

PHILOSOPHY 2: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS CSU SACRAMENTO, SPRING 2026

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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

Class Meets: TR 12:00-1:15pm, Douglass 110 (sec 6, #30927)
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:

- Grasp the theoretical content of significant moral philosophers in various periods of Western Philosophy.
- Explain how traditional ethical theories and problems are possible foundations for moral issues in a pluralistic, diverse, and morally complex society.
- Understand the contributions to and limitations of applying concepts in moral philosophy to various social issues.
- Develop critical thinking, reading, and writing abilities by analyzing one theory against another and/or moral alternative against another.
- 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.

Assessments:

- Quizzes will test comprehension of the writings of significant moral philosophers and the comprehension of readings on various social issues.
- The group presentations, writing assignments, and exams will test the ability to define, understand, evaluate & criticize, utilize, and apply the relevant content.

Grading and Grade Breakdown

Breakdown of Points:

- Attendance/Participation – 200 (20%)
- Quizzes – 200 (20%)
- Midterm exam – 200 (20%)
- Writing Assessment – 100 (10%)
- Fishbowl – 100 (10%)
- 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.”

Title IX

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

- [Crisis Assistance & Awareness Education Support \(CARES\)](#)
- [Drop and Withdrawal Policy](#)
- [Grading Policy](#)
- [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Academic Advising](#)
- [Peer and Academic Resource Center](#)
- [Dreamer Resource Center](#)
- [MLK Center](#)
- [Student Health and Counseling Services \(SHCS\)](#)
- [Student Success Center](#)
- [Reading & Writing Center](#)
- [Information Resources & Technology](#)

PARTICIPATION & POLICIES

Participation points comprise 200 points total (or 20% of your overall course grade). Participation includes, but is not limited to: attendance, icebreaker activities, participation in class and online discussions, Socrative polls, 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. Earbuds and headphones should also be taken off your ears. Occasionally we may have activities (such as Socrative) 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

In addition, note that recording is allowed only to help accommodate students with documented learning disabilities. California law otherwise prohibits recording or filming in a classroom without instructor consent ([Education Code § 78907](#)). Do not record anything in this classroom (for social media sharing, personal distribution, or other use) unless you have the express consent of those whom you are recording.

Please be aware that if you persistently fail to comply with my electronics policy, you will have participation points deducted from your overall scores. If you fail to comply with the CA Education Code, you may be guilty of a misdemeanor.

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 poll, 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.

Late Work Policy

Late assignments will lose 0.5 points for each hour that it is submitted late. The only circumstances that may excuse a late assignment are 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 for these excuses. *Computer problems are not legitimate excuses.* Be sure to back up your work.

Please note also that *it is important to be timely* if you are requesting makeup work. By this, I mean that you must inform me of your excusable hardships prior to your missed work, or within at least one or two weeks after the given due dates for which you are requesting the makeup work. For instance, if you contact me right before Finals Week that you experienced hardships months prior, it may be too late to make up work from that month or those months, even if your reasons for hardship are documented and normally excusable.

Academic Honesty

You are responsible for knowing the policies and procedures regarding academic honesty, found in the [University Policy Manual](#). Please pay close attention to what counts as academic dishonesty (Section IV). In addition, you may be interested in utilizing the [Academic Honesty Tutorial](#).

I also 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, which reveal in preliminary studies that people who rely too much on LLMs like ChatGPT have weaker brain connectivity patterns: www.media.mit.edu/projects/your-brain-on-chatgpt/overview/.

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

There will be a total of 10 quizzes worth 20 points each, comprising a total of 200 points, or up to 20% of your overall course grade. They will be based on both reading and lecture content, and are generally due in Canvas on a weekly basis.

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.

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

Fishbowls will comprise a total of 100 points, or 10% of the overall course grade. This is a presentation/debate that you will participate in with a group of classmates. 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. More information on the Fishbowls will be provided for you in Canvas.

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).

WRITING ASSESSMENT

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. Further details will be made available to you in Canvas.

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.”

