

FLAGLER COLLEGE — SPRING 2023
COR 183 ETHICAL CONTROVERSIES

Name: Dr. Rena Goldstein RGoldstein@flagler.edu pronouns: she/her/hers Office #207B 20 Valencia St St. Augustine, FL 32084 Credit Hours: 3	Class time: TR 2:00 PM-3:15 PM 3:00 PM-4:45 PM Class location: PLLRD 130 Office Hours: Mon/Wed 12:00-2:00 pm Syllabus Version: March 28, 2024 (Syllabus is subject to revision at any point during the semester)
---	--

REQUIRED TEXTS

Course overview: This course will connect controversial ethical issues with ethical theories. There are many controversial issues, but this semester we shall concentrate on the following:

- Sexual Morality
- Abortion
- Cloning and Genetic Enhancement
- Economic Justice

Students will also be able to pick one topic from the following list for debate:

- Freedom of Speech
- Drugs and Addiction
- Sexism and Racism
- The Ethics of Immigration
- Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide
- The Death Penalty
- War, Terrorism, and Torture
- The Ethical Treatment of Animals
- The Environment and Climate Change

We begin the course with a very brief introduction to the philosophical study of ethical issues, including an overview of philosophical accounts that addresses the question, ‘what are ethics?’. As we shall see, philosophers often approach specific ethical issues by making use of a particular ethical theory and applying the theory to the problem. (That’s why what we will be studying is sometimes called applied ethics.) So, as we proceed, not only will we be learning about the philosophical controversies surrounding the above-mentioned issues, but we will also be learning about ethical theory. Indeed, ethical viewpoints are often situated in an ethical theory with certain moral assumptions. Students will analytically

examine the assumptions and arguments in the ethical issues and theories covered in class. We will also examine arguments for and against controversial issues, doing our best to understand both sides with open minds. In the end, students should understand the nature of these controversial disputes better.

Materials *(available as an eBook for purchase)*

Timmons, M., ed. Disputed Moral Issues: A Reader. 5th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- ★ Configure your phone to receive your @flagler.edu email. Use this link for directions: <http://www.flagler.edu/offices/business-services/technology-services/email-calendar/email-app-setup/>
- ★ Download the Canvas app for students: Search “Canvas Student” in your App Store
- ★ Set your notification settings for Canvas: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10624-4212710344> Be sure they are set so you are receiving regular notifications.
- ★ For more help with Canvas: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>

Course Format

The eBook will be available on <https://www.redshelf.com/>. Other aspects of the course, including assignment instructions, quizzes, and deadlines will be available on Canvas. All the deadlines for this course are for the US east coast, that is Eastern Standard Time.

CORE LITERACY AND CORE VALUE DESCRIPTIONS

COR 183 satisfies **Ethical Inquiry**. Ethics deals with questions of good and evil, right and wrong, should and should not. The ability to think critically about ethical issues, to question our own ethical presuppositions and those of others, and to productively engage with people who ethical perspectives we disagree with or just don't understand is crucial both on an individual level and for a well-functioning society. These skills are necessary for developing our own ability to make well-informed ethical and political choices and for our formation as virtuous individuals. They are also indispensable tools for living and participating in a diverse democracy in which people often have different and sometimes conflicting values that inform their personal and collective decision making.

Additionally, COR 183 satisfies the Core Value for **Respectful and Inclusive Community**. We foster a sense of respect and appreciation for the dignity of all individuals. We cultivate an inclusive and diverse community that encourages civil and productive dialogue across differences.

EXPECTED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

SL01: Students will demonstrate how to have productive conversations about ethical issues with those they disagree with to foster understanding.

SL02: Students will express and defend reasoned viewpoints about ethical issues of personal, political, and social importance orally and in writing.

SL03: Students will articulate different theoretical approaches to ethical questions and identify the potential benefits and drawbacks of each approach.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

-Attendance (10%): The class is structured with in-class group activities and collective discussions. Attendance will be taken and is part of the grade for this course. Students are allowed 5 unexcused absences. On the 6th unexcused absence, a student can expect to see a grade reduction. If the student misses more than 10 classes, the student is subject to removal from the course with a grade of “WF”. Absences are excused due to Flagler College events and at the discretion of the instructor. Email me at least 24 hours in advance to request an excused absence. Additionally, your attendance may be also marked down if you are consistently late and/or are disruptive/disrespectful in class.

