

# ethics

California State University, Sacramento  
Phil 2-08  
Spring 2019  
Mon Wed Fri 11:00 – 11:50am  
Douglass Hall (DH) 110

**Instructor:** Jonathan Chen  
**E-mail:** jonathan.chen@csus.edu

**Office Hours**  
Mendocino Hall 3036  
Tues Thurs  
9:00 – 10:30am

**Website:** [farewelljon.com/teaching](http://farewelljon.com/teaching)

## BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT

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*If you are experiencing challenges in the area of food and/or stable housing, help is just a click, email or phone call away! Sacramento State offers basic needs support for students who are experiencing challenges in these areas. Please visit our Basic Needs website to learn more about your options and resources available. <https://www.csus.edu/basicneeds/>*

## CATALOG DESCRIPTION

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Examination of the concepts of morality, obligation, human rights and the good life. Competing theories about the foundations of morality will be investigated. Units: 3.0

## ABOUT THE COURSE

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In this course, we will consider these questions and reflect on many of the moral problems raised by both ancient and contemporary thinkers. Some have suggested that consequence is the most pertinent aspect to consider when making moral decisions, others argue that right actions override the consideration for good consequences, and still others defend the belief that one's cultivation of character is what deserves praise or criticism. In exploring these issues, we will come across the egoists, the utilitarians, the deontologists, and the virtue ethicists, who all provide unique insights into the moral problems of our world. Ultimately, the question we must ask ourselves is, "How ought we live our lives?"

After completing the course, students will be able to: 1. Describe and distinguish key ethical concepts, including concepts such as good, right, permissible, free will, pluralism, universality, reason, relativism, absolutism, obligation, virtue, prima facie, duty, action, intension, etc. 2. Read and comprehend philosophical texts, classical or contemporary, in the area of ethics. 3. Discuss core ethical problems, such as whether religion is a source of values, what does it mean to be virtuous, are we free to make choices, what is justice, how can we know what is right or wrong, etc. 4. Write clear and concise explanations and arguments about basic ethical problems. 5. Distinguish the basic ethical theories and approaches,

including: deontology, utilitarianism, virtue ethics, social contract theory, and one or more non-traditional or non-western positions (feminist theory, critical race theory, Confucian ethics, Buddhist ethics, etc.). 6. Apply basic ethical concepts and approaches to solving practical problems in ethics, including: sex and reproduction, environment, non-human animals, drug use, capital punishment, war, euthanasia, affirmative action, abortion, economic inequality, etc...

## GENERAL EDUCATION CRITERIA

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This course satisfies GE Area C2: Introduction to the Humanities. The learning objectives associated with C2 should focus on the human condition.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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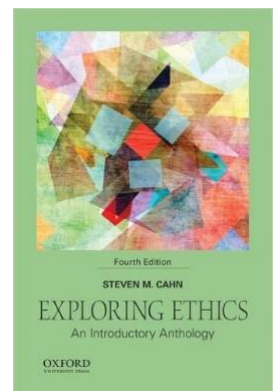
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of the study of the humanities.
  - ✓ You will engage in an array of ethical debates that stem from various thinkers and moral theories, and you will demonstrate your proficiency via quizzes, a final exam, and a midterm paper.
2. Investigate, describe, and analyze the roles and effects of human culture and understanding in the development of human societies.
  - ✓ By sympathizing with both Western and Eastern thinkers and understanding their motivation for their projects, you will have a clearer view on how they contribute to the world we currently live in.
3. Compare and analyze various conceptions of humankind.
  - ✓ By exploring the various thinkers' ethical theories and suggestions on how society can flourish, you will learn and be able to participate to the discussion in novel ways.
4. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical development of cultures and civilizations, including animating ideas and values.
  - ✓ During our exploration of several philosophical traditions that stem from Ancient Greek, Western, and Classical Chinese traditions, you will be tasked with essay-writing and exams to demonstrate your knowledge.

## BOOK

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Steven M. Cahn, *Exploring Ethics: An Introductory Anthology* (Oxford University Press, 2017)  
Fourth Edition

*Note: You can also purchase the Second or Third Edition, though a couple of the articles might be missing and the page numbers will be off.*



## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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### Canvas & Announcements

We will be using *Canvas*, as a means of communication and assessment. Please log in by going to <https://my.csus.edu/>

- ✓ Always check your CSUS e-mail for class announcements.
- ✓ I respond to all e-mails within 24 hours. If I do not respond within that time, assume I did not receive your e-mail and resend it.

