



**Course Description:** This course is designed to provide an introduction to philosophy and philosophical thinking. In particular, the course will be focused on the analysis of current moral and social problems including world poverty and hunger, euthanasia and physician assisted suicide, drugs and addiction, same-sex marriage, abortion, the death penalty, and the treatment of animals. We will essentially be raising questions about how we, as members of society, ought to live our lives in regards to each of these issues. What should we believe about the morality of abortion, the death penalty, euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide, etc.? How should we act in regards to eating meat and donating to suffering people in third world countries? What is the right thing to do? To begin answering these questions we will introduce and discuss some fundamental moral theories. This will serve as a foundation for our subsequent discussions on the moral issues and the differing arguments made in regards to each.

**Required Texts:** None- the all readings will be provided electronically/online as PDF files or web links.

**Canvas:** This course will be hosted by Canvas, an online learning platform. This is the web link to Canvas – <http://info.canvas.colostate.edu/login.aspx>. I will be instructing the course through Canvas and posting all course materials to Canvas. This will include presentations on each topic, weekly objectives and assignments, course announcements, email, etc. Similarly, you will be completing all components of the class through Canvas, including engaging in discussions with classmates, submitting assignments and essays, communicating with your instructor, etc. If you are having trouble using a feature on Canvas, please email me. For further support, you can contact the Morgan Library Information Desk at 970-491-7276 or [help@colostate.edu](mailto:help@colostate.edu).

**Instructor:** Shawn Brady

**Teaching Philosophy:** As a philosophy instructor, I aim to facilitate the development of students' critical thinking skills by challenging and supporting students through the learning process, demonstrating the fun of philosophy through enthusiastic and interactive teaching, and being a fellow learner open to others' ideas and questions.

**Email and Communication:** *Email is the best way to get in contact with me.* You can email me using the "Inbox" function in the top right corner of our Canvas page. Please email me with any questions, communications, etc. that you may have. I will get back to you as soon as possible, which is usually within 24 hours. *I want to hear from you,* so please do not hesitate to communicate with me.

**Meetings:** If you would like to meet with me, I am more than happy to do so – I want to meet with you throughout the semester! We can easily arrange meetings through Canvas or Microsoft Teams. These meetings can be video chats or simply audio chats. Please email me to arrange a meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> This syllabus is a projection and is subject to alteration, if necessary. The instructor retains the right to alter this syllabus at any point in the semester in order to reflect the reality of progress through the course materials and schedule.

**Student Outcomes:** Students in this course should gain meaningful results, knowledge, and skills. For this reason, I have specified outcomes that you have the opportunity to achieve during this semester.

### **Outcome #1: Critical Thinking**

- **Advance as a critical thinker:**

Students will develop their abilities to reason, closely analyze, and evaluate ideas. In other words, students will be able to better recognize, construct, and evaluate arguments and alternative positions by correctly applying logical standards and methodology, demonstrating the ability to identify underlying assumptions, ambiguous or contested terms, and potential objections to a thesis.

- **Practice and learn to implement the method of philosophical thinking:**

Students will be better equipped to think philosophically. According to one understanding, this means students will use their own reason to think autonomously. Throughout the semester students will develop an ability to ask for reasons, question reasons, analyze reasons, explain reasons, and provide their own reasons.

- **Develop skills that are useful and applicable to other areas of study and life:**

Though students may or may not choose to major/minor in philosophy, this class is designed to offer students skills that will benefit them in other areas. Students will develop skills that they can use in both their academic and personal lives, including critical and analytic thinking, reading, writing, reasoning, and reflection.

### **Outcome #2: Content Knowledge**

- **Ask and explore some of the major questions in moral philosophy and applied ethics:**

Students will gain exposure to and personally grapple with some of the basic questions of ethics. Doing so will build students' understanding of moral philosophy and, more importantly, help develop students' appreciation for the relevance and importance of moral philosophy.

- **Become familiar with and learn the importance of some of the major theories of ethical philosophy:**

As we introduce each section of the text, we will compare and contrast a number of ethical theories that attempt to explain morality and moral concepts. Students will become familiar these various theories and how they apply to actual moral issues. More importantly, students will come to realize why these moral theories are important to ethics, moral thinking, and moral decision-making.

### **Outcome #3: Reading and Research**

- **Become more comfortable interpreting, analyzing, and critically evaluating primary philosophical sources:**

Students will develop the interpretive, analytical, and conceptual skills to read with understanding a variety of philosophical texts. Students will be able to assess the quality and relevance of a variety of sources and use these sources in their own research and writing. Students will be challenged to analyze original texts that were written by and for professional philosophers.

