



## Ethics and Critical Thinking

**PHI 2600-25431**

**Spring, 2022**

**TR 10:00 a.m.-11:15 a.m.**

**Bldg. 1-326**

Dr. Albert Dale Truscott, Instructor

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Office Hours: by appointment.



**Course Description:** Ethics and Critical Thinking: Study of major theoretical principles on which claims to good life and moral action have been based, such as hedonism, utilitarianism and rationalism. Each theory illustrated by representative selections from works of great philosophers from classical period to 20th century.

**WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT?** This course is about two very important topics that relate to the lives and work of all successful educated people no matter what they choose for a profession or business: Critical Thinking and Ethics. How does a person think about things? How do we form opinions? Do we test the claims of other people, businesses, politicians, etc.? How do we do that? How do we know whether our thinking, our conclusions, our thought processes are valid or not? This is the stuff of Critical Thinking. You and I need to know about this. And the other bigger part of this course is Ethics. We will first take a look at the major ethical systems that have developed in the world over the course of human civilization. These are the ways great thinkers have tried to figure out how we make moral decisions and live and act morally. What is the good life? What does virtuous mean? How can I judge my actions and those of others? How can the greatest number of people benefit from my moral stance? What is my duty? Do I have a duty? Is morality skewed towards men or women? Then we will delve into a number of major ethical issues that our culture faces today – issues such as abortion, pornography, economic justice, environmental concerns, stem cells and cloning, and many more. It is a lot to tackle in one term. We shall work quite hard together. But this study will benefit you!

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

1. Demonstrate mastery of the basic principles of logical (critical) thinking so that you can examine ethical issues, your opinions and prejudices.
2. Understand the several classical philosophical theories of ethics and be able to apply them, critique them, compare and contrast them and use them to evaluate ethical issues.
3. Examine a number of contemporary ethical issues and scholarly articles about those issues, test those issues using the ethical theories and present reasoned, potentially meaningful and effective responses/solutions.
4. In the course of the study, examine and test your own life and the ethical issues you face and, perhaps, revise and update your thinking and feelings about ethics and you.
5. Examine a couple of examples of ethical situations/dilemmas in modern cinema, critically evaluating and responding to the issues tackled there.

**COURSE CREDITS:** Three

Method of Instruction: Ethics and Critical Thinking is a lecture/discussion/participation course. Our class style will be interactive. Ask questions at any time, please. There are NO inappropriate questions. Careful note-taking during a lecture is essential. Recorders are welcomed. There will be student small group participation assignments and some online work as well. It is assumed that students will keep up with reading and other assignments according to the attached schedule.

I am available to all students for consultations. Please feel free to ask to meet with me. Teaching is what I do. I love to be of help to students. I may ask for individual sessions with students experiencing difficulties.

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

MacKinnon, Barbara, *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues*, 3rd ed., CONCISE EDITION, Cengage, 2016. Check Cengage, Amazon, Chegg and other internet sources for available purchase and rentals and eBooks. Rent or buy ONLY the book. I do not require the extra access bundles. **[You may use a used or rental copy of the Regular 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. We are using the Concise Edition to lower your cost. Do NOT rent or buy the new 9<sup>th</sup> edition.]** You must obtain this text and study it. It will be used in class everyday. All quizzes and exams will be based, in part, on its content. There is no way to pass this course without the textbook.

**Copies of the Regular 8<sup>th</sup> Edition are on Reserve in the Library for your use. Go to the Circulation Desk and get it for 4 hours at a time. NO EXCUSE for not having a textbook.**

### **YOU MUST BE IN CLASS – ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Regular attendance is necessary for successful completion of this course. Students are allowed TWO personal absences for free. There is no need to notify the instructor about the reason for these. After the two free absences, each unexcused absence will result in 50 points deducted from the course score (1000 points). Excused absences are completely at the discretion of the instructor. Excused absences must be documented. For example, COVID symptoms must be verified by an antigen test, the results of which are available in 20 minutes. Illness, legal obligations, military obligations, deaths in the family, employment obligations can be excused if documented. Phrases like "family emergency" will not be excused without details and documentation.

