COURSE DESCRIPTION: a study of the components of moral decision and moral life: freedom, obligation, conscience, objective goods and values. Application of moral principles to particular circumstances. We will examine the ethical theory of St. Thomas Aquinas and of Aristotle, seeing how it applies to some contemporary ethical concerns.


MISSED EXAMS: Missed exams will receive a zero, except in cases of emergency. Students wishing to reschedule exams must contact me prior to the date of the exam.

CHEATING: Students who cheat on an exams or quiz and students who plagiarize on a paper will fail the course.

ONLINE DISCUSSIONS: There will be four groups of two forums throughout the semester, so that, for instance, the first group will have forums 1A and 1B, the second group will have 2A & 2B, and so on. Students must provide at least one substantial post in each group. In group 1, for instance, students must post in either 1A or 1B; they need not post in both 1A and 1B, although they may, if they wish. Posts such as "yeah, I agree with what Jonathan said." will count for nothing unless they go on to provide information, arguments, or insights not already given by Jonathan or others. Each group is worth a total of 5 points, which can be earned through a single post, if it is substantial enough. In each forum, students will be asked to react to some reading material. All posts must be made by midnight of the due date.

DISABILITY: If you have any disability for which accommodation may be requested, please contact Counseling Services/Disability Services, located on the second floor of Crooker Center at (713) 525-6953 or (713) 525-3162.

ASSESSMENT: Students’ grades will consist of 400 points, broken down into the following elements:
- 3 tests . . . . . . . . . .300 pts.
- 4 papers . . . . . . . . . .80 pts.
- 4 posts . . . . . . . . . .20 pts.
These values may change slightly.
Grades will be determined by the following percentile curve: 100-96 A; 96-92 A-; 92-88 B+; 88-84 B; 84-80 B-; 80-76 C+; 76-72 C; 72-68 C-; 68-56 D; 56-0 F.

ATTENDANCE: ¾ point participation will be given for each day of attendance. These points will be added gratis onto the student’s total score for the semester.

ELECTRONICS: The use of electronics are not permitted during class. Cell phones and computers may not be used. I know that some students wish to use them for good purpose, but too many students have used them for texting or for e-mail or for surfing the web during class. Students caught using a cell phone during a test will receive a zero. Audio recordings of class will be permitted if you are not touching the electronic device during class.
CLASS OUTLINE: (all dates are estimates)

I. What is ethics
   A. Chapter 1: introduction (Tue, Aug 23)
   B. Chapter 2: Ethics and the Good Life (Thu, Aug 25)

II. Reason, emotions, and will
   A. Chapter 3: Reason and the Emotions (Tue, Aug 30)
   B. Different kinds of emotions (Tue, Aug 30)

Paper #1 (Wed, Aug 31, midnight)
   C. Aquinas: I-II, q. 33, aa. 2, 3 (Thu, Sep 1)
   D. Chapter 4: Conscience and Choice (Tue, Sep 6)

online discussion Forum 1A (Wed, Sep 7, midnight)
   E. Chapter 5: Loving and Choosing (Thu, Sep 8)

III. Virtues
   A. Virtues of the emotions

online discussion Forum 1B (Mon, Sep 12, midnight)
   1. Chapter 6: Doing Right and Desiring Right (Tue, Sep 13)

Test #1 (Thu, Sep 15)
   2. Chapter 7: Virtue and the Emotions (Thu, Sep 22)

Paper #2 (Wed, Sep 21, midnight)
   3. Aquinas: II-II, q. 35, aa. 1 & 4; II-II, 36, aa. 1, 2, 4; II-II, q. 20, a. 4 (Thu, Sep 22)
   4. Aquinas: II-II, q. 35, aa. 1 & 4; II-II, 36, aa., 2, 4; II-II, q. 20, a. 4 (Tue, Sep 27)
   5. Sexual ethics (Thu, Sep 29)

Online discussion Forum 2A (Mon, Oct 3, midnight)
   6. Sexual ethics (Tue, Oct 4)

B. Justice
   1. Chapter 8: Justice (Thu, Oct 6)

Fall Break (Tue, Oct 11)

online discussion Forum 2B (Wed, Oct 12, midnight)
   2. Chapter 9: Injustice (Thu, Oct 13)

Paper #3 (Mon, Oct 17, midnight)
   3. Aquinas: II-II, 107, aa. 1, 2, and 4 (Tue, Oct 18)
   4. Chapter 10: Intrinsically Evil Actions (online lecture)

Test #2 (Thu, Oct 20)
   C. Topics for justice

Paper #4 (Wed, Oct 26, midnight)
   1. Plato: book 1 (Thu, Oct 27)
   2. Abortion
      a. Nature of abortion (Tue, Nov 1)
      b. Arguments (Tue, Nov 8)

no class (Thu, Nov 3)

b. Arguments (Tue, Nov 8)

Online discussion Forum 3A (Wed, Nov 9, midnight)
   c. Arguments (Thu, Nov 10)

online discussion Forum 3B (Mon, Nov 14, midnight)
   3. Euthanasia (Tue, Nov 15)
   D. Virtues of reason
   1. Chapter 11: Virtue and the Truth (Thu, Nov 17)
   2. Chapter 12: Practical Wisdom (Thu, Nov 17)

online discussion Forum 4A (Mon, Nov 21, midnight)

IV. Chapter 13: Ethics and Knowledge (Tue, Nov 22)

Thanksgiving break (Thu, Nov 24)

V. Chapter 14: Ethics and Happiness (Tue, Nov 29)

VI. Topics
   A. Transhumanism (Thu, Dec 1)

Test #3 (Thursday, December 8, 8:00-10:30)