### **Outcome #4: Communication**

- **Practice clear communication of philosophical questions, ideas, and positions to others in writing:** Students will clearly articulate ideas and arguments in writing. Students will demonstrate competence in interpretive, analytical, and argumentative writing. They will effectively present their own ideas and research in writing. Students will engage in open, thoughtful, and respectful dialogue.

### **Outcome #5: Values and Attitudes**

- **Expose oneself to different perspectives/arguments on current moral issues:**

Contrasting perspectives and arguments will be presented on each of the moral issues covered in the class. Students will honestly and rationally consider these different moral views, even if doing so requires suspending personal beliefs. Students will demonstrate cognitive flexibility by applying alternative possibilities and conceptual frameworks to their own and others' ideas and values. They will demonstrate intellectual curiosity in their pursuits of truth and meaning. They will engage in reflective inquiry and aim to achieve a greater understanding of their subject matter.

- **Develop your own views:**

Throughout the course, students will reflect on their own personal views on each philosophical issue. This does not mean that students must change their beliefs about these issues. Rather, this means that students take the time to apply what they learn in class to their actual life and beliefs about these issues. Students may end up changing their view, strengthening their view, building their view, and/or determining the questions they need to explore in order to develop their view.

**Instructor Outcomes** – As an instructor, I aim to learn and develop as well. For this reason I have set outcomes for myself that I will work to achieve during this semester.

- **Facilitate students' achievement of the student outcomes:** My primary objective in this course is assisting in student success. For this course, student success is understood in terms of the above student outcomes. If I can help students achieve these outcomes, then I will have been successful as an instructor.
- **Develop and strengthen my teaching and understanding of philosophy:** A fundamental aspect of being an instructor is recognizing that I can always improve my teaching methods and knowledge of the subject. As a result, I aim to remain open-minded to what my students and this class can teach me this semester.
- **Explain all sides of any issue and maintain overall neutrality:** Part of my duty as an instructor (and philosopher) is to fairly consider and present all sides of an issue. When this is properly done, students are in a better position to understand and reason about the issue - remaining neutral in my presentation of the ideas allows students to think autonomously and according to their own reason.
- **Maintain open and honest communication with my students:** Clear communication between the instructor and students is a vital aspect of any class. I want to communicate with students in an effective and accessible manner. If I ever fail in doing this, I want to know. Similarly, I want students to communicate with me whenever they have questions, confusions, interests or curiosities, etc.
- **Be available to my students:** I aim to be readily available to my students both through electronic communication and in person. I always try to respond to emails as quickly as possible and am generally available to meet in person by appointment.
- **Facilitate open and respectful discussion:** Discussion is a central aspect of any philosophy course, and open and respectful discussion is central to my classes. When students become involved in discussion they become more engaged in the class and the course becomes more interesting for everyone overall. I will act as a facilitator of discussions rather than the leader, clarifying and questioning ideas that are presented by students.
- **Teach in an engaging and enthusiastic manner:** If an instructor is engaging and enthusiastic in the classroom, then students are more likely to be more engaged with and enthusiastic about the class and class material. I attempt to maintain an upbeat rhythm to class lessons and discussions, as well as create innovative and interesting class activities and lessons.

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**Grades** – Students’ final grade in the course will be based on the following components:

- **Discussion Board Posts and Responses (52% or 520 points overall)**

- 12 posts and 12 responses; Posts and responses are each worth 15 points (1.5% of overall grade); Total of 24 worth 360 points (36% of overall grade)
- 2 reflection posts and 2 reflection responses; Reflection posts and responses are each worth 25 points (2.5% of overall grade); Total of 4 worth 100 points (10% of overall grade)
- 1 final reflection post and 1 final reflection response; Final reflection post and response are each worth 30 points (3% of overall grade); Total of 2 worth 60 points (6% of overall grade)

The discussion boards are the primary place where you will have the opportunity to communicate and interact with other students and the instructor. It is also one way in which you will be held accountable for the material from the readings and presentations.

**Each week you will be required to make one post on the discussion board, as well as a set of responses to classmates’ posts. Your initial post will be due by 11:59pm on Thursday and your responses will be due by 11:59pm on Sunday.** Your initial post will generally be in regards to your understanding and critical analysis of the readings for that respective week. Each week I will give specific directions for how to complete this post. Your second post will be a set of responses to classmates’ posts. Again, I will give specific directions each week for how to go about responding to your classmates’ posts. In weeks 5, 11, and 15 your discussion board posts and responses will require you to reflect on the previous weeks’ material. These reflection posts and responses will require a bit more effort than regular posts and responses and they will be worth more points as well.

