

# UWG PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM

PHIL 2030 sec.25H

**INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS** (3 hours)

Spring Semester 2015

MWF 10-10:52am, Pafford 309

Prerequisites: NONE

Web Site: <http://www.westga.edu/~rlane/ethics>

Email: [rlane@westga.edu](mailto:rlane@westga.edu)\*

Instructor: **Dr. Robert Lane**, TLC 2247

*Office Hours:*

M: 9-9:45am; 11am-1:45pm; 3:30-4pm

W: 9-9:45am; 11am-12pm; 1-1:45pm; 3:30-4pm

F: 8:45-9:45am; 11am-1pm

*and by appointment*

My office telephone: (678) 839-4745

English/Philosophy telephone: (678) 839-6512

*\*All email communication must be conducted from your official UWG email account. Students are obligated to check their UWG email accounts on a regular basis and to ensure that their mailboxes do not become full.*

**[UWG Severe Weather Policy](http://www.westga.edu/police/index_2277.php)**: [http://www.westga.edu/police/index\\_2277.php](http://www.westga.edu/police/index_2277.php)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Everyone has beliefs about morality, and to some extent we all agree about what actions are right and wrong; for example, we all agree that murder is wrong and that helping those less fortunate than us is right. But there are many moral questions about which people disagree: is abortion immoral? what about physician-assisted suicide? is it wrong to spend money on expensive cars and homes when people in other parts of the world are dying from malnutrition? do non-human animals have rights? This course will enable you critically to evaluate your own beliefs about concrete ethical issues like these. We'll also be dealing with more theoretical questions, such as: where does morality come from? (God? society? or somewhere else?); what makes an ethical argument good or bad?; and what general rules or principles ought we to live by? No prior experience in philosophy is necessary, so if you want to start thinking critically about morality, this course is a great place to begin.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** By the end of the semester, each student will be able to

- recognize and apply basic patterns of logical reasoning within ethical contexts;
- describe selected theories within meta-ethics and normative ethics, as well as selected arguments for and against those theories;
- describe positions and facts relevant to selected issues within applied ethics (such as abortion, physician-assisted suicide, capital punishment, world poverty, and animal rights);
- summarize the contributions of historically important figures (such as J. S. Mill and Immanuel Kant) to ethical thought;
- discuss in both oral and written discourse the ethical theories and issues explored in the course.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy Program by enabling students better to

- discuss the general historical development of the discipline of philosophy, including the views of at least three major historical figures of philosophy;
- incorporate a philosophical position in oral and written communications;
- critically outline and analyze philosophical issues;
- exhibit critical thinking skills.

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:** Although some course materials (syllabi, lecture notes, etc.) will be made available online, this is a traditional in-class course. Because of the size of the class, it is primarily a lecture course, although we will regularly take time for class discussions. Reading assignments will be made on a regular basis. In order to benefit fully from lectures, **it is a must** that you do the reading when it is assigned.

**TIME REQUIREMENTS:** UWG grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of (approximately) one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For this three credit-hour course, students are required to spend (approximately) three hours (160 minutes) in class each week **and to conduct at least an additional 6 hours of work relevant to this course outside of class each week.** You should expect to work more hours than this outside of class during periods when you are preparing for an exam.

## READING:

- *The Right Thing to Do: Basic Readings in Moral Philosophy* (6<sup>th</sup> ed., 2012), edited by James Rachels and Stuart Rachels (**required**)
- *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (7<sup>th</sup> ed., 2012), by James Rachels and Stuart Rachels (**required**)
- Online lecture notes (after most class meetings, I will post my own lecture notes for that day on the class web site; you should read and study these notes on a regular basis).

## EVALUATION:

- **Two in-class examinations (20% each).** Identification of argument forms, definitions/examples, short answer, essay.
- **Comprehensive final examination (25%).** Identification of argument forms, definitions/examples, short answer, essay.
- **Four response papers (10%).** See “Instructions for Writing Response Papers” on the class web site. See course schedule for tentative due dates.
- **Term paper (25%).** See “Writing a Philosophy Paper” and “Term Paper Instructions for This Class.” See course schedule for tentative due date.
- **GRADING SCALE:**  
100 – 90.1% **A**      90.0 – 80.1% **B**      80.0 – 70.1% **C**      70.0 – 60.1% **D**      60.0 - 0% **F**

