

Contemporary Moral Issues
Philosophy 111-503
MWF 1:50 – 2:40 YMCA 113

Instructor: Thomas Ellis
Office: 319 YMCA
Hours: MW 4:00-5:00, and by appointment
Phone: (979) 862-2797
E-mail: tellis@tamu.edu
Web Site: <http://phil111.tamu.edu>

Text: Richard Burnor and Yvonne Raley, *Ethical Choices: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy with Cases*

Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems* (Third Edition)

Course Description/Objectives: This course, as its title suggests, is an introduction to moral theory with an emphasis upon application to contemporary moral problems. Its goals are (1) to familiarize you with various moral theories, (2) to provide you with a deeper understanding of some pressing moral issues, and (3) to develop your critical thinking and writing skills. The aim of this course is not to teach you *what* to think, but rather *how* to think about morality.

Grading: Grades in this course will be calculated as follows:

30% - On-line reading quizzes
30% - 3 brief argument responses.
15% - PowerPoint assignment
25% - End of term paper

Schedule: The following is tentative, and subject to revision. For the most up to date and accurate schedule, please refer to the course web site.

Week 1	- Introduction to the course
Week 2	- Nature of Morality; Moral and Nonmoral Values
Week 3	- Autonomy, Agency; Relativism; Moral Reasoning
Week 4	- Egoism; Utilitarianism
Week 5	- Utilitarianism
Week 6	- Kantian Ethics
Week 7	- Virtue; Natural Law
Week 8	- Ethics of Care; Ethics and Practice
Week 9	- Spring Break
Week 10	- Abortion
Week 11	- Euthanasia; Enhancing Human Beings
Week 12	- Terrorism/Torture; Punishment
Week 13	- Affirmative Action
Week 14	- Poverty and Hunger
Week 15	- Environment; Moral status of Animals

Academic Dishonesty: Given that as Aggies we are all bound by the Honor Code, it pains me to have to explicitly state that academic dishonesty of any sort will not be tolerated. If you are unfamiliar with Texas A&M University's rules regarding what constitutes academic dishonesty, please refer to the appropriate section of the Student Rules handbook. It may be viewed on-line at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rules20.htm>.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek complex on west campus or call 979-845-1637. For additional information, visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.