-Quizzes (20%): Each week you will be asked to answer some multiple-choice questions about the reading. The quizzes will be open-book and open-note.

-Mid-Term Exam (25%): The midterm will consist of short-answer questions. The purpose of the midterm is three-fold: 1) to determine whether students can identify the values, norms and principles associated with the different positions exemplified in the reading assignments and class lectures; 2) to ascertain students’ ability to articulate the reasons why these values, norms and principles are held; and 3) to evaluate students’ ability to understand the implications of holding these values, norms and principles.

-In Class Group Assignment (20%): Debates will take place during section. These debates will require students to identify the values, norms and/or principles that undergird different moral positions, articulate the reasons given for different moral positions and discuss the implications of these moral positions. In addition, students will evaluate the relative merits of these positions arguing that one position is better or more important or more justified than another.

-Final Paper (25%): The final paper will build on the group assignment by requiring students to write a careful and sympathetic exposition of the relevant positions or arguments for the topic they were assigned. Students will also reflect on the debate process, including what they gained from the experience.

The essay will be 1400-1600 words in length. You will find the relevant deadlines in the appendices below. **Papers must be submitted to Canvas.** If you have questions about the essays, please don’t hesitate to contact me. I am willing to give feedback on essay plans (no

more than one page), though naturally you will need to do this well in advance of the essay deadline.

Essays don't need to use a particular style of formatting or referencing. All that is important is that they are clearly written throughout (and full references are given somewhere, where appropriate). Note that I give guidance in the course in terms of what I am expecting from the essays, so you need to carefully attend to that advice.

Grading: The breakdown for course is as follows:

- Attendance: 10%
- Quizzes: 20%
- Midterm Exam: 25%
- Debate: 20%
- Final Essay: 25%

Overall grading for the course follows the standard Flagler grading scheme:

A+ = 96.5% A = 93.5% A- = 90%

B+ = 86.5% B = 83.5% B- = 80%

C+ = 76.5% C = 73.5% C- = 70%

D+ = 66.5% D = 63.5% D- = 60%

F = Less than 60%

GENERATIVE AI IN STUDENTS' CREATIVE PROCESS

Because AI tools are rapidly evolving, this course will help students to use emerging AI technology in the design of written assignments. We will draw on inquiry-based pedagogical methods that, according to the [University of Texas at Austin's Center for Teaching and Learning](#), "involve guiding students to discover causal relationships by forming and posing hypotheses and then testing those hypotheses through experimentation or formal observation. Inquiry-based learning emphasizes active participation in discovering knowledge, and making meaning of the knowledge students construct. Crafting AI prompts inquiry and experimenting and documenting findings can promote confidence and ownership of the learning embedded in a student's creative process."

Students must record and assess the use of AI tools throughout their written academic works. Be prepared to chronicle the steps of finding, selecting, using, making, and transforming. Following again from UTA:

- For each assignment, you are required to include a paragraph that explains what AI content-generation tool you used, the dates you used it, and the prompts you used to generate the content according to the MLA or APA style guide.
- During critique, it is important to describe the precedents you used and how any source content was transformed. When showing or presenting images or other content you generated using an AI-tool, cite that image or content following the MLA or APA style guide.

- If you need help referencing your creative work, contact me to collaborate or see the [University of Nebraska's Center for Transformative Teaching Citation Style](#) guide for rules on citing ChatGPT and other AI generative tools.

LATE PENALTIES

For all assessed work, for each day (or part of the day) that the assessment is late I will deduct 1/3 letter grade. For example, a one-day late penalty means that A+ goes down to A, B- goes down C+, and so on). If you have a good excuse for being late—and please note that a good excuse doesn't mean 'I forgot about the deadline', or 'I left it to the very last minute and my computer broke down', and so on—then it is important that you get in touch with me ASAP to explain the situation.

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance Policy: Students are in danger of failing if they miss more than two weeks of class. This means that in our course that meets two times a week, a student who misses more than four classes, no matter the reason, is in danger of failing. I reserve the right to deduct 5% points from the final course grade for each absence over the allowed four. So, if you miss six classes (two over the allowed four) then, if your grade for the course would have been an 85 B, it will be lowered to 75 C. **Additionally**, it is important to arrive in class on time (i.e., before I have finished calling roll) and to stay until I dismiss you. Every tardy or early departure will count as an absence unless discussed with me prior to class.

