**Ethics (Spring 2018)**

Phil 2314 S, Sat. 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM; Jerabeck 201

Professor: Dr. Nelson Ramírez  
Office hours: Sat. 9:15-9:45. Rm. 109 in the Math Building;  
Phone number: 713-831-7265  
Contact: ramiren@stthom.edu

**Course 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. This course chiefly follows the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition on ethics, and from that tradition will also address other views. Prerequisite: PHIL 1311 or three courses in the historical sequence

**Teaching approach:**

1. Read philosophical texts  
2. Lecture  
3. Classroom discussion

**Texts:**

1. Required:  

2. Supplemental handouts and online material announced during the course

**Evaluation:** There will be two tests and a final, but this may change depending on the needs of the course. Each test will cover all material up to that point. Approximate dates: See tentative schedule.

2 papers: both 20%  
Test 1: 25%  
Test 2: 25%  
Comprehensive final exam: 30%

Grade correlations:  
A=92-97; A-=90-91; B+=88-89; B=82-87; B-=80-81; C+=78-79; C=72-77; C-=70-71;  
D+=68-69; D=62-67; D-=60-61; F=59 and below.

**Policies concerning quizzes, tests, and assignments:**

- Tests must be taken on scheduled date. If you foresee that you absolutely cannot make it to class on the scheduled test day, please inform me before hand. Make up tests are offered only for very serious reasons. You may only make up one test.  
- Tests will cover lectures and assigned readings.
Late papers will not be accepted. They may not be emailed.

All assignments to be turned in must be handed in in class at the time requested by professor. No class work may be emailed to the professor.

Responsibility for material covered in a missed class rests solely with the student.

Attendance: From the student handbook: “Absence from Class - The University expect all students to be regular and punctual in class attendance. Frequent, unexplained absences may result in a student being administratively withdrawn from the course or in a grade reduction or failing grade, at the discretion of the faculty member, in accordance with the faculty member’s attendance policy included in the course syllabus.” Attendance will be taken every day at the beginning of class. If someday you happen to be late to class, there will be a tardy sign-in sheet. A student may be dropped from the course due to absences and/or tardies since several tardies will turn into an absence. Please talk to me if you are experiencing difficulties attending class.

Electronic devices:

No electronic devices may be used during class, e.g., laptops, tablets, cell phones, and any other electronic device with a screen (except when academic accommodations apply). Please turn off your cell phones before class begins. If a student does not follow this policy, he or she will first be given a warning. If the student continues not to follow the policy, points will be deducted from student’s final semester grade every time it happens.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty:

Please see the UST Student Handbook:

“Every offense against academic honesty seriously undermines the teaching-learning process for which the University exists, and such offenses will be dealt with expeditiously according to the following criteria.

Definition

Academic Dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

1. Cheating on an examination or test, for example, by copying from another’s paper or by using unauthorized materials before or during the test;
2. Plagiarism, which represents as one’s own work the work of another, whether published or not, without acknowledging the precise source;
3. Knowing participation in the academic dishonesty of another student even though one’s own work is not directly affected;
4. Any conduct which reasonable persons would recognize as dishonest in an academic setting.

Penalty

The penalty for an incident of academic dishonesty is, at the discretion of the faculty member, either a mark of zero for the work in question or the grade of ‘F’ for the course.” (I will apply the latter) Please note that I am obliged to report all cases of academic dishonesty to the University administration.

“When a second charge of academic dishonesty has been upheld against a student, the student shall be
dismissed from the University. The transcript will note “Dismissed for Academic Dishonesty,” along with the date.”

Doherty library has created some guides to help you understand better academic integrity and plagiarism. Go to the following links. If you are ever unsure about whether you have plagiarized, you may always come speak to me before submitting your paper.

The academic integrity page can be found at: http://libguides.stthom.edu/plagiarism

A “Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Tutorial” is found at: http://libguides.stthom.edu/faculty/plagiarism-tutorial

**Respect for Others:**

- Please no eating or drinking during class. If you must, please do so discretely.

**Communication:**

- The professor will contact the entire class by internet. This will be done through UST Blackboard. Messages will be sent to UST email addresses of students. Blackboard should be checked daily for announcements pertaining to class.
- Professor will not give grades via email or phone.

