

PHILOSOPHY 2: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

CSU SACRAMENTO, FALL 2025

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Office Hours: TR² 1:30-3:00pm, or by appointment (Mendocino 3026)
Zoom meetings are by appointment only: [csus.zoom.us/my/dorcaschung](https://csus.zoom.us/j/9162873763)

Class Meets: MW 1:30-2:45, Mendocino 3009 (sec 8, #85878)
Also see Canvas: csus.instructure.com

Required text: Steven M. Cahn, *Exploring Ethics*, 4th Edition (New York: Oxford, 2017)
ISBN: 978-0-19-027363-7

GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Description:

The examination of the concepts of morality, obligation, human rights and the good life. Competing theories about the foundations of morality will be investigated.

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¹ Every effort is made to communicate with you quickly, effectively, and accurately. I take this as an important element of my responsibility to you. However, my response may be delayed outside of office hours and on weekends.

² In case you didn't know, TR stands for "Tuesdays" and "Thursdays" (the "R" represents "Thursday")

Area C-2 Learning Objectives, Introduction to the Humanities (G.E., 3 Units)

This course fulfills the General Education Requirements of Area C-2, which focuses on the human condition. The objectives are as follows:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of the study of the humanities.
- Investigate, describe, and analyze the roles and effects of human culture and understanding in the development of human societies.
- Compare and analyze various conceptions of humankind.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical development of cultures and civilizations, including their animating ideas and values.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment for Philosophy 2

Outcome	How Assessed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasp the theoretical content of significant moral philosophers in various periods of Western Philosophy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quizzes will test comprehension of the writings of significant moral philosophers • Writing assignments and exams will test ability to define and understand relevant concepts, and will require analysis of theoretical content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how traditional ethical theories and problems are possible foundations for moral issues in a pluralistic, diverse, and morally complex society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and group discussion assignments will require utilization and evaluation of content in the light of complex moral circumstances • Presentations will assess the ability to apply content to contemporary situations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the contributions to and limitations of applying concepts in moral philosophy to various social issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quizzes will test comprehension of readings on applied and practical ethics • Writing assignments, presentations, and group assignments will require evaluation of ethical theories in the light of various social issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop critical thinking, reading, and writing abilities by analyzing one theory against another and/or moral alternative against another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussion assignments, writing assignments, and fishbowl group presentations and peer reviews will require connecting and evaluating current content in the light of previous content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that an informed and critical exploration of contemporary issues can assist in making responsible decisions, which in turn equips the student for participation in a good society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned readings include discussion of individual responsibility and civic engagement. Reading quizzes will assess comprehension of assigned readings • Presentation, group, and writing assignments will examine relevant content, as well as the extent of human responsibility in responding to issues addressed in that content.

Grading and Grade Breakdown

Breakdown of Points:

- Attendance & Participation – 200 points (20%)
- Quizzes – 200 points (20%)
- Midterm exam – 200 points (20%)
- Writing Assessment – 100 points (10%)
- Fishbowl – 100 points total (10%)
 - Debate Group – 50 points (5%)
 - Questions – 20 points (2%)
 - Peer Feedback – 30 points (3%)
- Final Exam – 200 points (20%)

- TOTAL – 1000 points

Scale:

- 930-1000 points – A (excellent)
- 900-929 points – A-
- 880-899 points – B+
- 830-879 points – B (above average)
- 800-829 points – B-
- 780-799 points – C+
- 730-779 points – C (average)
- 700-729 points – C -
- 600-699 points – D (below average)
- 0-599 points – F (failure from course)

Technology Component

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have regular and reliable access to the computing facilities necessary for this course. If you come across any technical difficulties (for example, when it comes to accessing Canvas), you should notify me as soon as possible. If the problem is more complex than my skills allow, please contact [Information Resource Technology \(IRT\) Support and Consultation](#) by e-mail: servicedesk@csus.edu or phone (916) 278-7337.

Accommodations and Support

This course and material have been designed for universal access. If you have difficulty accessing any of the material, please let me know at your earliest experience of difficulty.

