

## **Introduction to Ethics D20 (Online) Spring 2022** Department of Political Science and Philosophy

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**Office Hours:** Blackboard Collaborate (by appointment)

**Class Times and Rooms:** all Online (Covid-19)

**Required Texts:** *Ethics, Theory and Contemporary Issues*, Barbara Mackinnon, 9<sup>th</sup> edition with readings, Wadsworth, 2016. This text is absolutely necessary and students should purchase a copy before semester begins. Buying the text after week 2 or 3 weeks will leave you insufficiently prepared for the first tests.

### **Course Description**

Sometimes called MORAL PHILOSOPHY, ethics serves to introduce students to ethical dilemmas and how philosophy approaches these. This is the branch of philosophy that questions what is good and bad, and why certain actions are right or wrong. In this class we will deal with questions such as the relation between ethics and religion? Can we have one without the other? And what is ethics? Are there universal moral principles? Should all human beings have the same moral values? How do we know what is right? Where do our moral values come from; reason? Emotion? Experience? The senses? Or perhaps morality is produced by culture and convention, or from social acculturation? Is an action good or bad in itself? Does it depend on our intentions? In the first half of the course students will gain conceptual tools, and philosophical understanding by learning something of the ethical systems of the Western philosophical tradition, such as moral relativism, utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, and virtue ethics. In the second half of the course you will apply your knowledge of ethical theories and systems to analyze and evaluate topical controversial issues such as euthanasia, abortion, economic justice, environmental responsibility, cloning, animal rights, violence and war.

### **The Class**

Because of continuing problems with covid-19 the course is taught entirely online for the Spring of 2021. The *Ethics* face-to-face class was not taught as a lecture class so there are no lectures for this course. The Chapter by Chapter readings from the textbook are the main course content. However, I will post my own chapter by chapter notes on Blackboard each week on each of the Chapters from the textbook.

### **Blackboard Collaborate**

For those of you who may not be aware of it, Blackboard has an embedded video conferencing client called collaborate. If you look at the list of tabs on the left hand of your Blackboard course screen you will see a collaborate tab near the top of the list. Students who want to meet me to discuss ideas in the course, or anything else, can **email me to arrange to meet** for one-on-one time. Just click on the collaborate tab at the appointed time and enter the "course room." (Students must switch on their video and audio for these meetings).

**Assessment**

8 Multiple Choice quizzes, (6.25% each) Ten multiple choice, true/false questions for each test on the chapter(s) of the week.

**\*Note:** Quiz settings; 30 mins to complete, no backtracking, force completion, only one question at a time displayed, only one attempt. (all course work must be completed for a final grade). These quizzes are not intended to be open book, you should complete the reading BEFORE attempting the quiz.

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**Papers**

Two papers; one midterm and a final (25% each).

You will be expected to write an answer of about 800-1000 words. There will be 3 or 4 questions to choose from and these will be made available on Blackboard. All papers should be submitted to Blackboard. The main reason why students under-perform with regard to papers is that they do not engage with course material. Papers often tend towards 'stream of consciousness' with few references to what has been studied. It is expected in a philosophy class, even in an intro class, that you will have learned the philosopher's names and can accurately point to what ideas are associated with these philosophers, and how to deploy these ideas in a coherent fashion. Higher grades will be awarded to those who can do some of this. No internet sources on papers, course content only.

**Academic Honesty**

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the University Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the ASU Student Handbook. See the Current Student page on the ASU homepage (URL address <http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/>) and click on the Academic Honor Code. Acts of academic dishonesty and misconduct as referenced in Angelo State University's Student Handbook will be referred to the Dean of Students.

**Religious Observances**

Every effort will be made to accommodate all forms of religious observance in compliance with ASU OP 10.19. Students who require additional arrangements to be made should make these known in good time in order that arrangements can be made.

