"The Unexamined life is not worth living." – Socrates
ETHICS – PHILOSOPHY 2306
SECTION 8001
DIVISION OF HUMANITIES, FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS
RICHLAND COLLEGE
Fall 2012
Jim F. Mills Ph.D. Instructor

For no light matter is at stake: The question concerns the very manner in which human life is to be lived.  Plato, The Republic, Book I, 352-D.

What is the catalogue description of this course?

PHIL 2306 Ethics (3) This is a common course number. Former course prefix/number PHI 203.

Prerequisite: None

Consideration of what constitutes a good and a moral life. Using classical and contemporary theories, students will weigh such ingredients as pleasure, duty, power, and love as they apply to current issues of daily living. Students may consider ethical problems in business, law, and medicine. (3 Lec.)

Coordinating Board Academic Approval Number 3802025335

Where and when does the class meet?

9:05 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. M/W/F

When do they begin and end?

They start on August 27, 2012 and end on December 13, 2012 with the end of Finals Week.

Who is the teacher?

He is Dr. Jim F. Mills.
B.A. Philosophy – University of Texas at Dallas
M.A. Humanities/History of Ideas – University of Texas at Dallas
Ph.D. Humanities – University of Texas at Dallas
How do I contact him?

A.C.C.E.S.S Officer
A110 Alamito Hall
972-238-6140

Humanities Division Office: 972-238-6250 (Leave message with secretary)
Fax: 972-238-3799
School e-mail: jfm8401@dcccd.edu

What are his office hours?

By Email at anytime

What textbook do I buy?

_The Moral Life, 4th edition_, Louis P. Pojman and Louis Vaughn, eds., Oxford University Press: New York, 2010. The ISBN Number is: 13-0780195396256. At Follett Bookstore on campus a used copy costs $62.35, a new copy $79.95, and a rental copy $38.98 You may be able to find it for less at Half Priced Books, on Amazon.com or elsewhere. Louis Pojman taught at UTD for a while and visited Richland several times. Before he died, he taught at West Point. The book contains a number of short stories that are very good and help us to understand the ethical theories. I think you will like it.

Is there another text you could recommend for additional study?

In the past, I have used _The Elements of Moral Philosophy_ by James Rachels, 5th ed., McGraw Hill, ISBN: 13: 978-0-07-312547-3. This is a new text with a 2007 copyright date. It has a good glossary and is very clear and straight forward. It is used in the Richland online Ethics classes and is available at Follett Bookstore.

Will this course transfer?

Yes, this course will transfer easily to any college in the country. In addition, it may be used to meet the Humanities, Category III, and requirement for an Associate Degree at DCCCD colleges under the old Core Curriculum and the Tier II “Humanity, Creativity, and the Human Experience” requirement in the new Core Curriculum.

What will I learn in Ethics that will help me?

1) You will learn to be more critical (although hopefully not cynical) about your own ideas and the ideas of others concerning human conduct. This critical ability will help
you in other courses and in your work by asking the right, pointed questions, at the right
time, about the right things, to the right people.

(2) You will learn to look at the world as a whole rather than in fragments. You will
learn to see “the big picture.” Many “miss the forest for the trees.” Ethics will help you
not to do that and to see the world as a whole, somehow tied together.

(3) You will learn from history how an idea developed and from looking at it from
different perspectives, through different sets of goggles, to appreciate differences in
beliefs of people and cultures and to be more tolerant of these differences.

(4) Finally you will learn the names of people and theories in ethics, which will be useful
to you in such subjects as history, English, psychology, sociology, and the humanities.

You WILL NOT learn how to be good, moral or happy. This course is not one in either
prescriptive or didactic ethics. It is not aimed, particularly, at changing your mind about
issues. It may, in fact, give you good reasons and arguments for holding the beliefs that
you do. A smorgasbord of ethical opinions will be laid out for you, and you pay your
money and take your choice.

What are the rules about attendance?

Ethics is architectonic. One day’s discussions and lectures build on the last day’s work.
Therefore it is important that you attend very regularly. An attendance will be taken by
different methods at different times during the class period each day. Sometimes it may
be the first order of business; other days, it may be the last.

