



## Ethics PHIL-2033-X11 Fall 2022

Instructor: Dr. Erik Baldwin  
Office: NA  
Office hours: By Appointment  
Office phone: NA  
E-mail: erik.baldwin@msutexas.edu

### Course Description

What does it mean to live a good life? How ought I treat others, and what should I expect of them in return? These questions are at the heart of ethics; a philosophical approach to figuring out what is right and wrong. This course will explore historical responses to these questions from several different perspectives and consider possible objections to each view. Major themes of the course will be: the nature of human happiness and its relevance to the good life, the role of human freedom in morality, and the nature of our duties to self and others. Students will come away from the course equipped with conceptual tools that will enable them to think more deeply and critically about ethical issues they face in their daily private and professional lives.

### Required Textbooks & Instructional Materials

Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (OUP, 2018). [FE]

Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Ethical Life*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (OUP, 2018). [EL]

Michael Harvey, *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Hackett Publishing, 2020).

### Assignments

You will be responsible for completing assignments in the following categories, each category being worth a percentage of your final grade.

1. Reading Discussion Questions (26) at 20% of final grade
2. Reading Journals (12) at 25% of final grade
3. Reading Quizzes (14) at 20% of final grade
4. Essays (5) at 35% of final grade

The Assignment categories will be broken down in the following way:

1. **Reading Discussion Questions:** Students are expected to study class notes and do assigned readings on daily basis. Reading questions will assess student understanding of philosophical theories and ideas to which students must provide short written responses. They will also help you to prepare for writing the essays. Each day a post is late there will be a 10% penalty. There are no make-up posts after a thread is closed. Reading Discussion Questions will be averaged into 20% of your final grade. Your lowest reading journal score will be dropped from the grade book.
2. **Reading Journals:** Over the course of the semester, students will keep a reading journal to record their thoughts about the weekly readings assigned from Shafer-Landau *The Ethical Life*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.

Write your journal on the readings that are assigned during the week the assignment is due. Each journal should be dated, include at least one in-text citation to the reading, and end with a bibliographic reference to all reading discussed in the entry. Students will be responsible for writing 13 entries. Each entry is worth about 10 points and must be about 250-300 words in length, contain an in-text citation in MLA format to the reading under consideration, contain a bibliographic reference in MLA format at the end of the entry to the reading under consideration, and all citation formatting must be correct. Entries should be written in Standard English without any grammatical mistakes or spelling errors. Reading responses will be averaged into 20% of your final grade. The lowest reading journal score will be dropped from the grade book.

3. **Reading Quizzes:** Basic knowledge of the assigned readings will be assessed by regular quizzes. There are fourteen quizzes. Quizzes will be averaged into 20% of your final grade. Quizzes open on Mondays and are due on Wednesday evening. The lowest quiz score will be dropped from the grade book.
4. **Essays:** Students will be expected to follow the course materials and express their comprehension of the course content in 5 written assignments. These assignments are designed to help the students develop their writing skills, advance their understanding of philosophical thought, and guide the students in developing a nuanced and coherent method of expressing themselves philosophically. For specific information regarding written work and its assessment, see the information sheet on “Written Work” available on D2L. Essays account for 35% of the final grade. The lowest essay score will be dropped from the grade book.

### **Notice**

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

### **GRADING SCALE**

Your points will be translated into percentages, and your final grade will be calculated according to the following percentage scale:

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- 60-69% = D
- 59% or below = F

### **Grade Appeal Process**

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

**Note about Incompletes:** A grade of “Incomplete” may be given to a student who has not been able to complete specific required coursework due to circumstances beyond his/her control before the end of a given reporting period. In order to remove the ‘I’ from his/her record, the student will meet with the instructor to discuss his/her completion of coursework or the taking of a final exam. In turn, the instructor will issue a new grade two weeks before the closing of the following reporting period. A student’s failure to comply with the instructor’s requirements prior to this deadline will result in an automatic F grade. Students are encouraged to meet the requirements set by their instructors in order to remove ‘I’ grades from their reports.

### **Late Work**

No late written assignments (reading journal and essays) will be accepted for credit. Incomplete assignments will be considered late.

### **Make Up Work/Tests**

Work cannot be made up unless there is a documented excused absence.

### **Grade Appeal Process**

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University Undergraduate Catalog.

### **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

**Academic Dishonesty:** The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, using the published or unpublished works of another person without recognition, either by paraphrase or direct quotation. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will not be tolerated. All papers will run through the Turnitin for an originality report. At the very least, plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment; at worst, the consequence will be an F in the course. Offenders will be reported to the Chair of the Department of English, Humanities, and Philosophy. Please understand that students have the right to appeal an alleged incident of Academic Dishonesty. More information about this policy and appeal procedure can be found on page 55 of the *Student Handbook* [https://msutexas.edu/student-life/\\_assets/files/handbook.pdf](https://msutexas.edu/student-life/_assets/files/handbook.pdf)

This course observes the MSU Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty, however small, creates a breach in academic integrity. A student’s participation in this course comes with the expectation that his or her work will be completed in full observance of the MSU Code of Student Conduct. A student should consult the Student Handbook or the Office of the Dean of Students for answers to any questions about the code. Student Honor Creed: “As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so.” Cheating includes, but is not limited to, (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers or completing other assignments; or (3) the acquisition of tests or other academic materials belonging to the university faculty or staff without permission.

