

**SYLLABUS**  
**SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

**CONTEMPORARY MORAL ISSUES**

Spring, 2008, 3 Credit Hours

Philosophy 263W.04 (CID-1933), TUTH 2:00-3:20, AB4 204

**Instructor:** James R. Chandler

**Office:** Bldg. Lee Drain, Room 332 L

**Office Phone:** 936-294-3694 **Fax Number:** 936-294-3798

**Office Hours:** TUTH 10:20-10:50, 1:00-1:50, 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 Boss, *Analyzing Moral Issues, Fourth Edition* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008). 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 participation in class, homework, 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 March 27. 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 April 29.

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 2 points added to your final grade can be earned. No extra credit will be awarded after May 1.

### 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; 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. 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).

### IX. 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
Jan. 17		Introduction/Syllabus	<b>Introduction</b>
22		What is Philosophy/Ethics?	
24	pp. 1-4	What is Ethics?	
29	pp. 5-16, 17-19	Relativism/Religion	<b>Theory</b>
31	pp. 20-23, 51-52	Ethical Egoism	
Feb. 5	pp. 23-28, 55-57	Utilitarianism	
7		Utilitarianism/Review	
12		<b>TEST 1</b>	
14	pp. 28-34, 57-61	Duty Ethics	
19	pp.35-39, 66-68	Natural Rights	
21	pp. 80-93	<b>Abortion/Debate</b>	<b>Moral Issues</b>
26	pp. 95-104	Thomson	
28	pp. 105-109, 117-121	Noonan/ Marquis	
Mar. 4	pp. 110-116	Warren/Review	
6		<b>TEST 2</b>	
11		Spring Break	
13		Spring Break	
18		Current Events	
20	pp. 194-208	<b>Euthanasia</b>	
25	pp. 213-221	Battin	
27	pp. 223-225, 209-213	Gay-Williams/Rachels	
Apr. 1	pp. 249-263	<b>Death Penalty/Debate</b>	<b>PAPER DUE</b>
3	pp. 265-268, 294-298	Haag/Prejean	
8	pp. 276-286,	Bedau	
10	pp. 368-381	<b>Sexual Intimacy</b>	
15	pp. 381-385, 387-394	The Vatican/Ruddick	
17	pp. 396-402	Ruse/Review	
22		<b>TEST 3</b>	
24	pp.652-667	<b>War and Terrorism</b>	
29	pp. 668-674	Anscombe	

May 1 pp.675-681 Coady  
6 to be assigned by class vote  
8 to be assigned by class vote  
15 2:00-4:00 **FINAL EXAM**