What if I have to come late or leave early?

You should plan to arrive on time and stay for the entire class and not to leave it, except
in an emergency. You should not schedule doctor’s appointments, counseling meetings,
or work time during the class period. If you have a change in work hours or other
commitments that cause you to miss a large number of classes, I suggest you drop the
course. Unfortunately, the class is not designed to be a self-paced, self-study, or distance
learning course. An important part of the course (perhaps the most important part) is
participation. You cannot participate if you are not present. The instructor has a pet
peeve about starting on time, and he likes to set the stage for the day’s activities in the
first few minutes of the class. If you miss this stage setting, the rest of the class may
make little sense to you. If you must leave class early, please let the instructor know in
advance.

What will a typical class day be like?

Typically, the instructor likes to spend a minute or so telling students about things, which
happened on this date, holidays being celebrated around the world and other trivia. Then
he likes to make class announcements, return papers, etc. He then spends a few minutes reviewing what was said in the last class to put the day’s work in context. Next he will outline the work for the day.

The methods of instruction will be varied. The instructor believes students best learn philosophy by doing philosophy. The least effective method of teaching is “the sage on stage” lecturing as the great guru; the most effective method is for the teacher to become a learner and to question with students the ethical issues being considered. I much prefer the latter and solicit your thoughtful and active participation.

**How will I be graded?**

The instructor must have four (4) major grades by the end of the semester for each student, with each grade counting 25%.

1) Four (4) in-class exams. Each of these exams will contain (40) multiple-choice, T/F or fill in the blank questions worth a total of (80) points. There will be a short essay question (about two or three paragraphs) worth (20) points. Students will have a choice of essay questions from three or four options.

We will hold a review session a few days before these exams. These sessions are designed to point the student in the right direction, not to give answers to the questions.

**What if I miss an exam?**

Students are expected to make up missed exams the following class period before exams are returned. If other arrangements need to be made due to an emergency or extended absence, please contact the instructor immediately. No extra credit assignments are accepted late.

**How can I make a better grade in this class?**

Ask yourself every week or two the answers to the below questions about your conduct and participation in class.

- Does the instructor know your name?
- Do you come to class on time?
- Do you remain for the whole class?
- Do you participate by asking questions and making comments?
- Do you resist resting your head on your desk or sleeping during class?
- Do you refrain from talking with others during class while the instructor or a classmate is speaking?
- Do you NOT do homework for other classes during philosophy class?
- Do you NOT read a newspaper or a book during class?
• Do you put your cell phone away during class and not text it during class?
• Are you courteous to others in your remarks?

If you answer with an honest “No” to one or more of the above your question, then these are the things you need to work on to improve your grade.

How am I expected to act in Ethics class?

Ethics is best learned by doing it. Therefore the student who benefits the most is the student who participates the most in class discussions, who asks the instructor questions, and who discusses opinions with classmates. In ethics, no question is too simple to ask. If you are wondering about something, chances are several of your classmates are wondering about the same thing, so ask.

Challenge the ideas of the instructor and your classmates. However, practice disagreeing without being disagreeable. Always leave the person you challenge intact, with a clear knowledge that you respect her opinions but simply don’t understand why she holds them or that you disagree with them for such and such reasons. Challenge ideas, not people. Rudeness and/or disrespect for the instructor or any of the students will not be tolerated.

Can I do extra credit?

No

How will the final grade be computed?

Each exam is worth 100 points; thus, it is possible to accrue 400 points. The total points accrued will be divided by 400 to determine your percentage grade.

What is the grading scale?

100-90= A  
89-80 = B  
79-70 = C  
69-60 = D  
Below 60 = F

What if I must celebrate a religious holiday that is not in the college schedule?

Please let the instructor know a few days in advance of your plans to celebrate this holiday, and your absence on this day will not be counted against the four absences allotted you.

Can I eat and drink in class?
Eating and drinking in classrooms is officially against college rules. However, the instructor does not mind if students bring a light snack, a soft drink, coffee, bottle water, and that sort of thing as to class long as they dispose of their trash and bottles in proper trash cans.

**Can I tape record class sessions?**

Yes.

