

### ***Course Description***

Ethics is the study of moral action, i.e., right and wrong, the just and unjust, etc., along with the various ways in which we commonly think and talk about moral action. Within this class, we will focus on two branches of ethics, viz., *normative ethics* and *applied ethics*. Normative ethics examines moral theories. A moral theory is a theory about moral action. We will study various moral theories that have developed throughout the history of ethics from Plato to present times. Alternatively, applied ethics is the study of real-life ethical questions and problems. Within our assignments and discussions, we will examine applied ethical topics as they relate to everyday life.

### ***Course Objectives***

Students will obtain a general understanding of what ethics is, the major subdivisions of ethics and some of the major moral theories within history along with applied ethical problems. Students will also develop evaluative skills, critical thinking, and argumentation skills through written assignments, discussions and exams.

### ***Required Readings***

The following texts will be used in this class and may either be purchased at the Missouri Western bookstore or else read online (links to e-texts available on Canvas website):

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*  
Kant, I., *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*  
Mill, J.S., *Utilitarianism*  
Nietzsche, F., *On the Genealogy of Morals*  
Plato, *The Republic*

*Note: Other e-texts available on Canvas will also be assigned in relation to course modules and assignments.*

### ***Student Evaluation***

Assignment Type	Points	Total%	Grade
Short Quiz [Attendance Verification]	5	90 – 100	A
Discussions (6 total)	60	80 – 89	B
Essays (3 total)	60	70 – 79	C
Reading Reports (3 total)	60	60 – 69	D
Term Exams (2 total)	60	0 - 59	F
<i>Total</i>	<i>245</i>		

*Note 1: Your final grade for this class is the percentage of the total points earned for all assignments divided by the total possible points (245 total) for this class. For example, if you earn 220 points total, then your final grade is:  $220/245 \times 100\% = 90\% = A$ .*

*Note 2: Your current total percentage can be seen at any time on Canvas “Grades”.*

#### **Short Quiz [Attendance Verification] (1 total, 5 points)**

During the first week of class, all students are required to take a short 5-question quiz that tests your knowledge of the assigned readings / media for that module. The quiz also serves as “attendance

verification” for this online class. Failure to take this quiz will result in your being marked “absent” for the class, which can potentially lead to problems regarding receipt of financial aid.

#### *Assessment*

1. The quiz is automatically graded by Canvas based upon question type.
2. Late policy: The quiz must be taken in the first week of class.
  - a. *Note: Students who sign-up after the first week of class must still take this quiz (for points), and must email me to inform me that they have not yet taken it.*

#### Discussions (6 total, 10 points each)

Throughout the class, students will be assigned forum discussions. The discussions are meant as a place for engagement and discussion of a problem within applied ethics. Students may be assigned extra reading and/or videos to watch. Students will then respond to a general question writing a ~300-400 word (maximum) opinion piece that they will post on the online forum discussion board. Following this, students will respond to two (2) posts of their fellow students writing ~50 words.

#### *Assessment*

1. You meet the required word length for the primary post (~300-400 words). (4-5 pts)
2. Your primary post is well-written, informative and adequately addresses the questions. (2-3 pts)
3. Your response posts are informative and ~50 words. (1-2 pts each)
4. Late policy: submissions accepted up to a week late after the due date with -20% (-2 pts) automatic late penalty.

#### Essays (3 total, 20 points each)

During certain modules, students will be assigned “essays” related to the moral theories (normative ethics) examined in this class. Students may also be assigned extra readings, videos, etc., for this assignment. Students will then write a ~500-700 word (maximum) essay in response to the assigned question(s).

#### *Assessment*

1. Your essay is well-written and defends a clear position and/or argument. (8-12 pts)
2. You demonstrate knowledge of the assigned text. (4-5 pts)
3. Your essay is ~500-700 words. (4-5 pts)
4. Late policy: submissions accepted up to a week late after the due date with -20% (-4 pts) automatic late penalty.

#### Reading Reports (3 total, 20 points each)

During certain modules, students will be assigned “reading reports” related to the historical texts read in this class. For the reports, students must write a general “summary” of the assigned reading, focusing on the main arguments of the texts studied in class. Students must also provide at least three citations (3) in the form of a ~1-sentence quotation from the text that supports their discussion. In general, the reading reports should be comprehensive and should be ~600-800 words (maximum) in length.