Services to Students with Disabilities

“Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class, please immediately contact [Services for Students with Disabilities \(SSWD\)](#) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided.”

Student Health & Counseling Services

“Your physical and mental health are important to your success as a college student. [Student Health and Counseling Services \(SHCS\)](#) in The WELL offers medical, counseling, and wellness services to help you get and stay healthy during your time at Sac State. SHCS offers: Primary Care medical services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, transgender care, and immunizations; urgent care for acute illness, injuries, and urgent counseling needs; pharmacy for prescriptions and over-the-counter products; mental health counseling, including individual sessions, group counseling, support groups, mindfulness training, and peer counseling; athletic

training for sports injury rehabilitation; wellness services, including nutrition counseling, peer led health education and wellness workshops, and free safer sex supplies; violence and sexual assault support services. Most services are covered by the Health Services fee and available at no additional cost.”

Crisis Awareness & Resource Education Support

“If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away! The [CARES office](#) provides case management support for any enrolled student.”

Title IX

In this course, the topic of sex (including sexual misconduct/sexual violence) may emerge either purposefully or inadvertently in readings, films, class discussions or other class materials. While making personal connections with these topics can be a meaningful and important endeavor, we recognize that such topics may be particularly upsetting for some. As such we encourage all students to seek the support they need. You are welcome to utilize the resources available to you from Sac State’s [Title IX website](#).

In addition, please be aware of the following policy regarding confidentiality and disclosures of incidents of sexual misconduct/sexual violence:

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help maintain a safe learning environment on our campus. In the event that you choose to write, speak or otherwise disclose information about having experienced sexual misconduct/sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking and specify that this violence occurred while you or the perpetrator were a Sac State student, federal and state laws require that I, in my capacity as a “responsible employee,” must notify Sac State’s Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will contact you to inform you of your rights and options and connect you with support resources, including possibilities for holding accountable the person who harmed you. Please be advised that you will not be forced to share information and your level of involvement will be your choice.

Sac State's Title IX Coordinator is *Skip Bishop* (Director of Equal Opportunity, Del Norte Hall 2005). You may contact him at william.bishop@csus.edu, 916-278-5770.

If you do not want the Title IX Coordinator notified, instead of disclosing the experience to me, you can speak confidentially by contacting the following confidential resources³:

- *Laura Swartzen* (Campus Confidential Advocate), weave@csus.edu, 916-278-5850
- WEAVE 24/7 Hotline, 916-920-2952
- Student Health & Counseling Services at The WELL, 916-278-6461, www.csus.edu/shcs

³ Note: If it is determined that an alleged perpetrator poses an imminent threat to the broader campus community or if persons under 18 years of age are involved, our Campus Confidential Advocate is required to notify the Sacramento State Police Department.

Other University Support and Services

- [Drop and Withdrawal Policy](#)
- [Grading Policy](#)
- [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Academic Advising](#)
- [Peer and Academic Resource Center](#)
- [Dreamer Resource Center](#)
- [MLK Center](#)
- [Student Success Center](#)
- [Reading & Writing Center](#)
- [Information Resources & Technology](#)

PARTICIPATION

Participation points comprise 200 points total (or 20% of your overall course grade). Participation includes, but is not limited to: attendance, participation in class and online discussions, Socratic activities, and group work activities.

Respect for One Another

In order to help maintain a successful and flourishing learning environment, I ask that you follow some of the following guidelines:

1. Please be on time to class, and pay attention as you would in any other in-person class.
2. Be respectful to the instructor and classmates, in both your speaking and your listening.
3. Avoid distractions and multitasking (for example, don't be preoccupied with your phone).
4. Actively participate by asking questions or responding to questions. Try not to interrupt, though (raise your hand instead).

Do recognize some of our discussion topics are very important and personal subject matters. While passion for the subject is great, please do not confuse that with emotional/irrational outbursts. Any comments/criticisms not made in the interest of academic pursuit are not tolerated. Please also be aware of the [University's Honor Code](#).