**Academic Accommodations:**

Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to speak with me (the professor) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities will also need to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713)525-2169 or 6953.

**Tentative timeline of the course:**

Due to the fluid nature of teaching, the instructor may change (with proper notice) due dates, reading assignments, total points for assignments, and course structure as is deemed necessary by the instructor for the good of the class. Changes may be necessary due to weather, unanticipated but necessary needs of the class, and other factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 20</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 27</td>
<td>“Know thyself” and “Nothing too much” Proemium to the Nicomachean Ethics by Thomas Aquinas Nicomachean Ethics, Bk. 1, chapters 1-3 Read Jensen Chapter 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>Jensen Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TENTATIVE CONTENT OUTLINE OF ETHICS COURSE

I. The first philosophers
   Readings: “Know thyself” and “Nothing too much” (Blackboard)
   Republic Bk. 1 and part of Bk. 2 By Plato (Blackboard)
   a. Pre-Socratics
      i. “Know thyself” and “Nothing too much.”
   b. Plato
      i. What is justice?
      ii. Is injustice better than justice?

II. What is Ethics?
   Readings: Proemium to the Nicomachean Ethics by Thomas Aquinas
Nicomachean Ethics, Bk. 1, chapters 1-3.

a. What kind of knowledge is it?
b. What is it about?
c. What is its method?

III. What is good?

a. The good is what all want
b. Is something good because we want it or do we want it because it is good?
   i. Objections on both sides
   ii. First solution by means of an inductive argument
   iii. Solution to objections

c. What kind of cause is the good?

IV. What is “more good” or better?

a. In general
   i. Elimination of false answer based on prior understanding of good
   ii. In general, the end is always better than the means
       1. Inductive argument
       2. Argument from a general reason

b. In particular, exterior goods, goods of the body, or goods of the soul?
   i. There are these three kinds of goods
   ii. We need some of all of them
   iii. The goods of the soul are better than all the rest
       1. Application of previously eliminated false answer
       2. Inductive argument to show that inside goods are better than outside goods
       3. Argument to show that goods of the soul are better than goods of the body

V. What is the end of man?

Readings: Nicomachean Ethics Bk. 1, chapters 4-12
          Summa Theologica, I-II, q. 1-5

a. Longer argument: by syllogism
   a. End
      i. General consideration
      ii. Application to man

b. “Done well” or according to virtue
   i. General consideration
   ii. Application to man

b. Shorter argument:
   a. By an if/then syllogism
   b. By an either/or syllogism

VI. Human virtue

Readings: Nicomachean Ethics Bk. 1, chapters 13-Bk. 2, chapters 1-9

a. Intellectual virtues
b. Moral virtues
   i. In general
      1. The causes of moral virtue
         a. Habituation
         b. Following the right rule of reason
         c. Avoid excess and defect
         d. The role of pleasure and pain
      2. Definition of moral virtue
         a. Genus
         b. Specific difference
      3. Practical corollaries
         a. Intermediate is not equidistant to the extremes
         b. Last practical rules for the acquisition of virtue
            i. Bend a little beyond the mean
            ii. Know what we are individually more inclined to
            iii. Beware of pleasure
      ii. In particular
         1. What are the kinds of moral virtue?
         2. The cardinal virtues

VII. Human action in general (means to an end or ways of not getting to the end)
Readings: Selections from Aquinas' Summa Theologiae lallae
   a. What is human action?
      i. Act in general
      ii. Acts proper to man
         1. Distinction between acts of man and human acts
         2. Voluntary and involuntary
         3. Distinction among them
            a. Good
            b. Bad
            c. What follows
      iii. Acts common to man and other animals: Passions of the soul
         1. Concupiscible
         2. Irascible
   b. Principles of human acts
      i. Intrinsic principles
         1. Power
         2. Habit
            a. Good (Virtues)
            b. Bad (vices)
      ii. Extrinsic principles
         1. That incline us toward evil (temptation): the devil
         2. That move us toward the good: God
Who instructs us with law
  i. Law itself in general
  ii. The kinds of law
And assists us with grace

VIII. Human acts in particular
IX. Application of moral principles to some particular actions
X. Critical examination of other “ethical” systems