

SYLLABUS
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

CONTEMPORARY MORAL ISSUES

Fall, 2008, 3 Credit Hours
Philosophy 263W.02 (CID-5587), TUTH 12:30-1:50, CFS 121

Instructor: James R. Chandler

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Office Hours: TUTH 11:30-12:20, and by appointment.

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Course Description: Philosophy 263 is a study of major moral issues in contemporary society. It includes topics such as abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, and other issues that confront today's society.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Become familiar with several major moral theories, such as utilitarianism, deontology, and natural rights,
- Investigate and discuss current thinking on contemporary moral issues, and
- Learn to apply critical and reflective reasoning to ethical issues.

Required Text: Judith Boss, *Analyzing Moral Issues, Fourth Edition* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008). It is the student's responsibility to obtain the textbook and bring it to class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I. Tests, and Final Exam

There will be three tests. Each of the three tests will be worth 15 percent of your final grade. In addition there will be a final exam, which will be cumulative and will be worth 15 percent of your final grade. The tests and final exam will consist of a multiple-choice section, plus a short essay section. The questions will come from material in the textbook and material covered in class. You should bring a scantron to each of the tests and the final exam.

Any student who is absent on test dates should be prepared to take a make-up of the missed test on the first day of returning to class. Students will not be assessed a penalty for a make-up test if the student has an acceptable written and dated excuse (doctors note or death in the immediate family). All other make-up tests will be assessed at least a 10 point penalty. The final exam cannot be made-up unless there are dire circumstances.

II. Participation

Participation will account for 20 percent of your final grade. This will include your attendance, participation in class, and homework. More details will be provided in class and documented on Blackboard.

III. Paper

Each student will be required to write a philosophic paper, worth 20 percent of your final grade. The paper should be typewritten, double-spaced, and approximately 5 to 7 pages. The paper is due Oct. 30. There is a 10-point penalty if the paper is late. There is a 20-point penalty if the paper is over a week late. No papers will be accepted after Dec. 2.

The paper is on a contemporary moral issue. More information on the exact format will be provided in class and documented on Blackboard.

IV. Extra Credit

Occasionally there will be an opportunity to earn extra credit. These opportunities will be announced in class and documented on Blackboard. Up to a possible 2 points added to your final grade can be earned. No extra credit will be awarded after Dec. 2.

V. Attendance

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and class participation is strongly encouraged. In accordance with University regulations, a record of each student's attendance will be kept.

VI. Instructor Evaluations: You are encouraged to provide me with feedback (what you like, what you don't like) at any time during the semester. You will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester. I use these evaluations to make changes in the future.

VII. Grading

Grading Scale

A	90%-100%
B	80%-89%
C	70%-79%
D	60%-69%
F	0%-59%

Final Grade Breakdown

Participation = 20%
Paper = 20%
Tests = 45% (15% for each of the three)
Final Exam = 15%
Total = 100%

VIII. Standard Policies

Each student should be familiar with the standard policies published on my Blackboard and contained in the University's Academic Policy Manual. Please consult these documents for a complete description and ask me if you have any questions. I have extracted from the full statement a few key elements as a reminder of these policies:

(1) NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. There will be no retroactive accommodations. (2) ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Plagiarism is considered academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is defined as

appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work. Should a student be guilty of plagiarism, he or she will, at a minimum, be given a zero for this assignment.

(3) CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. No use of cell phones (they are to be turned off) or headsets are allowed during class. Laptop computers are to be used for taking notes only, not for surfing the Internet. (4) VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM: It is at the instructor's discretion whether or not he/she will be allowed to remain. (5) ABSENCE ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS: A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s).

IX. Calendar

The following calendar is tentative. Any changes will be announced in class. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of changes.

Date	READING	SUBJECT	CATEGORY
Aug. 26		Introduction/Syllabus	Introduction
28		Phl.Pre-test/Philosophy/Ethics	
Sept. 2	pp. 1-4	What is Ethics?	Theory
4	pp. 5-16, 17-19	Relativism/Religion	
9	pp. 20-23, 51-52	Ethical Egoism	
11	pp. 23-28, 55-57	Utilitarianism	
16		Utilitarianism/Review	
18		TEST 1	
23	pp. 28-34, 57-61	Duty Ethics	
25	pp.35-39, 66-68	Natural Rights	Moral Issues
30	pp. 80-93	Abortion/Debate	
Oct. 2	pp. 95-104	Thomson*	
7	pp. 105-109, 117-121	Noonan*/ Marquis*	
9	pp. 110-116	Warren*	
14		Topic by class vote/Review	
16		TEST 2	
21	pp. 194-208	Euthanasia	PAPER DUE
23	pp. 213-221	Battin*	
28	pp. 223-225, 209-213	Gay-Williams*/Rachels*	
30	pp. 249-263	Death Penalty/Debate	
Nov. 4	pp. 265-268, 294-298	Haag*/Prejean*	
6	pp. 276-286,	Bedau*	
11	pp. 368-381	Sexual Intimacy	
13	pp. 381-385, 387-394	The Vatican*/Ruddick*	
18	pp. 396-402	Ruse*/Review	
20		TEST 3	
25	pp.652-667	War and Terrorism	

	27	Thanksgiving	
Dec.	2	pp. 668-674	Anscombe*
	4	pp.675-681	Coady*
	9	Topic by class vote	
	11	Phl. Post- test/Review	
	16	11:00-1:00	FINAL EXAM

*= Homework assignments