Course Syllabus

(Note: Syllabus is subject to change, either verbally or in written form. Students should note any and all changes as they occur.)

Course: Ethics (3 credits)
NBR: 2314—D (1229)
Time: MoWe 3:10pm – 4:25pm
Room: Jerabeck 202
Professor: Samuel B. Condic, PhD
Email: condics@stthom.edu
Phone: 713-942-3449
Office: Hughes House 205
Office Hours: TBD and By appointment

Spring 2018

Course Description:

A study of the components of the moral life and moral decision-making: freedom, obligation, conscience, objective goods and values. Analysis of major ethical systems from the perspective of the teleological systems of Aristotle and Aquinas. Application of moral principles to particular circumstances.

Abstract:

Natural Law ethics was the predominant ethics theory in the West from the time of Socrates until the beginning of the Modern period. Both supporting and supported by the principles of Classical and Scholastic physics, metaphysics, and anthropology, this ethics viewed each individual man as an epicenter of moral choice whose actions were judged good or evil based upon their conformance to the natural and appropriate end of the agent. Accordingly, as the Scholastic world view and political order fell away, Natural Law ethics gave way to various Modern and Post Modern alternatives.

This course will examine the roots of Natural Law theory, from the pre-Socratics through its subtle articulation in the work of Thomas Aquinas. This world view will be contrasted against the Modern alternatives; specifically Utilitarianism, Kantian Categorical Imperative, and Post Modern a-ethical theories and points of agreement and variance will be examined.

Course Outcomes:

1. Describe some of the major ethical theories of the Western philosophical tradition.
2. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of various ethical theories.
3. Appraise the basic elements of a teleological ethical system.

UST DISABLED STUDENT SERVICES

If you have a disability and need a special accommodation, please first contact the Office of Counseling and Disability Services (713) 525-2169, Crooker Center - Second Floor, and then discuss the accommodation with the instructor. This must be done before the first grading event.

Course Format

This course will emphasize both lecture and reading. Students are expected to attend lectures regularly and to maintain the reading schedule. Not all readings will be lectured on, but all readings are possible testing material.

Texts and Resource Materials

Recommended: Parker, Francis H. The Story of Western Philosophy (ISBN: 978-1587318207)

Other texts may be required, pending on the progress of the semester. Texts will be available through Amazon.com

Additional handouts as provided by the instructor.

Attendance

Attendance at all lectures is mandatory. Unexcused absences can have an adverse effect on your grade. Meet with the professor if an excused absence is required.
Methods for Evaluation and Grading

Exam #1 20%
Exam #2 (Midterm) 25%
Exam #3 (Final) 35%
Class Participation 10%
Paper 10%

“Class participation” includes but is not limited to your attendance and active engagement of the material in class.

Grading Scale

The course grade will be assigned following the Grading System as specified in the current UST Course Catalog, p. 71. Exams and other work will be graded on a percentage system. Percentages will be averaged at the end of the semester according to the weighting scheme (see above), rounded to the nearest full percentage, and converted to grade points as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 – 95</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>94 – 90</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>89 – 87</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>86 – 84</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>83 – 80</td>
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<tr>
<td>79 – 77</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>76 – 74</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>59 – 0</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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Assignment & Exam Policies:

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted without a reasonable excuse. Arriving late to class after an assignment has been collected constitutes “being late.” “Reasonable excuse” is completely and entirely defined by the judgment of the instructor. A penalty may be assessed on late work. Penalties may vary by assignment and student, depending on the reasonableness of the excuse.

Make-Up Exams

Exams are given on the day scheduled. Exams must be taken in the section in which you are enrolled. With the exception of school-sponsored activities, make-up exams are granted at the discretion of the instructor. If a make-up exam is granted, a one letter grade penalty is automatically assessed. Schedule holiday travel accordingly.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities are not generally provided. If extra credit opportunities do arise, they will be made available to all students according to an impartial and objective criteria.

Cheating

If you cheat, even a little bit, you will flunk the course and be reported to the appropriate administrative authorities. If you are not clear on what exactly constitutes cheating, refer to the Policy on Academic Integrity in the UST Course Catalog, p. 78 and/or ask the professor before you do it.

Plagiarism

Cheating includes plagiarism, i.e., representing someone else’s work (words or ideas) as though they were your own. A more detailed description of plagiarism is available in the UST Course Catalog, p. 78. Specifically and in addition, if you use reference materials, including websites, in any of your work, you MUST provide a reference to that source. If you do not, then you are guilty of plagiarism, which is a species of cheating, and is subject to the penalties spelled out in the “Cheating” section of this syllabus (see above). If you are not clear on whether or what sort of reference is required, ask the professor.
Tentative Course Outline:

I. Nature and Methods of Scientific Inquiry  
   Readings: McInerny 1-11
   a. Assignment #1: Logical Fallacies

II. Contemporary Ethical Landscape & the Decadence of Culture (Readings: Bloom 25-43, 194-216)

III. Aquinas & the Nature of the Good (STI.q5.a1)

IV. Exam #1

V. Skepticism and Pluralism  
   Readings: Parker 114-115; Knasas 2004; ST II-II.q10.aa8 & 11
   a. Assignment #2: Toleration of Unbelievers

VI. Hedonism  
   Readings: Parker 40-42
   a. Assignment #3: Paper Draft (Assessment)

VII. Epicureanism  
   Readings: Parker 115-119; Letter to Menoeceus
   a. Assignment #4: Epicurus

VIII. Utilitarianism

IX. Kant  
   Readings: Parker 267-295
   a. Assignment #5: Fig Leaves and Falsehoods

X. Post-Kantianism & Nihilism  
   Readings: Parker 297-299; (Bloom 141-156)

XI. Exam #2 (Midterm)

XII. Stoicism  
   Readings: Parker 119-121; ST I-II.q59.a3; Manual of Epictetus
   a. Assignment #6: Aquinas & the Stoics

XIII. Augustine, Evil and Free Will  
   Readings: ST I.q48.aa2-3; (Ibid.q49.aa1-2); Mansini 2004
   a. Assignment #7: Aquinas on Evil

XIV. Plato & the Object of Ethics  
   Readings: Parker 48-68

XV. Aristotle on Virtue & Friends  
   Readings: Parker 98-106; (Mansini 1998)

XVI. Aquinas on Soul & Choice  
   Readings: McInerny 60-76
   a. Paper Due (Assessment)

XVII. Exam #3 (Final)