Electronics in the Classroom

Unless your device is an e-reader tablet designed specifically for distraction-free note-taking (such as reMarkable, Boox, Supernote, etc), all electronic devices (phones, computers, music players, etc.) must be turned off or put on "silent" mode. Occasionally we may have activities (such as Socratic) that will involve the use of the web. In those instances I will allow you to take your devices out. In all other instances, please do not be tethered to them during class time.

You may be interested in reading this study, published in *Psychological Science*, which contends that longhand note-taking is more effective than laptop note-taking (Saclink login is required): pss.sagepub.com.proxy.lib.csus.edu/content/25/6/1159.full

Please be aware that if you persistently fail to comply with my electronics policy, you will have participation points deducted from your overall scores.

Socrative

Socrative is a free online application used to help facilitate class participation and discussion. Occasionally I may use this app to take in-class polls, encourage participation, and assign fishbowl peer reviews. You may access Socrative from a browser (www.socrative.com) or from an app store. Please note that Socrative polls are required, and completion of these polls will count toward your participation scores.

To log in, please click on the login button, and select “Student Login.” Enter the room name (which I will give in class), and then your full name. Please provide your *last name first*.

Group Work

This course will occasionally utilize in-class discussion groups to help facilitate the learning environment. Group work activities can vary from section to section, and will usually require that the group submit some form of written work.

Please note that group work participation is also required, and will be counted towards your participation scores.

Absence Policy

If you are unable to attend our class sessions, please let me know as soon as possible. I may still mark you as “absent” in the course, however. I generally require some form of documentation giving evidence for absences (such as doctor’s notes, funeral notifications, flight reservations, etc.). Most of the time, though, these are taken on a case-by-case basis.

Keep in mind that you are still responsible for the information that you missed, even if you are absent from class. For example, if there is a Socrative activity, group work activity, or presentation that takes place during your absence, you will still have points deducted if you are not present to complete the activity. You are welcome to contact me if you are interested in completing makeup work; some assignments, however (such as Fishbowl activities) may be ineligible for makeup.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Reading assignments are found on the calendar schedule at the very end of this Syllabus. Readings may be found either in your assigned textbook or on Canvas. You should be reading the corresponding material for homework while it is being covered in class lecture and class discussion.

You may notice that these readings can be a little hard and deep. Don’t be surprised if it takes more than one reading to really understand the material. I would advise you to join regular study groups – they can help!

QUIZZES

Quizzes comprise a total of 200 points, or up to 20% of your overall course grade. There will be a total of 10 quizzes, worth 20 points each.

Reading Quizzes will be given online in Canvas, and are generally due on a weekly basis. They will cover all of the readings assigned in the particular section of the course. However, more questions will be dedicated to the material that is covered in class. Do note that these readings can be difficult, and may require several reading attempts in order to full understand the content. Please be sure to schedule your time accordingly.

Note that completion of all quizzes and exams will require the Respondus Lockdown Browser. You may look at the textbook and any written notes in front of you to complete the quizzes and exams, but you are not allowed to access any other window while you complete these assignments. Please be prepared.

Make-up quizzes are not allowed unless you are able to provide evidence for: 1) death in the family (please provide funeral program, obituary news, etc.); 2) illness or injury of yourself or an immediate family member, such as your child or spouse (please provide a doctor's note); 3) U.S. military service (please provide notice); or 4) religious and/or cultural holiday.

A schedule of the readings and their corresponding quizzes are found in the Calendar Schedule, found at the end of this Syllabus.

FISHBOWL DEBATE/PRESENTATION

The fishbowl assignment is a presentation/debate that you will participate in with a group of classmates. Fishbowls will comprise a total of 100 points, or 10% of the overall course grade.

I will talk more about the format of a fishbowl in our in person class meetings. As a brief breakdown, you will be asked to choose a "side" of a particular debate (you are welcome to choose a side that you do not agree with, just to play the devil's advocate position). During the debate, your group will be given a set amount of time to present your position, and well as an opportunity to rebut/respond to the opposing position. After some time, we will be able to have an open discussion between the two sides, and then one with the rest of the class.