## Participation

Although attendance will not be taken (and *mere* attendance will not establish your grade), part of your grade requires that you are present in class to complete the quizzes. The quizzes reflect both what is covered in the readings and also what we discuss in class.

## Reading

All of the assigned reading should be done before class. The readings will often be challenging, but reading through them two or three more times will help to clarify the material. We will be discussing ways to tackle difficulties with reading philosophy in class, so please prepare yourselves to become better readers!

## Quizzes

There will be four quizzes for this class. Quizzes will be conducted in-class. You are required to bring an 882-e scantron for each quiz. All quizzes are closed-note and closed-book. You will be given a study guide before each quiz.

## Online Discussions

I will be facilitating mandatory discussion forums on *Canvas*, in which you will be evaluated on the following:

- (1) How constructive are your contributions?
- (2) Does your post reflect your familiarity with the readings for the course?

Students who provide insightful responses that are relevant to the discussion and help move the conversation forward will receive full credit for that particular assignment, while students who provide somewhat irrelevant responses that show a lack of preparation and also do little to move the conversation forward will be given half credit. Students who neglect to participate or make inappropriate remarks that harm the group discussion will receive no credit for the assignment.

There will be three parts to each online discussion. These include the Original Post, Long Replies, and Short Replies. For the Original Post, you will respond to an assertion I have made, and explain whether or not you agree with it. Afterward, you will respond in more detail to two of your teammates' Original Posts; you can offer counterexamples, voice your disagreement, raise questions, etc. Lastly, you will rate your teammates' Original Posts and write a couple of sentences to let them know you've read their posts. Further details for the assignment will be available on *Canvas*, though you can find the due dates for each discussion on the course schedule below.

## Ethics Paper

You will be assigned an ethics paper (3-4 pages) for this class. It will demonstrate some of the ways in which you approach moral problems. You must substantiate your viewpoint, but also be charitable and sincere to alternative viewpoints. Your grade for the paper is based on the reasoning behind your argument rather than the position you intend to argue for. With this, you will be given an opportunity to organize your thoughts clearly and coherently, and show that you have developed a proficiency in constructing arguments.

We will be holding a paper workshop in class to discuss what a philosophy paper typically looks like. Your paper is due on May 13<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm. **The last day to send me a proposal or draft is April 29<sup>th</sup>. However, from April 24<sup>th</sup> – April 29<sup>th</sup>, I will accept a maximum of 5 proposals and 5 drafts. Thus, if you are the 6<sup>th</sup> student to send me a proposal or the 6<sup>th</sup> student to send me a draft, your proposal or draft will not be read.**

For students who need additional help with writing and organizing their papers, I highly recommend visiting the Writing Center (<http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter/>) and/or PARC (<http://www.csus.edu/parc/index.html>) on campus.

## Assignments and Grading

Who is You?	20 pts	2%
Quizzes (4)	480 pts	48%
Online Discussions (3)	300 pts	30%
Ethics Paper	200 pts	20%

**A** = 93 – 100, **A-** = 90 – 92, **B+** = 87 – 89, **B** = 83 – 86, **B-** = 80 – 82, **C+** = 77 – 79, **C** = 73 – 76, **C-** = 70 – 72  
**D+** = 67 – 69, **D** = 63 – 66, **D-** = 60 – 62.9, **F** = 0 – 59

## Late Assignments

You will be given a feasible amount of time to complete each assignment, and it is your responsibility to know when an assignment is due. Should you need to make up an assignment, the following penalties will be enforced:

- 5 points for each 24-hour period that the 'Who is You?' assignment is submitted late. No excuses accepted.
- 20 points for each additional class session that a quiz is taken late, unless you have relevant documents to account for your absence.
- 20 points for each 24-hour period that a discussion post is submitted late. No excuses accepted.
- 100 points for each 24-hour period that your Ethics Paper is submitted late. No excuses accepted.

For instance, if you submit an online discussion 3 hours after the due date, you will be penalized -20 points. If you submit it 25 hours after the due date, you will be penalized -40 points.

Note: When submitting your assignment on *Canvas*, please make sure that it has been submitted properly. If you are unsure, you can always send me an e-mail with the assignment attached and copied and pasted (don't just send me an e-mail asking if I received the assignment posted on *Canvas*).

