

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

## Course Syllabus

PHIL 2306: Introduction to Ethics  
Spring 2020  
Meeting Time: TR 8:00-9:20 a.m.  
Room: TBA  
Credit Hours: 3  
Prerequisites: None

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### Required Readings

*Ethics in a Nutshell*, by Matt Deaton (available in Canvas)  
*Justice*, by Michael Sandel ISBN: 9780374532505  
*Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, by Cohen and Wellman ISBN: 9781118479391  
*The Sunflower*, by Wiesenthal ISBN: 9780805210606  
Additional electronic readings (available in Canvas)

### 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? Whether you've given much thought to these questions before, you're living out answers to them right now. So, it's worth spending some time thinking carefully about them and exploring the options. 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:

Exam 1:	100 points
Exam 2:	100 points
Exam 3:	100 points
Exam 4:	100 points
Paper:	100 points
Reading Quizzes:	70 points
Participation:	50 points
Attendance:	50 points
TOTAL:	560 points (lowest exam and quiz scores dropped)

Assessment:

**Exams:** Each exam may include T/F, multiple-choice, and/or short answer questions and covers only the material since the previous exam, although some questions might ask students to build on earlier material. The exams are based on the readings and lectures. The lowest exam score will be dropped. The last exam is not cumulative.

**Paper:** The purpose of this argumentative essay is to allow you to demonstrate how much you've learned in the course. In other words, the essay should utilize relevant ideas from the entire semester with the goal of constructing the strongest possible argument in support of a point of view. You will choose one of the chapters from the Cohen & Wellman book that we didn't read together and defend the author's point of view. Also, you will consider and respond to the contrary point of view represented by the other author in the text (each topic includes two chapters, both for and against). Using outside sources is permissible, but this isn't a research paper. It's about what you've learned in this class, so the citations should primarily be to course materials. The paper must use proper citations and include a reference list that conforms to the Chicago Manual of Style. See [here](#). Use either footnotes or the author-date system and include a reference list (bibliography) on the last page.

**BASIC REQUIREMENTS:**

- 1500-2000 words (not including citations and bibliography)
- Double-spaced
- No cover page
- Name and title at the top center of first page
- Page numbers on the bottom right of each page
- Standard twelve-point font (e.g. Times New Roman)
- One inch margins
- .docx or .rtf file formats only
- The introduction should be no more than half a page.
- The conclusion should be no more than half a page and only review the main points.
- No inflammatory or disrespectful language

The paper should be a standard five paragraph argumentative essay (no more and no less than five paragraphs), which means an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The thesis statement requirement: *the last sentence* of the introduction should be the *complete thesis statement* that clearly

states your point of view. **The topic sentence requirement:** the first sentence of each body paragraph should act as a topic sentence and state the philosophical idea being analyzed. The paper should be organized in the following way:

<u>First paragraph:</u> background and introductory material, any terms that need to be defined, and thesis statement
<u>Second paragraph:</u> first argument in support of the claim in the thesis statement
<u>Third paragraph:</u> second argument in support of the claim in the thesis statement
<u>Fourth paragraph:</u> an articulation of a contrary point of view immediately followed by the student’s careful and thorough rebuttal. The contrary point of view is represented by one of the two chapters in Cohen & Wellman.
<u>Fifth paragraph:</u> conclusion, review of main points

TERM PAPER RUBRIC (100 POINTS)	
0-20 points	<b>Does the paper demonstrate critical thinking?</b> The paper is an argumentative essay, containing a well-supported argument. It also makes careful distinctions and avoids logical fallacies and gaps in reasoning.
0-20 points	<b>Are connections made with other readings in the course?</b> Multiple, relevant connections are made to course material from the entire semester, whether to readings, lectures, or handouts. Students should demonstrate how much they have learned by using relevant ideas in service of their argument.
0-20 points	<b>Is ethical theory successfully applied?</b> Moral theory plays a prominent role in the paper, for example utilitarianism, Kant, virtue theory, etc. and is correctly applied in the argument to support the student’s thesis statement.
0-20 points	<b>Is another point of view carefully addressed?</b> A contrary point of view is carefully considered and critiqued, including, at least, the other chapter on the topic in the Cohen and Wellman book.
0-20 points	<b>Is the paper well-written?</b> Grammar is polished, and citation style conforms to Chicago Manual of Style. Also, the paper meets the thesis statement and topic sentence requirements in the instructions and is a five-paragraph essay organized in the way described above.