## MISSED TESTS / EXTRA CREDIT:

- If you know that you will need to miss class on a day on which a test is scheduled (for example, due to a UWG sponsored event), you must let me know about your absence as far in advance as possible so that we can schedule another day and time for you to take the test (or a make-up test). If you miss a test without receiving my explicit permission beforehand and making arrangements for a make-up test, you will be permitted to take a make-up test if and only if one of the following conditions applies: (a) Your absence was due to illness or injury serious enough to require professional medical care and which prevented you from contacting me before the test; or (b) Your absence was due to other extenuating circumstances beyond your control. I will determine on a case-by-case basis what constitutes "extenuating circumstances beyond your control." You may be required to provide documentation pertaining to your absence before you are allowed to take a make-up test. **Make-up tests will usually be longer and potentially more difficult than the original test that you missed.**
- **Extra-credit work will not be given under any circumstances. Work completed for other courses will not be accepted in this course.**

## ATTENDANCE, LATE ARRIVAL, EARLY DEPARTURE

- **You may miss six class meetings (two weeks of class) with no effect on your grade. Beginning with your seventh absence, you will lose three points from your final average for every class meeting you miss.** This policy applies to the first week of class, even for days on which you have not yet registered for the class. I will make exceptions for absences necessitated by UWG-sponsored events or by other circumstances that were absolutely outside your control. However, I will make these exceptions **only if ALL of your absences can be accounted for in one of these ways** (e.g., if you miss seven classes and you have documented, acceptable reasons for missing only six classes, then your seventh absence will still count against you). Documentation will be required in all cases in which I make an exception to this attendance policy.
- **Students who miss 12 or more class meetings (four weeks, or one month, worth of classes) will not earn a passing grade in this course.** In this case the reason for your absences is irrelevant. If you are unable to attend class for a month due to medical reasons, a family emergency, or any other reason, you should withdraw from the course; if the withdrawal date has passed, you should apply for a hardship withdrawal.
- An early departure or late arrival may be counted as an absence, depending on the circumstances. I will decide in each case whether an early departure or a late arrival counts as an absence. If you know before class that you will not be able to stay for the entire class session, please inform me of this before class and sit as close to the door as possible, so as to cause as small a distraction as possible when you leave.
- **From the UWG Undergraduate Catalog:**
  - “Instruction begins the first day of class. In face-to-face courses, if students fail to attend the first day and have not contacted the instructor to explain their absence, they may be dropped during the Drop/Add Period to make room for other students.”
  - “Class attendance policies are determined by each instructor for his or her courses and may be found in the syllabus. Since course policies differ, students are responsible for understanding attendance requirements for each course. Failure to comply with those requirements may significantly affect grades.”

- **“Students are expected to attend each class meeting.** Students absent from class while officially representing the University or observing religious holidays should generally not be penalized in the calculation of final grades, as long as they provide advance notice and expeditiously make arrangements to complete any missed work.
- “University-sponsored activities include but are not limited to the following: intercollegiate athletic competitions; musical/theatrical/art performances or exhibitions associated with a degree program; debate competitions; and research conferences. Activities not considered to be university-sponsored include participation in clubs, even if they are affiliated with UWG, or events associated with social organizations such as fraternities or sororities.
- “Regardless of the reason for the absence, each student is responsible for the material covered in class, for completing any assignments, and for making specific arrangements with the instructor for any work missed. The degree to which missed work can be made up will depend upon the nature of the work and its intended purpose. Make-up is at the discretion of the instructor.
- “Any student who must be absent for more than one week of class should notify the Patient Advocates in Health Services, telephone 678-839-6452. The student should also notify the instructor or department.”

### **COMMON COURTESY**

- **You may not use electronic devices, including smart phones and laptops, while class is in session, for any reason (talking, texting, Tweeting, etc.). Cell phones, laptops, etc., must be turned off and put away at the beginning of each class.**
- **Do not leave the room during class unless it is absolutely essential that you do so.** Leaving the classroom while class is in session (e.g., to visit the restroom) is both disrespectful and distracting. So when you come to class, be prepared to remain in the classroom for the full duration of the class period.
- **Do not study material from other classes while this class is in session.** While you are in this class, I expect your attention to be focused on it rather than on your other courses.
- **Students may be dismissed from any class meeting at which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others.** Such behavior includes – but is not limited to – arriving late for class, allowing cell phones to ring, speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students, and using personal audio or visual devices. **Each dismissal of this kind will count as an absence and will be applied toward the attendance policy above.**

### **CONVERSION TO HONORS CREDIT**

- Any student wishing to receive honors credit for this course must get the approval of the professor and complete all the necessary paperwork during **the first week of class**. No honors forms will be signed after this point.

