and publications.*

### **Course Requirements:**

**Tests:** There will be three examinations covering the material presented in the book and lecture, two during the semester and one final examination.

**Research Assignment:** There will be a research assignment requiring students to analyze and evaluate competing ethical theories as applied to a particular moral conflict. As such, this paper will require students to formulate, justify, and clearly express their own position, and to explore the ramifications of their position on their individual decisions and social interactions.

### **Course Calendar:**

Weeks 1-4: Unit 1

*Ethical Theory Basics and Challenges to Them:* may include but is not limited to exploring the minimum requirements for an ethics based on reason, the challenges that subjectivism pose to rational ethics, the challenges cultural relativism pose to rational ethics, and illustrating the consequences of abandoning rational ethics by covering an applied ethics topic (for example, the mistreatment of marginalized persons). **Includes instruction in Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility and Social Responsibility.**

Weeks 5-8: Unit 2

*Theoretical Challenges to Mainstream Ethical Theory:* may include but is not limited to exploring Ethical Egoism and basing ethics only on religion; applied ethics topics are examined again to illustrate the implications of these alternative theoretical approaches (for example, the abortion debate). **Includes instruction in Critical Thinking and Communication Skills.**

- First examination in week five

Weeks 8-11: Unit 3

*Mainstream Ethical Theory:* may include but is not limited to exploring utilitarianism, deontological ethics (e.g., Kantianism), and contractarianism. **Includes instruction in Critical Thinking and Communication Skills.**

- Second examination in week eight.

Weeks 12-14: Unit 4

*Testing Mainstream Ethical Theory*: may include but is not limited to exploring poignant criticisms of mainstream ethical theory, and by applying the theories themselves to additional applied ethics topics (for example, race relations, issues of war and peace, and the treatment of nonhuman animals). **Includes instruction in Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Social Responsibility and Personal Responsibility.**

- Research assignment: exploring the application of two competing moral theories to an applied ethics issue.

Final Exam Week

- Final Examination

### **Grading Policy:**

Exam 1: 25%

Exam 2: 25%

Research Assignment: 20%

Final Examination: 30%

### **Attendance Policy:**

(Example) A student who accumulates more than three weeks' worth of absences during the semester will receive a final course grade of "F." Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance record and recognizing when their final course grade is endangered by excessive absences.

### **Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

#### Definition of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic\\_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to <http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/>.