*Note 1: Citations should span the entire text, and should not be derived from, say, only one assigned chapter to the exclusion of others.*

*Note 2: Students must state the text as well as the book / chapter number (where relevant), from which their citation is derived, e.g., Plato states that, “...” (Republic, Bk I).*

#### *Assessment*

1. You provide a general summary of the main contents / arguments of the reading. (8-12 pts)
2. You provide at least two relevant (3) citations in support of your discussion. (1-2 pts each)
3. Your report is between ~600-800 words. (4-5 pts)
4. Late policy: submissions accepted up to a week late after the due date with -20% (-4 pts) automatic late penalty.

### Term Exams (2 total, 30 points each)

The term exams assess your knowledge of the assignment material covered in class. Each exam contains approximately 6 essay questions covering assigned material up to that exam. Exams are timed (90 minutes), can only be taken once, and must be completed by the due date (= not late submissions). Exams can only be made-up with a formal excuse.

### Grading

1. You offer an informative and accurate answer to all parts of the question. (5 points)
2. Your answer is mostly correct but contains some minor omissions or errors. (4 points)
3. Your answer contains some notable inaccuracies. (3 points)
4. Your answer contains a number of major inaccuracies. (2 points)
5. Your answer is uninformative or incorrect. (1 point)
6. You do not answer the question. (0 points)

### ***Course Regulations & Policies***

Make-up Policy: Missed assignments can only be made up with a formal excuse (doctor's notice, etc.).

General Grading Policy: You cannot receive an A in this class without successfully completing all major assignments (Essays, Discussions, Reading Reports, Term Exams). Failure in this class is warranted in the event that (1) your grade point percentage averages an F as established by grading criteria on this syllabus and/or (2) you do not comply with MWSU academic honesty guidelines as listed below.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty is defined in the Student Code of Conduct as engaging in acts which include (but not limited to):

- a. Falsifying documents or academic records;
- b. Any activity that violates the University's Academic Honesty Policy including (but not limited to) any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another's work, using any electronic device to either improperly store information for an exam or to transmit portions of questions or answers to other students, or allowing another student to take your exam for you.

MWSU Attendance & Participation Guidelines: At the beginning of this course you will be required to take an informal quiz. Taking this quiz likewise fulfills the initial attendance requirement for this online class. Students who fail to complete this quiz and/or subsequent quizzes and assignments may be considered absent from the course, following which they will be notified of their absence via MWSU Early Alert System. Subsequent inactivity may result in an unofficial withdrawal or failure for this course.

General Studies Requirements for Bachelor Degrees: General Education at Missouri Western State University consists of a common core of curriculum offerings necessary to equip students for successful and fulfilled lives as educated and active citizens. The required general education curriculum consists of a broad range of courses that assures that all baccalaureate-seeking students acquire academic skills and knowledge necessary for understanding, communicating, and performing in a diverse and complex world. Students completing courses in the general education program will be provided the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills to: (1) Write and speak clearly and effectively. (2) Think critically and reason analytically. (3) Locate, organize, evaluate, and synthesize information from print and electronic sources. (4) Understand and appreciate moral values and ethical choices. (5) Gain a greater awareness of the present by understanding other cultures and times. (6) Understand and enjoy aesthetic experiences and share in related activities. (7) Develop an understanding of fundamental mathematical concepts and their applications. (8) Understand common phenomena in the physical and natural environment and understand the methods by which they are studied through lectures and the connected laboratory experience. (9) Understand and appreciate the means of gaining and maintaining mental and physical health.

ADA Accommodations: Students seeking accommodations must first provide documentation of needed accommodations to the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) located in Eder Hall, Suite 203. Once accommodations have been approved by the ARC, students are responsible for notifying their instructors of those accommodations. This should be done within the first two weeks of classes. Accommodations are not retroactive.

Harassment, Discrimination & Sexual Misconduct: Consistent with its mission, Missouri Western seeks to assure all community members learn and work in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Title VII, Title IX, and University policy prohibit harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Missouri Western encourages anyone experiencing harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct to talk to someone from the Campus and Local Resources list found in the University Policies and Procedures (<https://www.missouriwestern.edu/studentaffairs/wp.../handbook.pdf>) about what happened so they can get the support they need and Missouri Western can respond appropriately.

There are both confidential and non-confidential resources and reporting options available to you. Missouri Western is legally obligated to respond to reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, unless made to a confidential resource. Responses may vary from support services to formal investigations. As a faculty member, I am required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. I must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident. For more information about policies and resources or reporting options, please visit the following website:

<https://www.missouriwestern.edu/titleix/sexual-misconduct-policy/>

Students have received information via email regarding training regarding Title IX. Student employees may have additional required training. Please follow the link in the email sent to your MWSU student account to complete the training. Students who do not complete the training will receive a hold on their account, prohibiting future semester enrollment until the training is complete. These training courses will ensure that all students are appropriately educated about these important regulations.