**Can I use my laptop computer in class?**

No.

**Can I bring a guest to class?**

Yes, guests are always welcome. However, the instructor does not allow guests under sixteen years old in class, because of liability issues and the nature of some of the material being discussed.

**What is the last date to drop or to withdraw?**

*November 15 is the last date to drop or withdraw with a “W”.*

A student initiates the drop or withdrawal in the Enrollment Planning Area in Thunderduck Hall, T170, or online if eligible. However, before you drop or withdraw, talk with the instructor to see if there is any way the semester can be salvaged for you.

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**IMPORTANT CALENDAR DATES:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 27, 2012</td>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 1 – Sep 4, 2012</td>
<td>Labor Day Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 15, 2012</td>
<td>Last Day to Drop the Course with a W</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 22 – Nov 26, 2012</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 10 – Dec 13, 2012</td>
<td>Final Exam Week</td>
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**What if I have a physical or mental ability that challenges my learning?**

Your first step is to visit the Disability Services in Thunderduck Hall, T120. If appropriate, that office will issue instructions to the instructor for special accommodations that should be made.
**How do I get my final grades?**

Richland College no longer mails grades to students. Students may receive their grades on-line or by telephone. You will need your student ID number published on your fee receipt and elsewhere as well as your password. Log on the Richland Homepage and then go to the last category in the menu on the left, “Online Services,” and check into e-Connect.

**How will I know if the school is closed due to bad weather or another emergency?**

Generally an announcement will be made on major local radio and television stations by 6 a.m. Or you may call 972-238-6196, the Inclement Weather Hotline. Notice of opening status will also be posted on the Richland Homepage. In addition, as soon as I receive information, I will leave the update on my voice mail both at home and at school at the numbers listed on page 1 of this syllabus.

**SPECIAL NOTICE TO FINANCIAL AID STUDENTS:**

New regulations require instructors to report your attendance the first twelve calendar days of class. If a student fails to attend at all during these first days of the semester, financial aid may be reduced, withdrawn or withheld.

If you are receiving financial aid grants or loans, you must begin attendance in all classes. **DO NOT drop or stop attending any class without first consulting the Financial Aid Office in Thunderduck Hall.** Changes in your enrollment level and failing grades may require that you repay financial aid funds.

**Academic Dishonesty Statement:**

Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.

As a college student, you are considered a responsible adult. Your enrollment indicates acceptance of the DCCCD Code of Student Conduct published in the DCCCD Catalogue at http://www1.dcccd.edu/cat0506/ss/code.cfm.

A student who is caught copying without proper citations of the source from a book, an internet page, or another student or is caught cheating in any other way will receive a “0” for that test or assignment and will not be allowed to make it up or to compensate for it in any way. Plagiarism and proper ways to document sources will be covered in class.

**The Third Attempt to Enroll in a Course Rule:**

Effective for the fall semester 2005, the Dallas County Community Colleges will charge additional tuition to students registering the third or subsequent time for a
All third and subsequent attempts of the majority of credit and Continuing Education/Workforce Training courses will result in additional tuition to be charged. Developmental Education and some other courses will not be charged additional tuition. Third attempts include courses taken at any of the Dallas County Community Colleges since the Fall 2002 semester. Visit www.dcccd.edu/ThirdCourse/Attempt for a list of courses and additional information.

NEW STATE REGULATION: THE SIX “W” RULE -VERY IMPORTANT!!

For students who enrolled in college level courses for the first time in the fall of 2007, Texas Education Code 51.907 limits the number of courses a student may drop.

You may drop no more than 6 courses during your entire undergraduate career unless the drop qualifies as an exception. Your campus counseling/advising center will give you more information on the allowable exceptions. Remember that once you have accumulated 6 non-exempt drops, you cannot drop any other courses with a “W”. Therefore, please exercise caution when dropping courses in any Texas public institution of higher learning, including all seven of the Dallas County Community Colleges. For more information, you may access: https://www1.dcccd.edu/coursedrops

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

To help ensure your safety on campus, please watch this video on keeping safe in a campus emergency at http://video.dcccd.edu/rtv/DO/emergency_dcccd.wmv

Is there anything else I should know?

