

CONTEMPORARY MORAL ISSUES
PHIL 111/501
MWF 10:20-11:10
Bolton 003 (basement)

Scott Austin
309 E Bolton
Voicemail (979) 695-7628
s-austin@philosophy.tamu.edu

OFFICE HOURS (309 E Bolton): MWF 11:30-12:30; T 9-12; TH none

An account of some moral theories as they affect the vital issues of today, issues such as liberty, abortion, animal rights, and terrorism. Do we need morality? Are morals relative? Is what's right equivalent to doing my duty? To bringing about the greatest good for the greatest number? To achieving moral excellence? Is what *is* truly good always what is good for me? Should all persons be equal? Are animals persons? What about fetuses? Exactly *why* is terrorism wrong?

Requirements: three 7-12 page double-spaced papers, due Wednesday, September 26 (in class); Monday, October 29 (in class); and Tuesday, December 11 (at the time and place of the optional 'final'). There are extensions for religious holidays, for illness, and for crisis. There are also rewrites, all to be due by December 11. Late papers must also be handed in by that date. The grade for the course is normally the average of the three paper grades. There is an *optional* final, also on December 11. The grade for the 'final' can replace one (lower) paper grade, unless the paper received an F* for scholastic dishonesty.

Submission of a paper or exam in fulfillment of these requirements constitutes an affirmation that the work conforms to the Aggie Honor Code.

Book: *The Moral Life: An Introductory Reader in Ethics and Literature* (edited by Louis P. Pojman, Third Edition Revised by Lewis Vaughn): Oxford University Press 2007.

Topics:

Topic 1. Do we need morality? Readings from Golding (pages 8-31 in *The Moral Life*) and Hobbes (pages 41-53).

Topic 2. Are morals relative? Readings from Benedict (pp. 157-65) and Pojman (pp. 166-91).

Topic 3. Is what's right equivalent to the greatest good for the greatest number? Readings from Mill (pp. 245-49) and LeGuin (pp. 278-84).

Topic 4. Is what's right equivalent to doing one's duty? Readings from Kant (pp. 309-28) and Bierce (pp. 356-62).

Topic 5. Is what's right equivalent to moral excellence? Readings from Hugo (pp. 392-409) and Aristotle (pp. 409-25).

Topic 6. Is the good always what's good for me? Readings from Plato (pp. 561-569) and Rand (pp. 569-579).

Topic 7. Liberty. Readings from King (pp. 648-653) and Angelou (pp. 653-665).

Topic 8. Abortion. Readings from Marquis (pp. 766-787) and Thomson (pp. 788-789).
(List of topics continued on next page.)

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Topic 9. Animal Rights. Readings from Orwell (pp. 870-877) and Singer (pp. 879-895).

Topic 10. Terrorism. Readings from the Bible (pp. 942-955) and Nussbaum (pp. 955-979).

Course Objectives

1. To demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works and positions in our responses to everyday ethical issues (EEO 1).
2. To understand ethical decisions as expressions of the cultures and civilizations of the people who make those decisions (EEO 2).
3. To respond critically to works in literature and philosophy embodying different ethical points of view (EEO 3).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement

The following ADA policy statement (part of the policy on Individual Disabling Conditions) was submitted to the University Curriculum Committee by the Department of Student Life. The policy statement was forwarded to the Faculty Senate for information.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation provides that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Cain Hall or call (979) 845-1637.

AGGIE HONOR CODE

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do”

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements of the processes of the Honor System.

For additional information please visit www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/

PLEDGE: On all course work, assignments, or examinations at Texas A&M University, the following Honor Pledge shall be pre-printed and signed by the student: “On my honor, as an Aggie, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work.”