In general, the main components of grading are how well the guidelines for the discussion board post/response were addressed, clarity, thoroughness, evidence of completing the reading, and evidence of comprehension and critical thinking. In other words, a strong discussion board post/response will clearly address the specific directions/guidelines for that respective discussion board forum. A strong discussion board post/response will be clear and easy for the reader to follow. Posts/Responses should include explanations of your and/or the respective author’s reasoning. Posts/Responses should demonstrate that you completed the readings and presentation for the week by making reference to key ideas, concepts, and arguments from those sources. Finally, posts/responses should demonstrate that you are reflecting on, actively thinking about, and questioning the ideas presented in the readings, the instructor presentations, and your classmate’s posts.

- **Quizzes (48% or 480 points overall)**

- 12 quizzes total; Each quiz is worth 40 points (4% of overall grade each; 48% of overall grade total)

Quizzes are another way in which you will be held accountable for the material from the readings and presentations.

A quiz will be given during most weeks, will be due by Sundays at 11:59pm, and will be specific to the material from the readings and presentations that was covered during the respective week.

Quizzes will be completed using the “Quizzes” function on Canvas and will generally consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. There may also be short answer or short essay questions on the quizzes

### **Grades Continued**

Final grades in the course are based on a points system (as opposed to a weighted system).

Total Points Possible = 1000 Points

Grade Equation: Total Points Earned / Total Points Possible = Grade

Students' final score for the course will be converted into a letter grade. The following letter grade scale will be used:

100% - 97 = A+	96.99 - 93 = A	92.99 - 90 = A-
89.99 - 87 = B+	86.99 - 83 = B	82.99 - 80 = B-
79.99 - 77 = C+	76.99 - 73 = C	72.99 - 70 = C-
69.99 - 60 = D		
59.99 - 0 = F		

### **Canvas Grade Book**

*It is the student's responsibility to confirm that their grades are properly recorded in the Canvas grade book. The instructor makes every effort to ensure that mistakes in grading do not occur. However, if a mistake does occur, the student is responsible for notifying the instructor of the mistake.*

### **Early, Late, Missed, and Make-up Work**

Discussion board posts and responses must be made by the appropriate due date/time. There are no make ups of discussion posts or responses.

In general, quizzes must be submitted by the appropriate due date/time. Make-up quizzes are permitted ***only*** in certain special, ***documented*** circumstances such as medical emergencies. In case of such circumstances, the student must get in contact with the professor ***before*** the quiz is due.

### **Controversial Material (Disclaimer):**

*In this class, we will often cover controversial, potentially offensive material. It is, indeed, part of the point of this class. We will, at times, disagree with each other. This is also part of this class, as disagreement allows chances to learn from each other. This class is about challenging your assumptions and beliefs. That being said, as a class, we must be committed to a respectful exchange of ideas.*

***→If you feel offended, at any time, for any reason, by any student, by the instructor, or by the material, please come speak with me and we can discuss how best to remedy the offense and return to a respectful environment in the classroom.***

**Rules of Discussion:** Discussion fosters learning by allowing for discourse between multiple people with different perspectives. Students are highly encouraged to share their own thoughts and perspectives as part of their way of contributing to the class. Participation can take various forms including playing an active, productive role in class and group discussions, asking questions, clarifying or critiquing ideas, and voicing opinions. As a class, we will generate and agree upon rules specific to the classroom, as a supplement to the rules of the Colorado State University Student Code of Conduct, but they will all be based upon the following two principles:

1-**Respect others at all times:** no name calling or derogatory remarks, or anything else that could be considered an attack, a humiliation, or a denigration.

2-**Don't make things personal:** our discussions are about ideas, arguments, and reasons, not about people or personalities. *This means it is NOT about YOU.* Don't attack others, instead, listen to them, and their reasons, patiently and actively.

### **Instructor Presentations**

Each week I will provide, and you will be asked to complete, a presentation of my own regarding that week's topic and readings. The presentations consist of both videos and text. As you will see, short videos of myself are combined and interspersed with text that I've written, all explaining and clarifying the respective idea/s. When completing each presentation, you will alternate between reading text and watching short videos. This format is intended to keep you engaged with the material and presentations.

The content of these presentations consists of my own explanations of the main concepts, arguments, and lingering questions in each topic and essay. That being said, in order for the presentations to make sense and be valuable to you, you will have to complete the respective readings prior to completing the presentations. Additionally, some of the content of my presentations is not explicitly found in the essays or textbook, though it is all based from the essays and textbook. The material and information contained in the presentations will be on the quizzes.