You should know that studying ethics is a lot of fun. So enjoy it. You should know that to some of the questions we ask, there are a multitude of answers, some in direct opposition to each other, and that you will not be given “the right answer” in this class. You must decide many of these answers for yourself. And know that such ambiguity and vagueness can sometimes be frustrating for the person who wants closure, ready-made, sudden answers.

For some students ethics is intimately tied up with religion. That is to be expected. Answers to Plato’s question “how to live one’s life” have been provided by religions as well as by philosophies. It is not the instructor’s attempt to change anyone’s religion or to alter anyone’s faith. However, ethics class is like a visit to the ophthalmologist; you try on different sets of glasses, seeing the world differently through each pair. The assumption should not be that you must cast away your old goggles; they may be perfectly fine. However, the instructor does request that you maintain what the poet Coleridge called “a willing suspension of disbelief.” What he meant was give a theory a fair hearing in court before you discount it – suspend disbelief.
To complicate matters, some religions teach that it is improper to question the religion’s ethical tenets. After all, for Martin Luther it was faith by justification alone. Reason and good works played an insignificant, if any, role at all. Ethics is going to employ reason. It is the hope that the tool of reason will bolster rather than diminish a student’s faith.

In this ethics course, the first half is a survey of some classical (both ancient and modern) ethical theories. The second half is an application of those theories to what we might call “practical ethics.” We consider such issues as euthanasia, abortion, drug use, computer use, automobile driving practices, and a host of other issues. For some students, some of these practical considerations touch spots very deep in their lives. Perhaps they have had an abortion; perhaps they have lost a loved one through suicide. You will never be asked to reveal more about yourself than you want to reveal. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein saw ethics (and philosophy as a whole) as a sort of psychotherapy. If he was correct, perhaps an examination of the issues, which are sensitive, will help with the healing. As we discuss sensitive issues, please try to keep an intellectual distance between yourself and the philosophy. Don’t personalize too much at the start. Let it sink in.

Please maintain confidences of what is said in class. Do not spread gossip about students who choose to share personal information. Keep it among class members.

COMPETENCIES FOR PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION COURSES

READING: Students will be asked to read from philosophy and religion textbooks written for students reading at the 12th grade level or above. Students may be asked to read some short passages from primary sources. Student achievement will be measured by such methods as exams, quizzes and in-class discussion of the material.

WRITING: Students will be given opportunities to write short essays about philosophical or religious issues.

SPEAKING: Students are expected to participate in such speaking activities as class discussions, small group discussions, and/or class presentations.

LISTENING: Students will enhance their listening skills by listening to and attending to the speaker. Students may be asked to summarize or repeat and argument they have just heard.

CRITICAL THINKING: Students’ writing and class participation will be evaluated by such criteria as clarity, consistency, coherence, and fairness in thought and expression.

SCOPE AND VARIETY IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION: By studying a wide range of ideas, purported by different historical periods, ages and cultures, the student will demonstrate an awareness of the scope and variety of issues and ideas studied by philosophy and religion.
CONNECTIONS: Students will be encouraged to relate the ideas studied in philosophy and religion to ideas studied in other courses such as literature, psychology, history, etc.

CRITICAL RESPONSE: Students will practice, in speech and writing, giving reasoned critical responses to the ideas and theories presented. Unsupported statements of likes and dislikes will be treated as seminal material by the instructor for the development of a reasoned, critical response to a theory, idea or religion.

THE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Philosophy/Religion Department at Richland College is to provide to students and teachers alike interactive and cooperative learning environments in which they may examine ideas related to their cultural, philosophical and religious heritages. The Department further strives to develop skills in analysis and evaluation of arguments and the ability to write and speak clearly about religious and philosophic issues, which pertain to values, knowledge, reality, human nature and God. The Department aims at translating these skills into considered actions in the lives of those involved and into reasoned interactions with the greater global community.

COURSE CALENDAR


Aug 29 – A look into the Greek Psyche

Aug 31 – Rationalism Versus Empiricism. We will discuss how these two schools of thought shape ethical thinking.

