

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

Course Syllabus

PHIL 2306: Introduction to Ethics (ONLINE)

Instructor: Dr. Jackson Hoerth.

E-Mail: jhoerth@uttyler.edu

Secretary Phone: 903.566.7373

Office Hours: Available via phone or videochat Fridays 12:00pm-3:00pm (Appointment Required)

Required Readings

Ethics in a Nutshell, by Matt Deaton (available in Canvas)

Introduction to Philosophy: Ethics, ed. George Matthews (available in Canvas)

Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics, 2nd Ed., Cohen and Wellman.

Course Catalog Description:

A study of moral theory and ethical decision-making including a critical analysis of practical and professional cases.

The Gist of the Course:

Ethics is the study of right and wrong. Is right and wrong a matter of personal taste? Is morality the same as legality? What kind of person or professional should I be? You may have already formed answers to these questions consciously or unconsciously, but it's worth spending some time reflecting on them and considering what philosophers have had to say about them. That's what this class is about.

Course Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to...

1. explain and critique the ethical theories of the world's most influential philosophers.
2. apply various ethical theories to concrete cases and contemporary moral problems.
3. analyze and evaluate the argument of an essay that takes a point of view on an ethical issue.
4. demonstrate competent writing skills in an argumentative and philosophical essay.
5. demonstrate competent oral communication skills, arguing for a point of view in a presentation.
6. describe how theories of morality apply to the self.

Grading Scale Percents

A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, F=less than 60%

Grading:

Discussions (Initial Posts) (5):	40%
Discussions (Reply Posts) (5/board):	10%
Midterm and Final Presentation	50%
TOTAL:	100%

Assessments:

Discussion Board Assignment:

You'll make a minimum of six (6) weekly contributions to the discussion board: 1 initiator post + 5 response posts = 6 total posts. These posts will be spread out over three separate days, for example 1 initiator post on Wednesday night, 2 response posts on Thursday, and 3 response posts on Friday.

Initiator Posts:

You'll write one initiator post each week, due on Wednesday. An initiator post is one that starts a thread based on the discussion prompt on the discussion board. A good post will offer a clear point of view and bring moral theory to bear on the question. It will also make connections to other material in the book and the course, demonstrating your understanding and ability to synthesize all course material.

The post must be at least 300 words. There's no maximum word count, but keep in mind that grades are not based on quantity of words but on demonstrated comprehension and critical thinking. The grading rubric below shows exactly what is expected. Initiator posts are due by Wednesday night.

If you only use course material to quote from, quotation marks and parenthetical citations are enough, for example: "yada, yada" (Sandel, 5). If students use even one outside source – like the excellent Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy – a reference list for all sources must be included at the end of the post and must follow Chicago Manual of Style (CMS). I expect multiple references in your post to course readings.

You must post first in order to view other posts. The edit function will be disabled. If you want to edit after posting, you may reply in the thread with corrections or request that I delete the post. There must be a very good reason for deletion. For grading purposes, I consider your first post to be the initiator post even if it is blank or incomplete.

Late initiator posts can be turned in for a lower grade before the board officially closes on Sunday evening. A late penalty of a letter grade per day applies in each case unless accompanied by a valid excuse (e.g. a doctor's note that indicates a serious illness). Technical issues are not valid excuses for late work in an online course unless they are the university's fault.

Response Posts:

In addition to the weekly initiator post, you'll write at least five (5) response posts each week (for a total of 6 weekly contributions: 1 initiator post + 5 response posts = 6). A response post is one that replies to a classmate's post and continues the conversation. One that ends the conversation or just says "I agree" in so many words does not qualify as a response. To avoid conversation-stoppers, posts should state an opinion, make connections to the reading and include at least one question to prompt discussion. The minimum word count for each response post is 50 words. If you are very active on the discussion board and far exceed the minimum requirements, you may receive extra credit.

Response posts are due by Sunday night. The penalty for not posting replies on separate days will be applied to the response post grade as a three-letter-grade deduction. Late response posts will not be accepted. Once the board closes on Sunday night, there are no further opportunities to complete the assignment, so it's advisable to post early to avoid unforeseen

events such as technical problems on Sunday night. Again, technical issues are not valid excuses for late work in an online course unless they are the university's fault.