Additional points will be deducted for late papers and papers that don’t satisfy the “basic requirements” above. Cases of plagiarism earn an automatic zero and a possible F in the course. Plagiarized papers may be sent to UT Tyler Judicial Affairs to receive additional consequences.

As the rubric shows, you’re not graded for your political or moral stance but whether you demonstrate good critical thinking and argumentation, as well as whether you have followed the instructions.

Dr. Deaton has provided a helpful video and handout in the PHIL 2306 Toolkit in Canvas about how to write an ethics paper. Be sure to check them out.

If you receive help from the Writing Center on an early draft and use the information to revise your paper, I will award you five extra credit points in the extra credit column, which amounts to half a letter grade on the paper. In order to receive extra credit, you must opt in to “email instructor” when you visit the Center. If I don’t receive an e-mail from the Writing Center, you will not receive credit. The Writing Center is often busy, so you must plan ahead and make an appointment. No exceptions will be made if you are too late in making your appointment.

**Reading Quizzes:** Seven reading quizzes will be given at random times throughout the semester. The purpose of these quizzes is to encourage students to complete the assigned readings before coming to class. The questions will be general reading comprehension questions. Reading quizzes will be given at the start of class. At 8:10 a.m., the quiz will end. Make-ups for late-arriving or absent students will only be allowed with a valid excuse (e.g. with a doctor’s note). The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

**Participation:** This is an interactive class. Students will be graded on the quality and quantity of in-class participation. In class, students should be contributing to a positive classroom environment and engaged with the topic. This means students should pay attention, ask questions, and offer their own opinions on a daily basis, which should, in the process, demonstrate that the student has read and thought about the material before coming to class, which means referring to the readings and thus bringing the book to class. Students who sleep, text, or just chat with their neighbors about other things will be penalized. Disrespectful behavior will be penalized (See classroom conduct rules below). Paying attention and taking notes in the class are not enough for a good grade. *A student who pays attention but does not engage in classroom discussions will earn an 80% (40 points) in this category.* Also, arriving late or leaving early may result in a loss of points if this is a regular occurrence. The most likely scenario in which arriving late will contribute to loss of points is if the student misses more than one reading quiz. The reading quizzes are only given at the start of class. The participation grade will be updated several times during the semester, and students may see their grade move up or down based on their performance.

CLASS PARTICIPATION RUBRIC	
90-100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-class contributions informed by an excellent understanding of the reading</li> <li>• The student's opinion is well-reasoned and supported</li> <li>• Several comments or questions in every class meeting</li> <li>• Makes connections with other readings in the course</li> <li>• Conveys open-mindedness and respect for classmates (does not preclude disagreement)</li> </ul>
80-89%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-class contributions informed by a good understanding of the reading</li> <li>• The student's opinion is adequately supported</li> <li>• At least one contribution made in every class</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not make connections with other material in the course</li> <li>• Conveys open-mindedness and respect for classmates (does not preclude disagreement)</li> </ul>
70-79%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the reading may be deficient in some way or not demonstrated</li> <li>• The student's opinion may not be supported well</li> <li>• Critical thinking may not be demonstrated</li> <li>• Contributions to class discussions may be rare</li> <li>• Student pays attention in class, but may not say much</li> </ul>
1-69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal contributions fail to demonstrate understanding of the reading</li> <li>• Comments may be disrespectful (see “Class Conduct” rules below)</li> <li>• Critical thinking may not be demonstrated</li> <li>• Student may be disruptive</li> <li>• Student may engage in distracting behavior like surfing the Internet or texting</li> <li>• Student may talk too much (to her neighbor about things obviously unrelated to the class)</li> <li>• Student regularly uses class time to work on homework for other classes</li> <li>• Student’s behavior may be disruptive</li> <li>• Student may come to class late or leave early</li> </ul>
0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No participation</li> </ul>

**Attendance:** At the start of the semester, each student has fifty points for attendance and one free unexcused absence. Each unexcused absence after the first is penalized five points per day against the attendance grade up to fifty points. Excused absences will not count against the fifty points but need to be accompanied with documentation (e.g. a doctor’s note). This documentation must be submitted when the student returns to class and no later. After losing fifty points, no further points will be deducted even if there are more absences. Students may not see points deducted in the grade book immediately or even until the end of the semester, so it is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the number of attendance points remaining and make sure that the attendance sheet is accurate on a weekly basis.