Sep 3 – Labor Day Holiday

Sep 5 – The Problem of Evil for Religion and Philosophy. Read “Why is there Evil?” beginning on page 73 or text as well as “Wickedness” beginning on page 102

Sep 7 – Discussion of assigned readings. Read “Beyond Good and Evil” beginning on page 121 for next class.

Sep 10 – Discussion of Friedrich Nietzsche and the assigned reading. Read “On the State of Nature” beginning on page 45 for the next class.

Sep 12 – Discussion of Thomas Hobbes and the assigned reading. Read pages 149 through 159 for the next class.

Sep 14 – Discussion of Ethical Relativism and the assigned readings. Read pages 160 to 173.
Sep 17 – Discussion of Assigned Readings. We also discuss logical criteria relevant to the evaluation of arguments. In so doing we will cover the basics of deductive thinking versus inductive thinking as we will also discuss various fallacious arguments that hinder our ability to think critically. Read “Life is Absurd” beginning on page 578 for the next class.

Sep 19 – Discussion of assigned reading. Read “Religion Gives Meaning to Life” beginning on page 585 for the next class.

Sep 21 – Discussion of assigned reading. Read “The Ring of Gyges” beginning on page 523 and “In Defense of Ethical Egoism” beginning on page 531 prior to the next class.

Sep 24 – Discussion of assigned readings.

Sep 26 – Review for Exam I

Sep 28 – Exam I

Oct 1 – We will discuss Utilitarianism and consider the work of Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and others. Read “The Ones who Walk Away from Omelas” beginning on page 261 for the next class.

Oct 3 – We will discuss the assigned reading and continue our discussion of Utilitarianism by introducing the work of Peter Singer. Read the Singer excerpt beginning on page 869.

Oct 5 – We will discuss the assigned reading and entertain several “thought experiments” relevant to Utilitarianism. Read “Against Utilitarianism” beginning on page 248 prior to the next class.

Oct 8 – Discuss assigned reading. We will begin our discussion of Deontological Ethics and the work of Immanuel Kant. Read “The Moral Law” beginning on page 293 prior to the next class.

Oct 10 – Discuss assigned reading. We will also entertain several “thought experiments” relative to Deontological Ethics. Read “A Horseman in the Sky” beginning on page 340 prior to the next class.

Oct 12 – Discuss assigned reading. We will then begin our discussion of Aristotle and his Virtue Ethics and again talk about Aristotle’s Empiricism versus Platonic Rationalism. No reading assignment.

Oct 15 – We will discuss Aristotle’s notions of Purpose, Potentiality and Actuality, Entelechy, his Four Causes as they relate to Virtue Ethics. Read “The Sermon on the Mount” beginning on page 461 and “Moral Cowardice” beginning on page 487 prior to the next class.
Oct 17 – Discuss assigned readings. We will take up the issue of an important question in philosophy and in ethics, that being, What is Human Nature?

Oct 19 – We will continue with our discussion of human nature by looking at the Standard Social Science Model, the Evolutionary Psychological Model, Eliminative Materialism and other theories.

Oct 22 – We will discuss the notion of how Free Will affects our Ethical Opinions.

Oct 24 – Review for Exam 2

Oct 26 – Exam 2

Oct 29 - An Introduction of Existentialism and Existential Ethics


Nov 2 – Discuss Assigned Reading. How much autonomy should one have? Should I be able to decide the day of my death? Read “Harrison Bergeron” beginning on page 667.

Nov 5 – Discuss Assigned Reading. How much does our current society resemble that portrayed in Harrison Bergeron?

Nov 7 – What constitutes fairness in governance? How much individual freedom should each individual have? How should goods and services be distributed?

Nov 9 – Plato and his Republic.

Nov 12 – Aristotle and his “best case State”.

Nov 14 – Machiavelli and Real Politik.

Nov 16 – Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness as a Right.

Nov 19 – John Rawls and Justice as Fairness.

Nov 21 – Ethics in Hinduism and Buddhism

Nov 26 – Review for Exam 3

Nov 28 – Exam 3

Nov 30 – Review for Final Exam
Disclaimer: The instructor reserves the right to make changes in this syllabus as circumstances demand.