### **Citation of Sources**

When completing writing assignments, students are required to cite any sources used during the writing process. In other words, if you are looking at another source to aid in the writing of your own essay, then you must cite the source being used. You must place quotation marks around all direct quotes and cite all quoted, paraphrased and summarized material, no matter the source. Both in-text citations and a work cited page are required if sources have been used. Any citation method is acceptable: APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.

### **Plagiarism, Cheating, and the Honor Code**

Academic integrity is at the foundation of this class. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind are completely immoral, academically unacceptable, and will not be tolerated in this class. Any case of cheating or plagiarism that does occur will be handled on an individual basis, the consequences being dependent on what the instructor and philosophy department believe is the appropriate course of action. Please go to the following websites to reference CSU's policies on cheating and plagiarism, as well as the CSU Student Code of Conduct –

[http://learning.colostate.edu/integrity/faqs/rules\\_against\\_cheating.cfm](http://learning.colostate.edu/integrity/faqs/rules_against_cheating.cfm)

<http://www.conflictresolution.colostate.edu/conduct-code>

### **Additional Accommodations**

If you are a student who would like accommodations in this class, please discuss your individual needs with me. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation. A verifying memo from the Student Disability Center may be required before any accommodations are provided.

*Syllabus continues on next page...*

**Course Schedule:** This is a tentative schedule for the course assignments and due dates. Assignments may change during the semester. You must stay up-to-date with course announcements and assignments through Canvas. You should check Canvas for new announcements at least once every other day.

I have organized assignments using a weekly schedule, but you may work at your own pace as long as the respective material is turned in by the appropriate due dates.

Week/Module	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1 1/19-1/24	Introduction to Course and Moral Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Ethics and the Examined Life” from <i>Doing Ethics</i> by Lewis Pojman</li> <li>• “The Value of Philosophy” by Bertrand Russell (on Canvas)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read/Complete <a href="#">Course Information</a></li> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>
2 1/25-1/31	Moral Relativism and Divine Command Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Relativism and Emotivism” by Lewis Vaughn</li> <li>• “Religion and Morality” by Lewis Vaughn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>
3 2/1-2/7	Utilitarianism and Kantian Moral Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Classical Utilitarianism” by Mark Timmons</li> <li>• “The Principle of Utility” by Jeremy Bentham</li> <li>• “Non-Consequentialist Theories: Do Your Duty” by Lewis Vaughn</li> <li>• “The Moral Law” by Immanuel Kant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>
4 2/8 -2/14	Natural Law Theory and Social Contract Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Natural Law Theory” by Mark Timmons</li> <li>• “Social Contract Theory” by Mark Timmons</li> <li>• “A Theory of Justice” by John Rawls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>
5 2/15 -2/21	Review and Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion Board Reflection Post and Reflection Responses</li> </ul>
6 2/22-2/28	World Poverty and Hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The Life You Can Save” by Peter Singer</li> <li>• “World Hunger and Moral Obligation” by John Arthur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>

**Moral and Social Problems**  
PHIL 103 Section 802 (Online)

7 3/1-3/7	Drugs and Addiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Drug-Free America or Free America” by David Boaz</li> <li>• “Permissible Paternalism: Saving Smokers from Themselves” by Robert Goodin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>
8 3/8-3/14	Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “A Case Against Euthanasia” by Daniel Callahan</li> <li>• “A Moral Defense of Oregon’s PAS Law” by Michael Gill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>
9 3/15-3/21	Hate Speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Racist Speech as the Functional Equivalent of Fighting Words” by Charles Lawrence III</li> <li>• “Sticks and Stones” by John Arthur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>
10 3/22-3/28	Gun Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Gun Control” by Hugh LaFollette</li> <li>• “Gun Violence and the Right to Bear Arms” by Sam Wheeler</li> <li>• “Fundamental Rights and the Right to Bear Arms” by Cynthia Stark</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>
11 3/29-4/4	Review and Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion Board Reflection Post and Reflection Responses</li> </ul>
12 4/5-4/11	Abortion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion” by Mary Anne Warren</li> <li>• “The Immorality of Abortion” by Don Marquis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>
13 4/12-4/18	<b><u>Spring Recess – No Classes – University Holiday</u></b>		
4/19-4/25	Abortion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “A Defense of Abortion” by Judith Jarvis Thomson – Pages</li> <li>• “A Moderate View” by L.W. Sumner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>
14 4/26-5/2	Animal Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Utilitarianism and Animals” by Gaverick Matheny</li> <li>• “Do Animals Have Rights?” by Carl Cohen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion Board Post and Responses</li> <li>• Quiz</li> </ul>
15 5/3-5/9	Reflection on the Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-read “The Value of Philosophy” by Bertrand Russell (on Canvas)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Presentation</li> <li>• Final Reflection Discussion Board Post and Reflection Responses</li> </ul>