In extreme situations where extended absences are necessary, negotiate with the instructor for a faculty withdrawal or for a D or F grade that may be eligible for grade forgiveness when the course is repeated. See the College rules about this.

**As of the college withdrawal-by-student date**, students in this class will receive the grade earned for the course. Students will not be permitted to secure a faculty withdrawal by not attending after the student withdrawal date.

- Students who do not come to class before January 20 will be withdrawn as NO SHOW. There is no refund of fees for NO SHOW withdrawals.
- The attendance records of the instructor are the official record of attendance.
- *If I become ill, I will endeavor to notify the class. Please wait 20 minutes before leaving the classroom if I am not there.*
- Students not signed in within the first 15 minutes of class will be marked absent.
- This class meets for 75 minutes. Unless you have a health condition that warrants it, leaving the class for restroom breaks should NOT be necessary.
- Students who leave class early for any reason and do not return will be marked absent for the day. I reserve the right to take attendance more than once during the session.

- Class time is a cell phone free space. Students who use cellphones in class will be marked absent. Students who leave the classroom during class for the purpose of using a cell phone will be marked absent. Discuss any special need for cellphones with the instructor.
- Students may withdraw from this class up to the published deadlines for withdrawal with and without refund of fees.
- See the College Catalog for information about the effect of Withdrawals on your record.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Read the Textbook. Bring it with you to class every day we meet. I reserve the right to mark a student absent if she/he does not have a textbook in class.**

**Chapter Exams:** There will be exams on chapters 1,2-3,4-5,6-7,8,Existentialism,9. **The five exams are worth a total of 522 points. The value of each question on the exams is 6 points. These Exams are given in class. It is up to the student to check the Syllabus Calendar and Canvas for these exams. DO NOT MISS Exams.**

**Online Study for Part 1 of the Textbook: These are called "Online Quizzes."**

For chapters 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9, there will be an online study-practice component on the class Canvas site. It will be formatted as a quiz. The questions will help you as you read the chapter. Each student must complete all the materials for each chapter. Study guide quizzes entries are due by the beginning of class the day the discussion of a chapter begins. The quiz will remain open until after the in-class exam on that chapter so that you can revisit it if you want. If you submit the quiz late, half credit will be given. The quizzes will close completely on the exam day for that quiz **AT THE CLASS TIME OF DAY. This assignment is worth 81 points, 9 points per chapter.**

**A Mid-Term Examination [Gordon Rule Assignment #1]** will be over the student's understanding of Chapters 1 through 9 and in-class lectures and discussions. The exam will be submitted on paper to the instructor **ON THE DUE DATE** (double spaced, 1" margins, no more than 12 pt. font, three to four pages) and will ask the student to apply ethical theories to a situation(s). This paper will be graded 50% for content and 50% for writing skill, Gordon Rule. A writing workshop or individual appointment will take place with the instructor to go over writing errors if the writing portion of the grade is less than 45 points, 90%. After attending the workshop or appointment, the writing portion of the grade will be raised ½ way to full credit. **This exam is worth up to 100 points. It will also be submitted on Canvas as a Unicheck assignment.**

**Small Group Issues Reports:** Students will be assigned one of the **ELEVEN** Ethical Issues chapters for In-Class study. These will be the groups that prepare and present their assigned chapter to the class.

Each group will be given specific instructions as to how to proceed with their issue study. They will prepare and present a common presentation, with PowerPoint with other video or computerized components, covering the content of the chapter and the entire issue carefully and completely. These groups will be expected to be "experts" on their chosen issue both in content and in ethical positions that are critically defensible. We will devote one class session to each issue. Each member of the group **MUST** actively present part of the session.

