Course Title: Ethics  
Section: PHIL 2314 F  
Days of the Week: Tues-Thurs  
Time: 8:10 – 9:25 a.m.  
Place: Malloy 012  
Semester: Spring, 2018  
Instructor: Fr. Joseph Pilsner, C.S.B.  
Office: Sullivan Hall, Rm. 105  
Office Hours: Mon. – Wed. 2:00 – 4:00; Thurs: 2:00 - 3:00; other times by appointment  
Telephone: 713-942-5081  
Email: pilsnerj@stthom.edu

1. Catalog Description: A study of the components of the moral life and moral decision-making: freedom, obligation, conscience, objective goods and values. Application of moral principles to particular circumstances.

2. Prerequisite: PHIL 1311 or PHIL 1315/3315, 2316/3316, 3317.


5. Requirements

a. Quizzes on the readings: There will be reading assignments for a number of classes. At the beginning of class, a quiz over these reading assignments may be given. Whenever there is a reading assignment for homework, students should presume a quiz will be given in the next class unless informed otherwise.
b. Participation: The participation of every student is an important ingredient in helping the entire class to learn, since students can benefit from the insights, the questions (and sometimes even the honest mistakes) of others. On the other hand, some student conduct can detract from a class; for example, a student who texts in class can distract both the professor and other students. A grade will be given to each student based on class participation. The highest marks in the category will be awarded to students who in the instructor’s judgment have made consistent and sincere efforts to enrich the proceedings of the class with their contributions.

c. A written assignment (see below for details).

d. A mid-term exam

e. A final exam

4. How the final grade will be calculated:

   a. Quizzes: 10%
   b. Participation: 5%
   c. Written assignment: 20%
   d. Midterm exam: 30%
   e. Final: 35%

5. Grade Scale: A = 93-100; A- = 90-92; B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- = 70-72; D+ = 67-69; D = 60-66; F = 59 and below

6. Written Assignment: The purpose of this written assignments is threefold: (1) to see whether students can imitate a classical form of philosophical writing; (2) to see whether students can present valid arguments, and on point counter arguments/responses to counter arguments; (3) to see whether students can understand certain logical fallacies of relevance and can include at least two of them in their assignment, along with appropriate rebuttals to these fallacies.

   a. Plato uses the dialogue as his preferred method of philosophical writing. For this assignment, each student will select an ethical issue of his or her choice and develop a dialogue concerning it. There should be a coherent chain of argumentation, where interlocutors respond on point to the arguments of others in the dialogue.

   b. Topic: Keep in mind that the ethical issue addressed in the dialogue should be philosophical rather than theological. The difference is this: theological topics and arguments are dependent on revelation/Church teaching; philosophical topics and arguments concern truths that can be known by reason without the assistance of revelation. For example, an appropriate topic might concern the rightness or wrongness of physician-assisted suicide based on appeals to reason. An inappropriate topic might be whether a Catholic should attend the wedding of a Catholic relative who is marrying outside the Church. (This is an interesting question; it is not, however, a good subject for
a philosophy assignment.) Students should avoid using Scripture or Church teaching to support a point, unless the Scriptures or Church teachings contain an argument which appeals to reason.

c. A second topic: If a student finds that the characters in the dialogue have exhausted a first topic, he or she may begin a discussion about a second topic. (A third topic would be excessive.)

d. Topic Review: If a student wishes, he or she may submit a topic to the instructor for review. The purpose of this submission is to give the student an opportunity to verify that his or her topic is appropriate for an assignment in Ethics. Students can submit a topic by e-mailing it to the professor or by consulting him, either during office hours or after class.

e. Format: Regarding how a dialogue should look, a student should simply imitate the format of Plato’s Gorgias, which we will be reading for class.

f. Specifications: This written assignment should be between 1,500 and 1,800 words (roughly 5-6 pages). It should be 12 point and double-spaced. The assignment should have a title page with appropriate identifying information, such as the student’s name, the date, the class, and the professor’s name.

g. Introduction: A student should begin the dialogue by introducing the characters and setting the scene. For example, someone might write: “The scene is a meeting of a hospital ethics board. Dr. Smith and Dr. Jones are doctors at the hospital; both have been members of the board for many years. Both have a keen interest in medical ethics, though their opinions frequently clash.”

h. Dialogue: Keep in mind that a dialogue format requires that at least two of the interlocutors should be proposing positions which differ and that they should be trying to test or refute one another’s arguments. A dialogue is different from an interview, where one character asks questions while the other answers them.

i. Number of interlocutors: It is best to keep the number of characters who are conversing to just a few. If there are too many discussants, the conversation can become difficult to follow.

j. Grammar: A student should ensure that the characters in the dialogue are using clear and correct English. (A student ought not to make the claim that his or her characters are speaking with bad grammar because that is one of their character traits.)

k. Arguing on point: One skill that the Philosophy Department is emphasizing is the ability of students to argue validly and on point. Interlocutors should address one another’s arguments fairly and not make irrelevant arguments. (A handout will be distributed in class to illustrate on point arguing.) There is an exception: a character may propose an irrelevant argument if another character corrects him or her for doing so. For example, if
one character insults another character, the latter might reply: “you are just name calling
and not addressing my argument”. This would be acceptable because it shows an aware
on the author’s part that the character is not arguing well.

