



**DAVIS UNIVERSITY**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**HUM141: CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL ISSUES**  
**SUMMER QUARTER 2025**

**QUARTER:** SUMMER QUARTER 2025

**COURSE SYLLABUS FOR:** HUM141 CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL ISSUES

**CREDIT HOURS:** 5 CREDITS

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**INSTRUCTOR EMAIL:**

**INSTRUCTOR OFFICE HOURS:**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In this course we will examine, analyze, question, and think critically about various contemporary ethical issues through a philosophical lens. We will discuss animal rights, poverty, social media, healthcare ethics, business, and much more. We will also cover essential fundamental philosophical perspectives such as Utilitarianism, Virtue Ethics, and Deontological Ethics.

**TEXT:** *"Ethics Essential Readings"* by Gordon Marino

**SUPPLEMENTARYTEXT:** *Morality Play: Case Studies in Ethics*, by Jessica Pierce (This book is not mandatory but suggested reading if you wish to purchase it)

**LATE WORK POLICY:** All students are expected to submit homework assignments electronically on the date specified on the syllabus. No late homework will be accepted and the student will receive a "0" (zero) for the homework assignment. Should the student refuse to complete the assigned work for the class, it could result in the student failing the class. All work assigned is expected to be completed on the date assigned. The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary. Please be sure to check your email/Moodle for any changes to the schedule.

**PLAGIARISM AND COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT POLICY:** Work that is found to be plagiarized receives a grade of zero and often causes a student to fail a class. Documentation of plagiarism is added to the student's academic file as a violation of accepted student conduct and is subject to disciplinary action. Plagiarism is the use of another person's exact words, or their ideas written in the student's words without giving the original author credit.

Plagiarism can result from any of the following:

- Quote material directly without using quotation marks.
- Paraphrase the original so that many of the phrases are the same as the original. A good rule is no more than 3 or 4 words in a row should be the same as the original.
- Copy the original sentence pattern, substitution synonyms for key words.
- Neglect to indicate the source of the original material.

### **ASSESSMENTS:**

#### Content

Participation (discussions)	10%
Assignments	40%
Reflection Paper / Portfolio	10%
Final examination	40%
Total	100%

**COURSE GRADE: A = 93%-100%**

**B = 85%-92%**

**C = 77%-84%**

**D = 70%-76%**

**F = below 70%**

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE:**

(Subject to change)

Week	Content Covered	Assignments & Assessment Due
<p><b>Week 1:</b></p>	<p><b><u>Readings and topics for Week 1</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Introduction" pages IX and X (9 and 10) – first two pages of introduction</li> <li>2. Virtue Ethics "Crito" by Plato Pages 24 – 37</li> <li>3. Virtue Ethics "The Republic" by Plato Pages 38 – 42</li> <li>4. Critique of Virtue Ethics "Moral Saints" by Susan Wolf 463 - 471</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Supplementary Readings</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Virtue Ethics "Nicomachean Ethics" by Aristotle Pages 66 – 90</li> <li>2. Critique of Virtue Ethics Gilbert Harman– "Fundamental Attribution Error"</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Week 2:</b></p>	<p><b><u>Readings and topics for Week 2</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ethical Egoism Nietzsche "Genealogy of Morals" Pages 284 – 287 (Sections 7 – 9) and Pages 294 – 296 (Section 13).</li> <li>2. Deontological Ethics Kant "Metaphysics of Morals" Pages 194 (starting at last paragraph) – 200 (to very bottom of page)</li> <li>3. Critique of Deontological Ethics Thomas Nagel "Moral Luck" Pages 446 – 450 (end of 2nd paragraph)</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Supplementary Readings</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Utilitarianism John Stuart Mill "Utilitarianism" Pages 228 – 232</li> <li>2. 1. Moral Sentimentalism Adam Smith "Moral Sentimentalism"</li> </ol>	<p>Assignment- Friday</p>

<p><b>Week 3:</b></p>	<p><b><u>Readings and topics for Week 3</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Civil Disobedience and Racial Justice “Letters From a Birmingham Jail” Martin Luther King Jr. Pgs. 358 - 386</li> <li>2. Criminal Justice System “Crime and Punishment” Cesare Becarria (handout/link)</li> <li>3. Distributive Justice “A theory of Justice” John Rawls Pgs. 380 - 396</li> <li>4. Economic Justice “Rich and Poor” Peter Singer Pgs. 507 -520</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Supplementary Readings</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Critique of Economic Justice “Lifeboat Ethics” Garrett Hardin</li> <li>2. Justice v.s. Loyalty “Justice as a Larger Loyalty” Richard Rorty</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Week 4:</b></p>	<p><b><u>Readings and topics for Week 4</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Animal Rights “The Case for Animal Rights” Pgs. 531 - 544</li> <li>2. Abortion and Reproductive Rights “A Defense of Abortion” Pg. 578</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Supplementary Readings</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abortion and Reproductive Rights “The Case for Not Being Born” David Benatar</li> <li>2. Ethics of Police “Are Police Necessary” Roger Wertheimer</li> <li>3. Bioethics “Case Against Perfection” Michael Sandal</li> <li>4. Euthanasia A.C. Grayling</li> <li>5. Sexual Ethics Tauriq Moosa and Jeff Sebo</li> <li>6. Ethics of Cheating “Cheating the Big Mistake” Anita Allen</li> </ol>	<p>Assignment- Friday</p>
<p><b>Week 5:</b></p>	<p><b><u>Readings and topics for Week 5</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultural relativism Ruth Benedict Pgs. 310 - 320</li> <li>2. Various case studies related to contemporary ethical issues such as feminist ethics, ethics of war, and environmental ethics.</li> </ol>	<p>Final Exam- Friday</p>