--ISSUE CHAPTER SESSIONS MUST USE THE ENTIRE 75 MINUTES.

--Powerpoint or equivalent may be used. YouTube and other video resources may be used.

--Presenters may NOT read their powerpoints to the class by looking at the screen. That is boring! All words in a group powerpoint must be pronounced correctly and spelled correctly.

--Powerpoint pages may NOT be excerpts from the chapter. They must be the group's own words.

--Presenters MUST engage the class in conversation, discussion and debate. The instructor will EXPECT and REQUIRE class members to participate.

While the in-class report is a group report, EACH STUDENT in the group will write a separate and distinct short essay on the same issue, dealing with one specific area of the subject that is of interest to the student. **[Gordon Rule Assignment #2]** The papers should be about 3-4 pages long, double-spaced, no more than 12-point font, with proper citations, grammatically and stylistically correct. They will be printed and submitted to the instructor. THESE WILL ALSO BE SUBMITTED ON Canvas and checked by Unicheck.

The papers will be graded 50% for content. I will be looking for a mastery of the chapter in the text on which your report is based, including the Readings connected with that chapter in the Full Edition of the textbook on Reserve in the Library. These extra readings are NOT in the Concise Edition. You must go to the Library and read them in the Full Edition #8. You must specifically refer to the Title and Author of the Readings, and you must cite the text if you are quoting or referring to it. You must present ethical issues and use of the basic ethical theories in your paper. You must present a position on the paper that is either your position or the position you choose to take for the sake of the paper and argue ethically and critically for that position.

Further instructions will be given in class and in Canvas. This paper will be graded 50% for content and 50% for writing skill, Gordon Rule. A writing workshop or individual appointment will take place with the instructor to go over writing errors if the writing portion of the grade is less than 45 points, 90%. After attending the workshop or appointment, the writing portion of the grade will be raised ½ way to full credit.

**The Group Presentation portion of the assignment is worth up to 100 points.**

**The Individual Paper portion of the assignment is worth up to 100 points.**

**Online Quizzes for Part 2 of the Textbook:** For chapters 10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20, there will be an online component consisting of a chapter quiz. The purpose of these quizzes is to prepare the entire class for the student group presentation so that we can all participate. Therefore, these quizzes will be due **before the class on which the presentation takes place**. Late quizzes will not be accepted. Quizzes will close at the beginning of the class period during which that chapter is presented. **These quizzes are worth up to 9 points each, 99 points total.**

**There is NO Final Exam in this course.**

**The total number of points to be earned in this class is 1002.**

**Less than a total of 140 points for the combination of the Mid Term Exam essay and the Group Issues Chapter essay results in a "D" for the course – Gordon Rule.**

**NOTE: The fact that an exam is listed in Canvas for a certain day does NOT mean that this exam is available until the end of the day by some other means than in class. In class exams are IN CLASS at the class time.**

**Extra Credit:** Because ethics and ethical behavior is an essential part of human participation in society and politics, I offer the following: If you show written proof that you are registered to vote, you will receive **25 bonus points**. If you are not yet eligible to vote, or if you are not a citizen of the US or have some other reason that you cannot be a voter, you may show me proof of voting in another country or write a 2-page essay about the importance of a religious person participating in a democracy.