1. Requirement for a featured chain of argumentation: Although the whole dialogue may be
an on point chain of argumentation, the Philosophy Department would like to test
whether students can do at least the following: (1) propose an initial argument, (2)
propose an on point objection to this argument, and (3) propose an on point response to
the objection. For this assignment, a student is required to highlight one chain of
argumentation where he or she believes that this has been achieved. Usually, a first
character proposes an argument, a second character (immediately following) objects, and
then the first character refutes this objection. A student must indicate somehow what past
of the assignment is the featured chain of argumentation. For example, a student might
bold a chain of argumentation, footnote it, and then indicate in the footnote that this is his
or her featured chain of argumentation. If the instructor cannot tell which chain of
argument is featured, the student will not have fulfilled this requirement of the
assignment.

m. Additional page with a syllogism: Keep in mind that the initial presentation in the chain
should be an argument. This is different from simply taking a stand, such as “theft is
wrong”. The interlocutor must reason to his or her conclusion. At the end of the paper, a
student should include an additional page where the initial argument in the featured chain
is put in the form of a syllogism. It should also indicate whether the objection is refuting
the major premise or the minor premise. (This additional page will not be included in the
word count for the assignment.) A class handout will illustrate in greater detail how this
ought to be done.

n. Two fallacious arguments: Characters in the dialogue should propose at least two
fallacious arguments, and other characters should correct them. The only fallacies which
will count are five fallacies of relevance that I will provide for you in a class handout. In
a footnote, students should indicate which of these five fallacies has been used by a
character. (A student should introduce two different kinds of fallacies into the dialogue,
and not use the same fallacy twice.) If a student doesn’t want the two main characters in
the dialogue to be making fallacious arguments, then he or she can introduce a third
character who does this.

o. Research: Students do not have to do research for this assignment. A dialogue may well
be enhanced, however, by interlocutors quoting important authors, studies, statistics, and
so forth. If a student quotes or cites something, he or she must provide proper citation.
Writing conventions, including footnotes and bibliography, should follow the Chicago
(Turabian) style sheet. Please remember that footnotes or bibliographical references from
an Internet source must not simply be a URL address: they must adhere to the proper
conventions. One can find proper citation conventions on the Internet. For example,
students can refer to the Purdue Owl “readings and citations” section:
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/
Submission: A student should submit both a printed version and an MS Word version of the assignment. Students should submit the MS Word version as an attachment to an e-mail message (unless otherwise directed by the professor). Students will have made a timely submission of the assignment up until just before midnight on the due date. (For example, a student could send the MS Word version at 11:59 pm on the due date as an attachment to an email message and the assignment would be submitted on time.) Although the assignment will be considered officially submitted when either the paper or MS Word version has reached the professor, the assignment will not be considered submitted in full until both versions have reached the professor.

DUE DATE: THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE ON FEBRUARY 27, 2018

Policy for late papers: Students should submit written assignments on the due date. A penalty of half a grade will be applied if a student is late (for instance, a B will be lowered to a B-). Delay of more than a week will result in further deductions. Those who wish to make reparation, however, should see the instructor, who may assign extra credit projects which can partially or completely eradicate such late penalties.

Extra Credit: In addition to extra credit for late penalties on papers, the professor may offer extra credit to students who have failed the midterm exam. Such extra credit is usually intended to bring the exam into the “D” range and is given solely at the discretion of the professor. (These are the only two forms of extra credit offered for the class.) Please see the professor for further details.

Accessing Blackboard: Students will sometimes be asked to view reading assignments on Blackboard, the course management system used by UST. If a student is having trouble accessing Blackboard, then he or she could write to the IT Helpdesk at this address: ithelpdesk@stthom.edu or phone the IT Helpdesk at 713-525-6900. Ask for the UST staff member who manages Blackboard. Also, once a student has accessed Blackboard, a student help/frequently asked questions link may be of further assistance. If these means do not solve your Blackboard-related problem, please alert the professor.

Policy for Absence: Students who are absent for more than three classes may be penalized on their class participation grade.