Respect: This class involves significant online discussion of topics on which you and your classmates may have differences of opinion. You may also have opinions that differ from those of the instructors. Please always respect classmates and the professor.

Respect for Diversity: It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. I intend to present materials and activities respectful of diversity including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated, and I hope we will engage in civil and productive discussions on challenging, but important, issues. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious or cultural events, please let me know so that we can decide for you. PPPs-Preferred personal pronouns and your preferred name or nickname will be used and honored in this class.

Academic Honesty: Cheating, plagiarism, violation of test conditions, complicity in dishonest behavior, or other falsification of academic work is a serious breach of Flagler College's expectations and is subject to immediate disciplinary action. Violations will result in a failing grade on the assignment and withdrawal from the course.

Plagiarism is not tolerated in this, or any, course of study. If you'd like a primer on plagiarism, click on this link [Understanding Plagiarism \(Links to an external site.\)](#). Plagiarism is a broad concept defined by actions like 1) a student submitting a paper that takes words, sentences, and paragraphs from another text, computer program, AI, or otherwise where the student did not write and does not cite as a source; 2) a student having another person do the research and/or writing of any portion of the assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write essays; 3) a student submitting the same work for more than one class without asking the instructors. Students who commit ethical violations like these will find themselves subjected to disciplinary action, which may result in the failure of an assignment or the course itself.

If you are unsure that you are citing material correctly, or whether parts of your paper could be labeled as plagiarism, you should contact your professor immediately. If you are found in violation of this code of Academic Honesty, you will fail the assignment, and may face additional penalties (including failing the course or expulsion) from Flagler College.

Campus Safety: We will briefly cover evacuation and safety procedures for the assigned classroom on the first day. Should there be a campus emergency, information will be pushed out on the Live Safe app, which you can download in your phone's app store. You can also view safety and emergency information at emergency.flagler.edu.

Disability: Reasonable accommodations for students eligible for disability services. Contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) to make the appropriate arrangement.

SCHEDULE

Date	Lecture	Readings	Assignments
Week 1 1/18	Introduction & Course Overview	Syllabus	
Week 2 1/23 & 1/25	Introduction to Moral Theory	Ch. 1 Introduction “A Moral Theory Primer” Ch 1.1 “What is a Moral Theory”	
Week 3 1/30 & 2/1	Thursday: Moral Relativism	Ch 2. Timmons “Why I’m not a moral relativist and neither are you”	10 Question Reading Quiz
Week 4 2/6 & 2/8	Tuesday: Moral Relativism cont.	"Watch an AI Learn to Write," NYT article “Talking About LLM,” Shanahan	Film Assignment Due
Week 5 2/13 & 2/15	AI and Philosophy: Prompt Engineering and AI-Tool Introduction		
Week 6 2/20 & 2/22	Tuesday: AI Cont. Sexual Morality	“Why I shouldn’t use ChatGPT to write my paper” Ch. 2 Aquinas “Treatise on Law”	LLM Creative Writing Assignment Due (2/20)
Week 7 2/27 & 2/29	Sexual Morality cont.	Ch 3: Corvino “What’s Wrong With Homosexuality”	LLM Input Reflection Due (2/27)
Week 8 3/5 & 3/7	Sexual Morality cont.	Ch. 2: Kant “The Moral Law” Ch 3: Linda Papadaki “Sexual Objectification”	Reading Quiz
Spring Break			
Week 9 3/19 & 3/21	Choose your own adventure:	Ch.2 Consequentialism Aristotle Virtue and	Midterm Due (3/19)

	Economic Justice, Cloning and Genetic Enhancement OR Abortion	Character Rights-based moral theory	
Week 10 3/26 & 3/28	Abortion	Ch. 9: Hursthouse, Virtue Theory and Abortion	Submit Debate Topic
Week 11 4/2 & 4/4	Abortion	Ch. 9: Marquis, Why Abortion is Immoral	
Week 12 4/9 & 4/11	Abortion	Ch. 2: Locke, Natural Rights Ch 9: Thompson, Defense of Abortion	Reading Quiz
Week 13 4/16 & 4/18	Debate Preparation		
Week 14 4/23 & 4/25	Debate Presentations		
Final Paper Due 4/29-5/2			