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

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**DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.** Any student caught intentionally plagiarizing will automatically receive an **F** in the class and be reported to Student Affairs and the department chair for serious disciplinary action.

"Plagiarism, as a form of cheating, is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution. Regardless of the means of appropriation, incorporation of another's work into one's own requires adequate identification and acknowledgement. Plagiarism is doubly unethical because it deprives the author of rightful credit and gives credit to someone who has not earned it. Acknowledgement is not necessary when the material used is common knowledge."

If you are still unsure of what counts as plagiarism, please speak with me or read more at: <http://www.csus.edu/umanual/student/STU-0100.htm>

## DROP POLICY

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**First 2 weeks** - During the Fall and Spring semesters a student can add and drop classes using MySacState until the end of the second week of the semester.

**Weeks 3-6** - During this period the student must describe the seriousness of the circumstances that necessitate dropping and get the approval of the instructor and department chair on a Drop Petition. Most departments require verifying documents, such as a letter from a doctor or supervisor. In weeks 3 & 4, drop forms are turned in to the department office and no grade is given. In weeks 5 & 6, forms are turned in to the Office of the University Registrar and "W" grades are assigned.

Week 7 through the last day of classes - It is more difficult to drop classes after the sixth week. The drop petition requires signatures from the instructor, the department chair, and the dean of the college which offers the class. Students are required to have a letter from a doctor or supervisor stating that a medical or work-related circumstance is beyond the control of the student. Turn in forms to the Office of the University Registrar; a "W" grade will be assigned.

Finals Week - No drops allowed.

**University's Drop and Withdrawal Policy:** "Although instructors may exercise their authority to administratively remove any student who during the first two weeks of instruction fails to attend, students should not assume they will be dropped by this procedure. Students will receive a final grade of "F" or "WU" in courses they fail to drop officially. 'Failure to attend' is defined as failure to attend any two class meetings (for courses that meet two or more times a week), one class meeting (for courses that meet once a week), or the initial meeting of those courses that require attendance at the first class meeting. Students should verify their registration to make sure they are enrolled in only the classes they are attending."

## ACCOMMODATIONS

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For students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations, please contact me before the end of the third week of the semester so that arrangements can be made. Late notifications may interfere with providing accommodations in a timely manner. Also, please provide disability documentation to SSWD (<http://www.csus.edu/sswd/>), Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-9655, so that they may facilitate the reasonable accommodations process.

## OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

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Student Health & Counseling Services: <https://shcssacstate.org>

Dreamer Resource Center: <http://www.csus.edu/saseep/drc/>

University Writing Center: <http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter/>

Pride Center: <http://www.csus.edu/pride/>

Academic Advising: <http://www.csus.edu/acad/>

Multi-Cultural Center: <http://www.csus.edu/mcc/>

Women's Resource Center: <http://www.csus.edu/wrc/>

Information Resources & Technology: <http://www.csus.edu/irt/>



ASI Food Pantry: <http://www.asi.csus.edu/programs/food-pantry/>

Basic Needs (Food, Housing, Financial Security): <http://csus.edu/basicneeds/index.html>

# COURSE SCHEDULE

This is subject to change. You will be given at least a two-week notice if any changes are made.

All readings should be completed before coming to class.

Date	Lectures & Readings	Assignments Due
 <h2 style="margin: 0;">INTRODUCTION</h2>		
<h3 style="margin: 0;">WEEK 1</h3>		
Jan 21 - 25	<p style="color: #e67e22; font-weight: bold;">MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY (MONDAY) – NO CLASS</p> <p><b>CAN BAD PEOPLE BE HAPPY?</b></p> <p>Read: Cahn and Murphy, <i>Happiness and Immorality</i> (pp 83 – 89)</p>	<p><u>Due Wednesday at 11:59pm</u> <span style="color: #e67e22;">'Who is You?'</span></p>
 <h2 style="margin: 0;">MORAL THEORIES</h2>		
<h3 style="margin: 0;">WEEK 2</h3>		
Jan 28 – Feb 1	<p><b>PSYCHOLOGICAL &amp; ETHICAL EGOISM</b></p> <p>Read: Rachels, <i>Egoism and Moral Scepticism</i> (pp 71 – 82)</p>	
<h3 style="margin: 0;">WEEK 3</h3>		
Feb 4 – 8	<p><b>PAPER WORKSHOP</b> (Wed &amp; Fri)</p>	<p><u>Monday in Class</u> <span style="color: #e67e22;">Quiz #1</span></p>