### Tentative schedule

The following schedule is a general outline of the semester. It doesn’t contain due dates, exam dates, or schedule changes. ***Students should follow and regularly consult the schedule posted on the course home page in Canvas to see specific dates, additional assignments, and to stay up to date with important changes to the schedule.***

Week 1: *Ethics in a Nutshell*

Week 2: *Justice*, Chapters 1 and 2

Week 3: *Justice*, Chapters 3 and 4

Week 4: *Justice*, Chapters 5 and 6

Week 5: *Justice*, Chapters 7 and 8

Week 6: *Justice*, Chapters 9 and 10

Week 7: *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, Chapters 2, 3

Week 8: *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, Chapters 4, 5

Week 9: *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, Chapters 6, 7

Week 10: *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, Chapters 10, 11

Week 11: *The Sunflower*

Week 11: *The Sunflower*

Week 12: *The Sunflower*

Week 13: Final Exam

#### 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](http://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 instructor 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)

### Course Policies:

**Late work policy:** Papers must be uploaded to Canvas by the deadline. A penalty of half a letter grade per day up to two letter grades will be assessed for late papers. This penalty will be waived only under special circumstances (e.g. a serious illness accompanied by a doctor’s note). *The same applies for test make-ups.*

**Communication policy:** The best way to communicate with the instructor is through UT Tyler e-mail 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.

**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.

**Cell phone (distraction) policy:** Mobile devices can be used during class if it is related to what is going on in class. If you have an electronic textbook or plan to take notes on your device, please let me know early in the semester. If it appears from my perspective that your device has become a distraction to you or those around you, you may lose points in the participation column. This also applies to any other possible distraction you may bring into the classroom, such as homework for another class.

**Arriving late (tardy) or leaving early policy:** This is an 8:00 a.m. class, so arriving on time may sometimes be challenging. It is better to be late than never, but late arrivals and early departures can be disruptive. For this reason, coming late and leaving early may affect the student’s participation grade. In addition, late-arriving students will not be allowed to make up the reading quiz for the day (see Reading Quizzes above). If the student has a valid reason for leaving early or arriving late, this should be communicated by e-mail or at a time that is not disruptive to the class. Examples of valid excuses include the following: court date, emergency room visit, death

in the family, etc. Examples of invalid excuses include the following: lack of parking spaces, malfunctioning alarm, requirements for other classes, etc.

**Extra credit policy:** Extra credit may be offered by the instructor from time to time, but extra credit is not given on demand or by request. Students do not have a right to it; for example, the instructor is not obligated to provide extra credit opportunities that work with a student's schedule or as make-up for a missed opportunity. Extra credit opportunities may only occur at certain times during the semester and will not be available during finals week or the previous week. Sometimes extra credit will be available during class time, such as in the form of a quiz. Students who are absent or tardy on these days will not be allowed to make up the extra credit.

**“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 (1) the request is made prior to the second to last exam, (2) the student has a valid reason, e.g. a verifiable medical condition, and (3) the student has a C or higher at the time the request for an “incomplete” is made. The terms of satisfying an “incomplete” will be set by the instructor.

**Additional policies and expectations:**

- Students will set up their Canvas accounts so that they will be aware of announcements sent out in the course. The instructor will use this means of communication weekly. If students have not received an announcement after the first or second week of class, they should assume something is not working correctly and should contact technical support.
- Students will e-mail the instructor with questions.
- Students will meet with the instructor during office hours or by appointment if extra help is needed on assignments.
- Students will not wait until the drop deadline to discuss lower than expected grades on assignments; instead, the student will take the initiative early in the semester to meet with the instructor to discuss ways of improving.
- Students will access the Canvas toolkit. The toolkit is intended to provide you extra study resources if you find yourself struggling with the material or if you just want to excel.
- Students will complete assignments on time.
- Students will participate in a civil and respectful way.
- Cheating on tests will not be tolerated.
- Plagiarism on written assignments will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is cheating; it is taking credit for material that is not your own whether it is copied from a classmate, textbook, or online source. Plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment and a possible F in the course. It could also mean suspension from the university. So, students should be sure to use proper citations and do their own work. If students are not sure whether something constitutes plagiarism, they should contact the instructor to ask about it before submitting the assignment. The penalty will apply whether the act of plagiarism is intentional or not. Anyway, **it is really bad karma to cheat in an ethics class.**
- Students will declare that they have read and understood this syllabus by including a statement to this effect in a self-introduction post that will be posted to the discussion board “Meet Your Classmates” during the first week of class.

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