

SYLLABUS
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

CONTEMPORARY MORAL ISSUES

Fall 2007, 3 Credit Hours

Philosophy 263W.01 (CID-4691), MWF 1:00-1:50, AB4-301

Instructor: James R. Chandler

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Office Hours: MWF 12:30-12:50, 2:00-2:50, 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 A. Boss, *Analyzing Moral Issues, Third Edition* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005). 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 20 percent of your final grade. The tests and final exams 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 15 percent of your final grade. This will include your record of attendance, participation in class, and a short presentation. 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 October 26th. 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 November 26th.

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 3 points added to your final grade can be earned. No extra credit will be awarded after November 30.

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. If you do not attend class, you must drop the course before the deadline (Oct. 10); otherwise, you will receive an F.

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

VIII. 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. 20		Introduction/Syllabus	Introduction
22		What is philosophy?	
24	pp. 1-17	What is ethics?	
27		What is ethics?	
29	pp. 17-19	Religious ethics	Theory
31		Religious ethics	
Sep. 3	Labor Day		
5	pp. 61-64	Rand	
7	pp. 32-36, 58-61	Locke	
10	pp.55-58	Rawls	
12	pp. 24-31	Kant	
14	pp. 50-54	Kant/Review	
17	TEST 1		
19	pp. 20-24	Mill	
21	pp. 47-49	Mill	
24		Mill	
26	pp. 77-90	Abortion	Moral Issues
28	pp. 91-101	Thomson	
Oct. 1	pp. 102-106	Noonan	
3	pp. 106-112	Warren	
5	pp. 113-117	Marquis	
8	pp. 181-194	Euthanasia	
10	pp. 199-207	Battin	
12	pp. 208-212	Callahan	
15	pp. 194-199	Rachels/Review	
17	TEST 2		
19	pp.234-248	Death Penalty	
22	pp. 248-253	Haag	
24	pp.260-272	Bedau	
26	pp. 279-289	Prejean	PAPER DUE
29	pp. 349-363	Homosexuality	
31	pp. 378-385	Ruse	
Nov. 2	pp. 385-391	Finnis	
5	pp.498-514	Racism	
7	pp. 518-523	Steele	
9	pp. 523-535	Garcia/Review	
12	TEST 3		
14	pp.629-642	Just War	
16	pp. 643-649	Anscombe	
19	pp.649-657	Coady	
21	Thanksgiving		
23	Thanksgiving		
26	pp. 707-719	Environmental Ethics	
28	pp. 720-725	Regan	

	30	pp.725-730	Narveson
Dec.	3	pp.749-753	Leopold
	5	Review	
	12	2:00-4:00	FINAL EXAM

IX. 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. (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).