#### **Grading Policy:**

90 - 100% = 900+ points = A

80-89% = 800-899 points = B

70 - 79% = 700-799 points = C

60 - 69% = 600-699 points = D

Below 60% = less than 600 points = F

### **Student Conduct and Academic Honesty:**

- Exams and homework are considered individual effort; any submissions that are too similar for coincidence will receive no credit.
- Students are responsible for preparing for class by reading pre-assigned readings and completing assignments. Students who are absent are fully responsible for all material covered in class.
- Students may *collaborate* on design and project issues. This does NOT include duplication of programs or designs. Collaboration should be used to find bugs in programs or to solve program syntax and general structure problems. Copying, regardless of the number of editor changes, renaming, and/or retyping is considered cheating, and a student's inability to describe the function of a submitted assignment will be considered evidence of cheating. All students involved in incidents of cheating will be given a zero ("0") for that assignment/quiz/exam/project without regard to who did the original work or who may have benefited.
- During exams and quizzes, students may not leave the room or receive phone calls.
- The instructor's phone and email are provided for emergency situations, such as missing an exam, and brief questions about specific assignments. Messages should consist of your name, your class and class time, and a brief message. Questions such as "What did we cover in class?" will not result in a response. Due to the problem of "phone tag", student phone calls will normally not be returned. Emails with specific questions will be answered as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours. Students who need more than a brief response should arrange a meeting with the instructor. A web site has been set up which contains schedule and assignment information as available.

### **Expected Student Conduct:**

Valencia College is dedicated not only to the advancement of knowledge and learning but is concerned with the development of responsible personal and social conduct. By enrolling at Valencia College, a student assumes the responsibility for becoming familiar with and abiding by the general rules of conduct. The primary responsibility for managing the classroom environment rests with the faculty. Students who engage in any prohibited or unlawful acts that result in disruption of a class may be directed by the faculty to leave the class. Violation of any classroom or Valencia's rules may lead to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from Valencia. Disciplinary action could include being withdrawn from class, disciplinary warning, probation, suspension, expulsion, or other appropriate and authorized actions. You will find the Student Code of Conduct in the current Valencia Student Handbook.

### **Computer/Equipment Use Policy:**

- Use of computers in the Business, IT, and Public Services classrooms at Valencia Community College is restricted to those activities designated by the instructor to enhance the class materials. Any other use is strictly forbidden. Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:
  - Use of computer to send E-mail or access Internet sites not specifically assigned in class.
  - Use of computer for job, internship, homework or other activities not assigned in class.
  - Modifying any hardware or software system configuration or setting.
  - Activities not in accordance with the Valencia Student Code of Conduct
- Use of computers in the Business Students open lab (Bldg. 2, Room 304) is limited to those activities involved with preparing homework or coursework in the IT or Business departments and is subject to the same restriction as listed above.
- Computer use is remotely monitored; any student using computers inappropriately may be subject to dismissal from class or banishment from the lab. Subsequent offense may be sent to the campus administration for further disciplinary action.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide a notification from the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) and discuss specific needs with the instructor, preferably during the first two weeks of class. The Office for Students with Disabilities determines accommodations based on appropriate documentation of disabilities. The East Campus Office is located in Building 5, Room 216.

### **Bay Care Services**

Valencia students can get immediate help that may assist them with psychological issues dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment difficulties, substance abuse, and time management, as well as relationship problems dealing with school, home or work. Students have 24-hour unlimited access to the BayCare Behavioral Health's confidential student assistance program phone counseling services by calling (800) 878-5470. Three free confidential face-to-face counseling sessions are also available to students.

### **Disclaimer Statement**

As many factors may affect the development and progress of a class, the instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule as may be required to assure attainment of course objectives.

## **COMPUTER AND EMAIL REQUIREMENTS**

- You must have access to a computer with Windows XP or higher or compatible Macintosh OS.

- You must have access to MS Word. Some students will want to use MS Power Point or Excel. Do NOT submit anything to me with a .wps suffix.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader, latest edition, is required to view pdf documents.
- You must have access to Canvas and check it daily for class messages.
- You must have and use your Valencia email address to communicate with the instructor or students. Please put PHI 2600 + CRN number, <your last name>, <the subject of your email,> in the Subject Line.
- **You MUST have a Valencia email account. This will be the ONLY email address that I can use to communicate with you.**

**Students ARE permitted to use laptops, iPads, Notebooks and SmartPhones for class purposes ONLY. Any student caught using an electronic device or phone in class for any other reason than class participation will be reported to the Dean's office for violation of the Code of Conduct. Students may contact the instructor in person if they have special reasons to be available by phone and *may* be granted an exception.**