The discussion board is a focus of this class, an important learning tool for you to discuss important ideas and cases in ethics. This said, I hope that you think of it as such and not merely as something to check off a list.

I may, periodically, reply to your post. When I reply to a post, I often take a contrary position as devil's advocate. My response to your posts should be interpreted as "constructive" and an opportunity to strengthen your argument. It doesn't mean that I don't like you or that I have a different moral viewpoint or political stance than you. In fact, it is nearly impossible to figure out my politics, ethics, or personal opinions from my posts. If I express a point of view, I do so for teaching purposes, to help you think more carefully about your own position, and to extend the conversation.

Discussion Board Initiator Post Rubric:

0-20 points	Point of view is clear and well-defended.
0-20 points	Multiple connections made to readings or videos for the week and ideas from previous weeks
0-20 points	Moral theory plays a prominent role in the post.
0-20 points	Conveys respect for other points of view even if it takes a contrary position
0-20 points	Grammar is polished, and citation style conforms to Chicago Manual of Style.

Essay Assignments

Midterm Paper - At the middle of our course, there will be a short, term paper that is an argumentative essay between two ethical theories covered in class. Each paper will select a contemporary issue, apply the two ethical theories, and evaluate the responses each theory has to the issue. The ethical theories to be applied will be selected by the instructor. The contemporary issue will be selected by each student.

All essays will be submitted via Canvas and will adhere to the following requirements and grading rubric.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

1. • 500-1000 words (not including citations and bibliography)
2. • Double-spaced
3. • No cover page
4. • Name and title at the top center of first page
5. • Page numbers on the bottom right of each page
6. • Standard twelve-point font (e.g. Times New Roman)
7. • One inch margins
8. • .docx or .rtf file formats only

9. • The introduction should be no more than half a page.
10. • The conclusion should be no more than half a page and only review the main points.
11. • No inflammatory or disrespectful language

Essay Rubric (100 points):

0-25 points	The paper demonstrates an original and thoughtful answer to the prompt.
0-25 points	Ethical theory is clear and central to the overall paper.
0-25 points	Multiple, relevant citations are used from at least 1 outside, scholarly, source.
0-25 points	Grammar is polished, paper adheres to the minimum word count, and citation style conforms to a conventional citation style.

*Additional points will be deducted for late papers and papers that don't satisfy the "basic requirements" above.

Final Presentation - The purpose of this assignment is to allow students to demonstrate how much they have learned in the course. Students will take sides on an ethical issue specified on the assignment page. Throughout the presentation, students are required to apply ideas from the course material in support of their point of view. To earn an A, the presentation should primarily engage both ethical theories and the given case study in ethics.

Note: You're not graded for your political, religious, or moral stance but whether you demonstrate good critical thinking, argumentation, and application of concepts from the semester. Review the grading rubric above carefully.

Cases of plagiarism earn an automatic zero and a possible F in the course. Plagiarized posts may be sent to UT Tyler Judicial Affairs to receive additional consequences. In short, do your own work, and be careful to give credit to the original author when you quote or paraphrase.

Course Policies:

Late work policy: Papers must be uploaded to Canvas by the deadline. No late papers will be accepted. This policy *may* be waived only under special circumstances (e.g. a serious illness accompanied by a doctor's note).

Late discussion board posts will be allowed at a penalty of 1 letter grade per day. Late initiator posts are not accepted after the weekly Sunday night deadline.

Communication policy: The best way to communicate with the instructor is through UT Tyler e-mail (jhoerth@uttyler.edu) or in Canvas. Students can expect replies within 48 hours excluding weekends and holidays. Students who do not receive a reply within this timeframe should

attempt to contact the instructor again. The instructor communicates with the class via Canvas emails and announcements. It is important that students check their email and allow push notifications for class announcements.

Class conduct policy: The subject matter of this class can make some people hot under the collar. This said, all comments and behavior must be classroom appropriate. What does “classroom appropriate” mean? It does *not* mean that students cannot express unpopular opinions. It means practicing reasoning and logical argumentation. It means being civil and listening with respect. Insults, snide comments, name-calling, cutting someone off, derogatory tones, sarcasm, ridicule, cussing, vulgarity, personal attacks, racial slurs, misogynistic remarks, etc. will not be allowed. If you are unsure about what counts as disrespectful, consult the instructor or the Golden Rule. The instructor will act as the final word on what is or is not classroom appropriate. Violators may be ejected from the class.