The Fishbowl will come in three parts: Presentation (50 points), Questions (20 points), and Peer Reviews (30 points). The presentation portion will be relevant for the individuals presenting during that particular day; but the questions and peer reviews will be relevant for all those listening to the presentation/debate.

Signups for fishbowl presentation topics will be made available to you in the People section of Canvas. Please check the calendar for the topics and presentation dates (see Weeks 9-15).

More information on the Fishbowls will be provided for you in the relevant Assignment section in Canvas.

PAPER ASSIGNMENTS & OTHER RELATED NOTIFICATIONS

You will have one in-class writing assessment due this semester. The paper will coincide with your Midterm Exam, and will be a moral theory application paper. This assignment will involve answering a specific set of questions related to a moral theory. Further details will be made available to you in Canvas. In the meantime, please pay attention to the following policies and guidelines. Though your writing assessment will take place in-class, I will still post my no-AI-use policy below, in case it is relevant for any work you submit.

Academic Honesty

You are responsible for knowing the policies and procedures regarding academic honesty, found in the [University Policy Manual](#). In addition, you may be interested in utilizing the [Academic Honesty Tutorial](#). Plagiarism at Sac State includes, but is not limited to:

1. The act of incorporating into one's own work the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work *without giving appropriate credit* and thereby representing the product as entirely one's own. Examples include not only word-for-word copying, but also the "mosaic" (i.e., interspersing a few of one's own words while, in essence, copying another's work), the paraphrase (i.e., rewriting another's work while still using the other's fundamental idea or theory); fabrication (i.e., inventing or counterfeiting sources), ghost-writing (i.e., submitting another's work as one's own) and failure to include quotation marks on material that is otherwise acknowledged; and
2. Representing as one's own another's artistic or scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawing, sculptures, or similar works.

In addition to this, I do have a no-AI-use policy. Do not utilize, cite, or quote any AI source in assignments, even if you were to give appropriate credit and citation (note that this includes, but is not limited to, chatbots such as ChatGPT, paraphrasing tools such as Quillbot, and grammar tools such as Grammarly). In this course you are not allowed to use AI text generators or tools to assist you in any way on your assignments. Improper use of AI technology can be grounds for a charge of plagiarism or other academic misconduct, leading to academic penalties (like failing a course) and administrative penalties, regardless of when the academic misconduct is discovered.

I do believe that there is great benefit to you in doing the hard work yourself and struggling through the daily grind. You may be interested in reading the following article from MIT. Preliminary studies reveal that people who rely on LLMs like ChatGPT have weaker brain function than those who don't: <https://www.media.mit.edu/projects/your-brain-on-chatgpt/overview/>.

Citing Sources

It is very important that you properly cite sources. The most important thing I look for is that you are giving credit to the authors and providing page numbers for all your quotes and paraphrases. Failure to provide correct citations will be given point penalties and may be counted as "plagiarized."

Late Work Policy

Late assignments will lose 0.5 points for each hour that it is late. If you come up to me during class and ask, "Can I submit it late?" my answer will be "Yes. But your paper will be considered late." The circumstances that may excuse a late assignment include: 1) Death in the family; 2) Debilitating illness or injury of yourself or an immediate family member, such as your child or spouse; 3) U.S. military service; or 4) Religious or cultural holiday. Documentation must be provided in order to demonstrate your reasons for requesting an excuse. *Computer problems are not legitimate excuses.* Be sure back up your work.

EXAMS

You will have two exams in this course – a Midterm, and a Final Exam. Each exam will comprise 20% of your total grade (200 points). Together, the exams will comprise 40% of your grade (400 points). The Midterm will assess material covered between Weeks 1-7 (Moral Theories), and the Final Exam will assess material covered between Weeks 9-15 (Moral Issues). Please bring a bigger (8.5 x 11) Blue Book or Green Book to class on the day of your exam.

Exams will generally follow the following pattern: 1) Identification (multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks, short answer, etc.); and 2) Definitions (defining/explaining significant terms and concepts).

CALENDAR SCHEDULE

Please see the attached calendar below for a tentative schedule of our course. Note that the assigned (required) readings may be accessed either in Canvas or via your textbook. However, they are subject to change due to any unforeseen circumstances. In addition, please keep in mind that the list of due dates is not exhaustive of all of your assignments. You may have in-class group activities, Socrative polls, or other participation activities to complete.