Policy for Academic Dishonesty: Serious penalties will be incurred by students for cheating, plagiarism, and other like academic offenses. Plagiarism means taking material from some already-existing source and using it in one’s own paper without giving the author due acknowledgment. One especially ought never to copy word-for-word from another source unless one uses quotation marks (for shorter quotes) or indentation and single-spacing (for longer quotes) and the proper citation (e.g. footnotes). Anyone who cheats or plagiarizes may receive a zero for the assignment or be failed for the course; two offenses during one’s academic career at UST may lead to a student’s expulsion. See Academic Dishonesty, pages 49-51 from the Student Handbook on UST’s Website.
11. Policy for Classroom Technology: The use of electronic devices during class time – cell phones, laptops, iPhones, and so forth – is not permitted. Exceptions will be made for those recommended for an accommodation from Counseling/Disabilities Services. Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before class begins.

12. Accommodation for Disabilities: The University of St. Thomas abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which stipulates that no student shall be denied the benefits of an education “solely by reason of a handicap.” If students have documented disabilities that may impact their performances in this class and for which they may be required accommodations, they must be registered with and provide documentation of disability to Counseling Services/Disability Services which is located on the second floor of Crooker Center. Please contact Debby Jones (713-525-6953) or Rose Signorello (713-525-3162).

13. Assistance with Writing: All students, but especially those for whom standard American English is a second language or dialect, are encouraged to take advantage of the free services provided by the UST Tutorial Services Center (TSC) (Crooker 207; phone 713.525.3878, tutoring@stthom.edu). The TSC offers subject tutoring as well as tutoring in both general writing and subject area writing. You can find out about individual TSC tutors, tutorial subjects, and the tutoring schedule on the TSC’s website. In addition, the TSC offers workshops each semester on topics that you might find helpful, including sentence and usage errors and the research paper process.
### Term Schedule

**Thursday, January 18**  
Introduction to the Course; Introduction to Ethics

**Tuesday, January 23**  
Introduction to Plato and *Gorgias* (By Tuesday, Jan. 30, please read the first part of the Gorgias: 447a until 478e)

**Thursday, January 25**  
Plato’s *Gorgias* (Continued)

**Tuesday, January 30**  
Plato’s *Gorgias* (Continued) (MacIntyre, Alasdair, *A Short History of Ethics*, ch. 4)

**Thursday, February 1**  
Human Actions (Stephen Jensen, *Living the Good Life*, ch. 1 [Introduction] and ch. 2, p. 1-16)

**Tuesday, February 6**  

**Thursday, February 8**  

**Tuesday, February 13**  
Aquinas on Happiness: (Aquinas, I-II, q. 5) (Jensen, ch. 14, p. 182-200)

**Thursday, February 15**  
Fundamentals of Conscience (Jensen, ch. 4, p. 32-46)

**Tuesday, February 20**  
Doubtful Conscience (Grisez: *Christian Moral Principles*, ch. 12, A-C; E)

**Thursday, February 22**  
Doubtful Conscience (continued)

**Tuesday, February 27**  
Natural Law (Austen Fagothey, S.J., *Right and Reason*, ch. 11, 170-189); WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE

**Thursday, March 1**  
Human Law (Grisez: ch. 11: A-B; D-E)

**Tuesday, March 6**  
Human Law (cont); Review for Midterm

**Thursday, March 8**  
Midterm Exam

**Tuesday, March 13**  
Spring Break

**Thursday, March 15**  
Spring Break

**Tuesday, March 20**  
Action Specification and Exceptionless Moral Norms (Jensen, ch. 10, p. 123-135)

**Thursday, March 22**  
Proportionalism and a Critique (Russell Shaw, *Fulfillment in Christ*, Ch. 6)

**Tuesday, March 27**  
Morality and Emotion (Jensen, ch. 3, 17-31)

**Thursday, March 29**  
Easter Break

**Tuesday, April 3**  
Morality and Emotion (continued)

**Thursday, April 5**  
Indirect Willing and Omission (Grisez, ch. 9: F-G)

**Tuesday, April 10**  
Formal and Material Cooperation (Grisez: Ch. 12: G) (Difficult Moral Questions, Appendix 2; read up to, not including, the heading “Judging whether one’s reason would be proportional and proportionalism”)

**Thursday, April 12**  
Formal and Material Cooperation (continued)

**Tuesday, April 17**  
Aristotle on Virtue (Aristotle, *Nicomachaen Ethics*, Bk. 2, chap. 1-6)

**Thursday, April 19**  
Aristotle on Virtue (continued)

**Tuesday, April 24**  
Aristotle on Friendship (Aristotle, *Nicomachaen Ethics*, Bk. 8, chap. 1-5)
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 26</td>
<td>Life Ethics: Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide</td>
<td>(Aaron Kheriaty, “Apostolate of Death”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, May 1</td>
<td>Life Ethics: Military Ethics; Killing in Self-Defense</td>
<td>(James Turner Johnson, “Just War as It Was and Is)</td>
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<td>Thursday, May 3</td>
<td>Life Ethics (continued); Review for the Final Exam</td>
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<td>Tuesday, May 8</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM: 8:30 – 11:00 a.m.</td>
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