	<b>WEEK 4</b>	
Feb 11 - 15	<b>UTILITARIANISM</b>  Read: Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> (pp 118 – 129) Pojman, <i>Strengths and Weaknesses of Utilitarianism</i> (pp 130 – 138)	
	<b>WEEK 5</b>	
Feb 18 - 22	<b>KANTIANISM</b>  Read: Kant, <i>The Categorical Imperative</i> (pp 102 – 113)	<u>Due Friday at 11:59pm</u> Online Discussion #1 Part 1
	<b>WEEK 6</b>	
Feb 25 – Mar 1	<b>ARISTOTELIANISM</b>  Read: Aristotle, <i>The Nature of Virtue</i> (pp 139 – 144)	<u>Due Friday at 11:59pm</u> Online Discussion #1 Part 2 & 3
	<b>WEEK 7</b>	
Mar 4 - 8	<b>CONFUCIANISM</b>  Read: Ivanhoe, <i>Confucianism Introduction</i> (PDF available on Canvas)	
<b>MORAL ISSUES</b>		
	<b>WEEK 8</b>	
Mar 11 - 15	<b>WORLD HUNGER</b>	

	<p>Read: Singer, <i>Famine, Affluence, and Morality</i> (pp 264 – 273)</p> <p><b>HOMELESSNESS</b></p> <p>Read: Waldron, <i>Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom</i> (PDF available on Canvas)</p>	<p><u>Monday in Class</u> Quiz #2</p>
	<b>WEEK 9</b>	
Mar 18 - 22	<b>SPRING RECESS (NO CLASS)</b>	
	<b>WEEK 10</b>	
Mar 25 - 29	<p><b>EUTHANASIA</b></p> <p>Read: Rachels, <i>Active and Passive Euthanasia</i> (pp 246 – 252)</p>	<p><u>Due Friday at 11:59pm</u> Online Discussion #2 Part 1</p>
	<b>WEEK 11</b>	
Apr 1 - 5	<p><b>CESAR CHAVEZ DAY (MONDAY) – NO CLASS</b></p> <p><b>RACISM</b></p> <p>Read: Blum, <i>Racism: What It Is and What It Is Not</i> (PDF available on Canvas)</p>	<p><u>Due Friday at 11:59pm</u> Online Discussion #2 Part 2 &amp; 3</p>
	<b>WEEK 12</b>	
Apr 8 - 12	<p><b>ABORTION</b></p> <p>Read: Thomson, <i>A Defense of Abortion</i> (pp 186 – 204) Marquis, <i>Why Abortion is Immoral</i> (pp 223 – 231)</p>	



	<b>WEEK 13</b>	
Apr 15 - 19	<p><b>VIRTUAL VS. ACTUAL</b></p> <p>Read: Luck, <i>The Gamer's Dilemma: An Analysis of the Arguments for the Moral Distinction Between Virtual Murder and Virtual Pedophilia</i> (PDF available on Canvas)</p>	<p><u>Friday in Class</u> Quiz #3</p>
	<b>WEEK 14</b>	
Apr 22 - 26	<p><b>AFFIRMATIVE ACTION</b></p> <p>Read: Cahn, <i>Two Concepts of Affirmative Action</i> (pp 421 – 431) Hansen, <i>Facing Facts and Responsibilities</i> (pp 432 – 437)</p>	<p><u>Due Friday at 11:59pm</u> Online Discussion #3 Part 1</p>
	<b>WEEK 15</b>	
Apr 29 – May 3	<p><b>PORNOGRAPHY</b></p> <p>Read: Longino, <i>Pornography, Oppression, and Freedom</i> (pp 339-351)</p> <p><b>ANIMAL RIGHTS</b></p> <p>Read: Regan, <i>The Case for Animal Rights</i> (pp 360 - 372)</p>	<p><u>Due Friday at 11:59pm</u> Online Discussion #3 Part 2 &amp; 3</p>
	<b>WEEK 16</b>	
May 6 - 10	<p><b>WAR &amp; TERRORISM</b></p> <p>Read: Anscombe, <i>Mr. Truman's Degree</i> (PDF available on Canvas) Walzer, <i>Terrorism</i> (pp 280 – 287)</p>	<p><u>Friday in Class</u> Quiz #4</p>

	WEEK 17	
May 13 - 17	FINALS WEEK (NO CLASS)	<u>Due Monday at 11:59pm</u> Final Paper