### **Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

### **Online Computer Requirements**

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. *\*Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.* Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the

Academic Success Center. \*Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!! There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world that is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

### **Instructor Class Policies**

Insults, slurs, or attacks of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. Any student who engages in this type of behavior in the classroom will be permanently removed from the class, in addition to other possible punishment by Midwestern State University.

### **Change of Schedule**

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the [Schedule of Classes](#) each semester.

### **Refund and Repayment Policy**

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

**Email:** You should always include the course number and section in the subject of your email and include your name as a signature at the end of your message. Please observe proper email etiquette. Writing a professional email is like writing a business letter. Emails to your professor are not text messages and should not be informal or overly familiar.

### **Disability Support Services**

Midwestern State University is committed to providing equal access for qualified students with disabilities to all university courses and programs, and by law all students with disabilities are guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation of their disability. This guarantee is provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA reads: "No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subject to discrimination by any such entity." The Director of

Disability Support Services serves as the ADA Coordinator and may be contacted at (940) 397.4140, TDD (940) 397.4515, or 3410 Taft Blvd., Clark Student Center 168.

## College Policies

### Midterm Grade Reporting

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, the instructor for this class will provide a Midterm Progress Report through each student's WebWorld account. Midterm grades will be reported for all students.

Midterm grades will not be reported on the students' transcript; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. They simply give students an idea of where they stand at the midpoint of the semester. Students earning below a C at the midway point should schedule a meeting with their instructor at their earliest possible convenience after midterm grades are posted.

### Course Schedule and Outline:

We will follow the order of readings provided below. See modules on D2L for details. **Notice: Topics and readings are subject to change. Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.**

| Week  | dates               | Topic  | Readings                                 | Assignments  |
|---|---------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Part One: The Good Life</b>                            |                     |  |  |  |
| Week 1  | Starts August 22    | Introduction                                 | FE<br>Introduction<br>EL<br>Introduction | Discussion Questions 1 & 2   |
| Week 2  | Starts August 29    | Hedonism: Its Powerful Appeal                | FE 1<br>EL 1                             | Quiz 1<br>Discussion Questions 3 & 4<br>Reading Journal 1              |
| Week 3  | Starts September 5  | Is Happiness All that Matters?               | FE 2<br>EL 2 & 4                         | Quiz 2<br>Discussion Questions 5 & 6<br>Reading Journal 2              |
| <b>Part Two: Normative Ethics – Doing the Right Thing</b> |                     |  |  |  |
| Week 4  | Starts September 12 | Morality and Religion                        | FE 5<br>EL 6                             | Quiz 3<br>Discussion Questions 7 & 8<br>Reading Journal 3<br>Essay 1   |
| Week 5  | Starts September 19 | Natural Law                                  | FE 6<br>EL 7                             | Quiz 4<br>Discussion Questions 9 & 10<br>Reading Journal 4             |
| Week 6  | Starts September 26 | Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions | FE 9<br>EL 8                             | Quiz 5<br>Discussion Questions 11 & 12<br>Reading Journal 5<br>Essay 2 |
| Week 7  | Starts October 3    | Consequentialism: Its Difficulties           | FE 10<br>EL 8                            | Quiz 6<br>Discussion Questions 13 & 14<br>Reading Journal 6            |

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|--|--------------------|--|----------------|--|
| Week 8   | Starts October 10  | The Kantian Perspective:<br>Fairness and Justice                   | FE 11<br>EL 9  | Quiz 7<br>Discussion Questions 15 & 16<br>Reading Journal 7              |
| Week 9   | Starts October 17  | The Kantian Perspective:<br>Autonomy and Respect                   | FE 12<br>EL 9  | Quiz 8<br>Discussion Questions 17 & 18<br>Reading Journal 8<br>Essay 3   |
| Week 10  | Starts October 24  | Ethical Pluralism and Absolute Moral Rules                         | FE 15<br>EL 11 | Quiz 9<br>Discussion Questions 19 & 20<br>Reading Journal 9              |
| Week 11  | Starts October 31  | Ethical Pluralism<br>Prima Facie Duties and Ethical Particularism  | FE 16<br>EL 11 | Quiz 10<br>Discussion Questions 21 & 22<br>Reading Journal 10<br>Essay 4 |
| <b>Part Three: Metaethics – The Status of Morality</b> |                    |  |                |  |
| Week 12  | Starts November 7  | Ethical Relativism   | FE 19<br>EL 18 | Quiz 11<br>Discussion Questions 23 & 24<br>Reading Journal 11            |
| Week 13  | Starts November 14 | Moral Nihilism   | FE 20<br>EL 15 | Quiz 12<br>Discussion Questions 25 & 26<br>Reading Journal 12            |
| Week 14  | Thanksgiving Break |  |                |  |
| Week 15  | Starts November 28 | Eleven Arguments Against Objectivity; Is Moral Knowledge Possible? | FE 21 & 22     | Quiz 13<br>Discussion Questions 27 & 28<br>Reading Journal 13            |
| Finals Week  | Starts December 5  |  |                | Quiz 14<br>Essay 5   |