### Class Calendar

Date	Topics and Text Pages	In-Class Group Assignments	Quizzes and Exams	Online Study Due Dates and Other Information
1/11	Course Introduction <i>Crimes and Misdemeanors</i>			
1/13	<i>Crimes and Misdemeanors</i>			
1/18	Critical Thinking and Chapter 1			Online Study Quiz for chapter 1 must be posted BEFORE class today
1/20	Chapter 1			Online Study Quiz for chapter 2 must be posted BEFORE class today.
1/25	Chapter 2		Exam on Chapter 1	
1/27	Chapter 3			Online Study Quiz for chapter 3 must be posted BEFORE class today.
2/1	Chapter 4		Exam on Chapter 2-3	Online Study Quiz for chapter 4 must be posted BEFORE class today.
2/3	Chapter 5			Online Study Quiz for chapter 5 must be posted BEFORE class today.
2/8	Chapter 6		Exam on Chapter 4-5	Online Study Quiz for chapter 6 must be posted BEFORE class today.

2/10	Chapter 7			Online Study Quiz for chapter 7 must be posted BEFORE class today.
2/15	Chapter 8		Exam on Chapter 6-7	Online Study Quiz for chapter 8 must be posted BEFORE class today.
2/17	Existential Ethics			Online Study Quiz for Existential Ethics must be posted BEFORE class today.
2/22	Chapter 9 Presentation. Groups meet.		<b>Mid Term Exam is Due.</b>	Online Study Quiz for chapter 9 must be posted BEFORE class today.
2/24	<i>Movie: Kite Runner</i>			
3/1	<i>Movie: Kite Runner</i>			
3/3	Individual appointments for writing skills on the mid-term		Exam on Chapter 8, Existentialism & 9	
<b>Spring Break</b>				
3/15	10	In-Class Group Study of Euthanasia		Online Quiz must be posted BEFORE class today
3/17	11	In-Class Group Study of Abortion		Online Quiz must be posted BEFORE class today
3/22	12	In-Class Group Study of Sexual Morality		Online Quiz must be posted BEFORE class today
3/24	13	In-Class Group Study of Equality and Discrimination		Online Quiz must be posted BEFORE class today
3/29	14	In-Class Group Study of Economic Justice		Online Quiz must be posted BEFORE class today
3/31	15	In-Class Group Study of Punishment and the Death Penalty		Online Quiz must be posted BEFORE class today
4/5	16	In-Class Group Study of Environmental Ethics		Online Quiz must be posted BEFORE class today
4/7	17	In-Class Group Study of Animal Ethics		Online Quiz must be posted BEFORE class today
4/12	18	In-Class Group Study of Biotechnology and Bioengineering		Online Quiz must be posted BEFORE class today
4/14	19	In-Class Group Study of Violence and War		Online Quiz must be posted BEFORE class today

4/19	20	In-Class Group Study of Global Justice and Globalization		Online Quiz must be posted BEFORE class today
4/21	Individual appointments for writing skills on the class presentation papers.			
4/26	Final Exam Day	There is NO Final	This day is reserved in case we get behind in the schedule.	

### **Study Recommendations**

1. Read the ENTIRE chapter BEFORE coming to class the first day that chapter is discussed. You WILL be expected to be able to respond in class discussions and you may be called upon at random. Highlight or take notes on the chapter content. Do NOT leave out the boxed articles and margin quotes. Discover the author's outline use it to frame your reading notes or highlights.
2. Take notes in class. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT, and it is an essential higher learning skill that you should master.
3. Read the chapter once or twice more before taking an exam on the material. Review class notes to discover what the instructor has emphasized. Review your journal entries. If your group reported on this chapter, review the paper you wrote.
4. Get plenty of rest before taking an exam. The human mind works better that way.
5. Do NOT cram immediately before an exam. You run the risk of scrambling your memories.