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, Socratic polls, or other participation activities to complete.

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

JANUARY 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26 (Wk 01)	27 Semester begins! Read the Syllabus	28	29 Introducing Ethics & Philosophy	30 Introduce Yourself Post due

FEBRUARY 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 (Wk02)	3 <u>Moral Relativism</u> Read: Timmons, and King (both in Canvas)	4	5 <u>Moral Relativism</u> Read: Timmons, and King (both in Canvas) Quiz 1 due in Canvas	6
9 (Wk03)	10 <u>God & Morality</u> Read or Watch: Singer and Hare (in Canvas)	11	12 <u>God & Morality</u> Read or Watch: Singer and Hare (in Canvas) Quiz 2 due in Canvas	13
16 (Wk04)	17 <u>Utilitarianism</u> Read: Mill (p. 118-129); Pojman (p. 130-138)	18	19 <u>Utilitarianism</u> Read: Mill (p. 118-129); Pojman (p. 130-138) Quiz 3 due in Canvas	20
23 (Wk05)	24 <u>Deontology</u> Read: Kant (p. 102-112); O'Neill (p. 114-117)	25	26 <u>Deontology</u> Read: Kant (p. 102-112); O'Neill (p. 114-117) Quiz 4 due in Canvas	27

MARCH 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>2 (Wk06)</p>	<p>3 <u>Virtue Ethics</u> Read: Aristotle (p. 139-144); Driver (p. 145-147)</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5 <u>Virtue Ethics</u> Read: Aristotle (p. 139-144); Driver (p. 145-147) Quiz 5 due in Canvas</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>9 (Wk07)</p>	<p>10 <u>Care Ethics</u> Read: Held (p. 148-153)</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 <u>Care Ethics</u> Read: Held (p. 148-153) Quiz 6 due in Canvas</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>16 (Wk08)</p>	<p>17 Writing Assessment Please bring an 8.5 x 11 green book to class</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19 MIDTERM Please bring an 8.5 x 11 green book to class</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>23 SPRING BREAK!</p>	<p>24 SPRING BREAK!</p>	<p>25 SPRING BREAK!</p>	<p>26 SPRING BREAK!</p>	<p>27 SPRING BREAK!</p>
<p>30 (Wk09)</p>	<p>31 NO SCHOOL (Cesar Chavez Day)</p>			

APRIL 2026*

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
(Wk09)		1	2 <u>World Relief Efforts</u> Read: Singer (p. 264-273); Timmerman (p. 274-277)	3
6 (Wk10)	7 <u>World Relief Efforts</u> Read: Singer (p. 264-273); Timmerman (p. 274-277)	8	9 <u>Fishbowl Debate 1</u> On World Relief Efforts Quiz 7 due	10
13 (Wk11)	14 <u>Immigration</u> Read: Wellman intro; Mendoza (both in Canvas)	15	16 <u>Immigration</u> Read: Wellman intro; Mendoza (both in Canvas)	17
20 (Wk12)	21 <u>Fishbowl Debate 2</u> On Immigration Quiz 8 due	22	23 <u>Abortion</u> Read: Warren (p. 205-221); Marquis (p. 223-231)	24
27 (Wk13)	28 <u>Abortion</u> Read: Warren (p. 205-221); Marquis (p. 223-231)	29	30 <u>Fishbowl Debate 3</u> on Abortion Quiz 9 due	

* dates may or may not be shifted this month, in order to accommodate the Nammour Symposium

MAY 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1
4 (Wk14)	5 Euthanasia Read: Rachels (p. 246-252); Foot (in Canvas)	6	7 Euthanasia Read: Rachels (p. 246-252); Foot (in Canvas)	8
11 (Wk15)	12 <u>Fishbowl Debate 4</u> on Euthanasia Quiz 10 due	13	14 Conclusion Prepare for the Final	15 Reflection post due
18	19 FINAL EXAM Please bring a Green Book 12:45 - 2:45pm	20	21	22
25	26	27 Spring Grades Due (this means you should see your final grades by tomorrow)	28	29