**Accommodations for Disability**

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation. The Student Affairs Office is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting the Student Affairs Office, Suite 112 of the Houston Harte University Center, at 325-942-2047 (phone) or 325-942-2211 (fax) or by e-mail at [studentservices@angelo.edu](mailto:studentservices@angelo.edu) to begin the process. The Student Affairs Office will establish the particular documentation requirements necessary for the various types of disabilities.

**ASU Mission Statement**

Angelo State University, a member of the Texas Tech University System, delivers undergraduate and

graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines. In a learning-centered environment distinguished by its integration of teaching, research, creative endeavor, service, and co curricular experiences, ASU prepares students to be responsible citizens and to have productive careers.

### **Title IX at Angelo State University**

Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. This is done in order to connect students with resources and options in addressing the allegations reported. As a student, you are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU's Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator. You may do so by contacting:

### **Michelle Miller, J.D.**

*Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator*

Mayer Administration Building, Room 210

325-942-2022

[michelle.miller@angelo.edu](mailto:michelle.miller@angelo.edu)

### **Grading Scale**

A90%Outstanding

B80% Very good

C70%Satisfactory

D60%Min required

F- Fail

## **The Course Calendar**

(I reserve the right to change the course from time to time when necessary)

### **PART 1 *Systems of Ethics***

#### **Week 1**

**Topic:** So Many Ways to Mess Up: the Fallacies.

#### **Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 1, *Ethics and Ethical Reasoning*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 1 Where do Ethics come from? (Blackboard)

#### **Week 2**

**Topic:** You have your God and I have mine.

#### **Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 2, *Religion and Global Ethics*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 2, What is Globalization Anyway?

## **First Quiz: Friday, January 28.**

(all quizzes will open up automatically on Blackboard at 8am and will remain open until midnight)

### **Week 3**

**Topic:** It's all relative isn't it?

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 3, *Ethical Relativism*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 3, Who's to Judge?

### **Week 4**

**Topic:** Me first!

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 4, *Egoism, Altruism, and the Social Contract*

**Chapter Notes:** Is selfishness so bad?

## **Second Quiz: Friday, February 11.**

### **Week 5**

**Topic:** Being Happy?

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 5, *Utilitarianism and John Stuart Mill*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 5, This is Torture.

## **Third Quiz: Friday, February 18.**

### **Week 6**

**Topic:** Categorically True

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 6, *Deontological Ethics and Immanuel Kant*

**Chapter Notes:** Duties are so Boring

## **Midterm Paper: Friday, February 25.**

### **Week 7**

**Topic:** It's Only Natural

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 7, *Natural Law and Human Rights*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 7, The Law's an Ass

**Week 8**

**Topic:** But I'm a Good Boy!

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 8, *Virtue Ethics*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 8, Be the Best that You can Be

**Fourth Quiz:** Friday, March 11.

**Week 9**

**Topic:** Men are from Mars, Women from Venus

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 9, *Feminist Thought and the Ethics of Care*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 9, So Many Feminism's

**Fifth Quiz:** Friday, March 25.

**PART 2 *Ethical Issues*****Week 10**

**Topic:** You can't take a life, so why should you be able to take a death?

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 10, *Euthanasia*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 10, Why Not?

**Sixth Quiz:** Friday, April 1.

**Week 11**

**Topic:** Where does the 'special' moral status of the fetus come from?

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 11, *Abortion*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 11, It's a Matter of Life and Death (again)

**Week 12**

**Topic:** Who Gets What?

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 14, *Economic Justice*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 14, Main Street v Wall Street

**Seventh Quiz:** Friday, April 15.

**Week 13**

**Topic:** But it wasn't Me

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 15, *Punishment and the Death Penalty*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 15 It's Not Reversible

**Eighth Quiz:** Friday, April 22.

**Week 14**

**Topic:** It's Just War

**Reading Assignments:**

**Textbook:** Chapter 19, *Violence and War*

**Chapter Notes:** Chapter 19, When is a 'terrorist' a 'freedom fighter?'

**Final Paper:** Tuesday, May 10.