If there are changes, I'll let you know, either in class or on Canvas!

AUGUST 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
24 (Wk 01) Semester begins! Read the Syllabus	25	26 Introducing Ethics & Philosophy	27	28 Introduce Yourself Post due

SEPTEMBER 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 (Wk02) NO SCHOOL (Labor Day Holiday)	2	3 <u>Moral Relativism</u> Read: Timmons, and King (both in Canvas)	4	5
8 (Wk03) <u>Moral Relativism</u> Read: Timmons, and King (both in Canvas) Quiz 1 due in Canvas	9	10 <u>God & Morality</u> Read or Watch: Singer and Hare (in Canvas)	11	12
15 (Wk04) <u>God & Morality</u> Read or Watch: Singer and Hare (in Canvas) Quiz 2 due in Canvas	16	17 <u>Utilitarianism</u> Read: Mill (p. 118-129); Pojman (p. 130-138)	18	19
22 (Wk05) <u>Utilitarianism</u> Read: Mill (p. 118-129); Pojman (p. 130-138) Quiz 3 due in Canvas	23	24 <u>Deontology</u> Read: Kant (p. 102-112); O'Neill (p. 114-117)	25	26
29 (Wk06) <u>Deontology</u> Read: Kant (p. 102-112); O'Neill (p. 114-117) Quiz 4 due in Canvas	30			

OCTOBER 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
(Wk06)		1 <u>Virtue Ethics</u> Read: Aristotle (p. 139-144); Driver (p. 145-147)	2	3
6 (Wk07) <u>Virtue Ethics</u> Read: Aristotle (p. 139-144); Driver (p. 145-147) Quiz 5 due in Canvas	7	8 <u>Care Ethics</u> Read: Held (p. 148-153)	9	10
13 (Wk08) Class meets at the Fall Ethics Symposium (Redwood Room, Pacific Suite in Union)	14	15 <u>Care Ethics</u> Read: Held (p. 148-153) Quiz 6 due in Canvas	16	17
20 (Wk09) Writing Assessment Please bring an 8.5 x 11 green book to class	21	22 MIDTERM Please bring an 8.5 x 11 green book to class	23	24
27 (Wk10) <u>World Relief Efforts</u> Read: Singer (p. 264-273); Timmerman (p. 274-277)	28	29 <u>World Relief Efforts</u> Read: Singer (p. 264-273); Timmerman (p. 274-277)	30	31

NOVEMBER 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3 (Wk11) <u>Fishbowl Debate 1</u> On World Relief Efforts Quiz 7 due	4	5 <u>Immigration</u> Read: Wellman intro (Canvas); Mendoza (Canvas)	6	7
10 (Wk12) <u>Immigration</u> Read: Wellman intro (Canvas); Mendoza (Canvas)	11	12 <u>Fishbowl Debate 2</u> On Immigration Quiz 8 due	13	14
17 (Wk13) <u>Abortion</u> Read: Warren (p. 205-221); Marquis (p. 223-231)	18 NO SCHOOL (Veteran's Day Holiday)	19 <u>Abortion</u> Read: Warren (p. 205-221); Marquis (p. 223-231)	20	21
24 (Wk14) <u>Fishbowl Debate 3</u> on Abortion Quiz 9 due	25	26 <u>Euthanasia</u> Read: Rachels (p. 246-252); Foot (in Canvas)	27 NO SCHOOL (Thanksgiving Holiday)	28 NO SCHOOL (Thanksgiving Holiday)

DECEMBER 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 (Wk15) <u>Euthanasia</u> Read: Rachels (p. 246-252); Foot (in Canvas)	2	3 <u>Fishbowl Debate 4</u> on Euthanasia Quiz 10 due	4	5 Reflection post due
8 FINAL EXAM Please bring a Green Book 12:45-2:45pm	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31	JAN 01	JAN 02 <u>Fall Grades Due</u> (this means you should see your final grades by tomorrow)