Extra credit policy: It has been my experience that some students wait until the end of the semester in hopes that extra credit will save their grade. As such, *I will not be offering any opportunities for extra credit in this class unless specifically announced.*

“It is what it is” final grade policy: Grades are final once the final grade percentage has been posted in Canvas at the end of the semester. No changes will be made unless the instructor has made a mistake. Grades are not bumped up unless the student is within .5% of the next letter grade. For example, an 89.5% is an A. An 89.4% is a B. No extra credit opportunities will be given during finals week or the week prior. A request for an “incomplete” may be approved only if the student has a valid reason, e.g. a serious medical condition accompanied by documentation.

Course AI Policy: UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools’ ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler’s Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler’s Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course, the work submitted by students in this course will be generated by themselves. This includes all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, editing, and final products. This extends to group assignments where students must collaboratively create the project. Any instance of the following constitutes a violation of UT Tyler’s Honor Code: a student has another person/entity do any portion of a graded assignment, which includes purchasing work from a

company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment and/or using AI tools (such as ChatGPT).

Course Schedule

- Week 1 – Course Introduction and Syllabus
 - Syllabus Confirmation **(8/30)**
- Week 2 – Moral Relativism and Subjectivism
- Week 3 – Moral Relativism and Subjectivism (cont.)
 - Discussion 1 Initial Post **(9/9)**
 - Discussion 1 Replies **(9/13)**
- Week 4 – Divine Command Theory and Natural Law Theory
- Week 5 – Divine Command Theory and Natural Law Theory (cont.)
 - Discussion 2 Initial Post **(9/23)**
 - Discussion 2 Replies **(9/27)**
- Week 6 – Virtue Ethics
- Week 7 – Virtue Ethics (cont.)
 - Discussion 3 Initial Post **(10/7)**
 - Discussion 3 Replies **(10/11)**
- Week 8 – Utilitarianism
- Week 9 – Kantian Ethics
 - Midterm Paper **(10/25)**
- Week 10 – Abortion and Capital Punishment
- Week 11 – Abortion and Capital Punishment (cont.)
 - Discussion 4 Initial Post **(11/4)**
 - Discussion 4 Replies **(11/8)**
- Week 12 – Immigration and Affirmative Action
- Week 13 – Immigration and Affirmative Action (cont.)
 - Discussion 5 Initial Post **(11/18)**
 - Discussion 5 Replies **(11/22)**
- Week 14 – Thanksgiving Break **(No Class)**
- Week 15 – Final Presentations
 - Final Presentation **(12/4)**

Important Information:

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- • Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- • Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- • Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- • Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- • Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

i. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- • copying from another student's test paper;
- • using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- • failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- • possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks

constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;

- • using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- • collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- • discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- • divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- • substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- • paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- • falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- • taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- • misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

ii. “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.

iii. “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- • UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- • UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- • The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- • UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)

Information for Classrooms and Laboratories: Students are expected to wear face masks covering their nose and mouth in public settings (including classrooms and laboratories). The UT Tyler community of Patriots views adoption of these practices consistent with its [Honor Code \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and a sign of good citizenship and respectful care of fellow classmates, faculty, and staff.

Students who are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, digestive issues (e.g. nausea, diarrhea), or a higher than normal temperature should stay at home and are encouraged to use the [UT Tyler COVID-19 Information and Procedures \(Links to an external site.\)](#) website to review protocols, check symptoms, and report possible exposure. Students

needing additional accommodations may contact the Office of Student Accessibility and Resources at University Center 3150, or call (903) 566-7079 or email saroffice@uttyler.edu.

Recording of Class Sessions

Class sessions may be recorded by the instructor for use by students enrolled in this course. Recordings that contain personally identifiable information or other information subject to FERPA shall not be shared with individuals not enrolled in this course unless appropriate consent is obtained from all relevant students. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for educational purposes. Course recordings should not be shared outside of the course in any form without express permission.

[UT TYLER HONOR CODE](#)

I embrace honor and integrity.
Therefore, I choose not to lie, cheat or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

(By the way, it is really bad karma to cheat in an ethics class.)