--

Please carefully review the following information at this link: <http://tinyurl.com/UWGSyllabusPolicies>. It contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester. Topics covered include:

**The Americans with Disabilities Act**

**UWG’s Email Policy**

**UWG’s Credit Hour Policy**

**UWG’s Honor Code**

## COURSE SCHEDULE

THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE IS **TENTATIVE** AND MAY CHANGE AS THE SEMESTER PROGRESSES. THIS INCLUDES TEST DATES, WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. If the class finds a specific topic especially interesting and/or difficult, then we may spend more than the allotted time on that topic. I will maintain an up-to-date version of the course schedule on the class web site. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up with test dates, due dates, and reading assignments, either by checking the class web site or contacting me directly.

"RTD" refers to *The Right Thing to Do*; "EMP" refers to *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. All readings are fair game for pop quizzes at the beginning of that day's class, as are the lecture notes from the previous class.

Jan.	topic	reading due	tests / papers due
M 5	Introduction to the course	--	--
W 7	Logic and ethical arguments	EMP ch.1 pp.1-10	
F 9	Logic and ethical arguments	EMP ch.1 pp.10-13; RTD ch.2 pp.19-21	
M 12	The Cultural Differences Argument	RTD ch.2 pp.21-24	
W 14	The Cultural Differences Argument	--	
F 16	The Provability Argument	RTD ch.2 pp.24-27	
M 19	<b>MLK Holiday: No Classes</b>		
W 21	Moral-Cultural Relativism	EMP ch.2 pp.14-17	<b>Response Paper #1</b>
F 23	Moral-Cultural Relativism	EMP ch.2 pp.17-21	
M 26	Moral-Cultural Relativism; King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"	RTD ch.31 (all); EMP ch.2 pp.21-31	
W 28	Morality and religion: DCT	EMP ch.4 pp.49-54	<b>Response Paper #2</b>
F 30	Morality and religion: DCT	--	

Feb.	topic	reading due	tests / papers due
M 2	Morality and religion: DCT	--	
W 4	Morality and religion: abortion	EMP ch.4 pp.58-63	
F 6	Catch-up & review	--	
M 9	--	--	<b>TEST 1</b>
W 11	Abortion: Don Marquis	RTD ch.11 (all)	
F 13	Abortion: Don Marquis	--	
M 16	Abortion: Thomson	RTD ch.12 pp.88-92	<b>Response Paper #3</b>
W 18	<b>Dr. Lane is attending a conference; this class does not meet.</b>		
F 20	<b>Dr. Lane is attending a conference; this class does not meet.</b>		
M 23	Abortion: Thomson	RTD ch.12 pp.93-97	
W 25	Abortion: Thomson	RTD ch.12 pp.98-104	
F 27	Utilitarianism	EMP ch.7 (all)	

March	topic	reading due	tests / papers due
M 2	Euthanasia: Rachels	RTD ch.34 (all)	
W 4	World Poverty: Singer	RTD ch.17 (all)	Response Paper #4
F 6	<b>Dr. Lane is attending a conference; this class does not meet.</b>		
M 9	World Poverty: Singer	--	
W 11	Catch-up & review	--	
F 13	--	--	TEST 2
M 16	<b>SPRING BREAK: CLASSES DO NOT MEET</b>		
W 18	<b>SPRING BREAK: CLASSES DO NOT MEET</b>		
F 20	<b>SPRING BREAK: CLASSES DO NOT MEET</b>		
M 23	Animal Rights: Singer	RTD ch.14 (all)	
W 25	Animal Rights: Norcross	RTD ch.15 (all)	
F 27	Classical vs. Modern Utilitarianism	EMP ch.8 pp.110-112; RTD ch.3 (all); RTD ch.5 (all)	
M 30	Criticisms of Utilitarianism	EMP ch.8 pp.112-117	Term Paper Draft

April	topic	reading due	tests / papers due
W 1	Defending Utilitarianism: J.J.C. Smart	EMP ch.8 pp.117-124	
F 3	Kant & Absolute Rules	EMP ch.9 pp.125-30	
M 6	Kant & Absolute Rules	RTD ch.7 (all)	
W 8	Kant & Absolute Rules	EMP ch.9 pp.130-135	
F 10	Kant & Respect for Persons	EMP ch.10 (all)	
M 13	Capital Punishment: Pojman	RTD ch.18 (all)	
W 15	Capital Punishment: Bright	RTD ch.19 (all)	
F 17	Review & student evaluations	--	Term Paper
W 22	<b>FINAL EXAM: Wednesday April 22, 8am – 10:30am</b>		