

Linn Benton Community College  
**PHL 202 ELEMENTARY ETHICS (3)**

This course is delivered via Moodle

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Office hours: email me for an appointment

### **ON-LINE LEARNING**

In a web course, the teacher is a **resource** in the learning process, while the student takes a more active role. If you are new to on-line learning, be aware you will need to take the initiative to read all documents and materials thoroughly for your own understanding. Self-direction and self-discipline are critical. The weekly learning units, assignments, and forums are ways for me to gauge your understanding of the teaching/learning process in which you are participating.

I am here to help. You may email, post a question in the class forum or come to my office. I will respond to your assignments / questions with feedback. It is **up to you** to determine how much assistance you would like from me. If you have carefully read the course materials and still have a question, contact me or post in the forum right away! Don't delay.

**Moodle** seems to run most smoothly on Mozilla Firefox browser. If you are having delays or glitches in other browsers, I'd suggest switching to Mozilla.

### **STUDENTS SUPPORT**

The below link provides you with a wide variety of support information when it comes to: Child Care, Disability Services, Veterans, Counseling, Advising etc.:

<http://www.linnbenton.edu/current-students/student-support>

The website below is the website designed to help you succeed in your academic career. Please make sure you visit the website and use the resources available to you whenever you need the help of a tutor, advisor or other assistance: <http://www.linnbenton.edu/learning-center>

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course is designed in such a way as to introduce students to the basic ethical theories and moral issues concerning the individual's moral choices as well as the moral progress of a society as a whole. The course consists of three thematic blocks in which we will debate the issues with a meta-ethical approach, normative approach and applied ethics approach. Meta-ethics is an art of ethics concerned with asking general questions about morality: What is morality? Why do we need morality? Where does the evil come from? Is morality relative or absolute? The normative approach will allow us to focus on more direct and detailed answers to such questions as: What is the right thing to do? Why to choose one action over the other? What are my moral obligations to myself, others, our environment etc. We will approach ethics from the pragmatic standpoint as well: applied ethics explores the issues on a more pragmatic platform and is focused on debating the current issues of society such as: the validity of capital punishment, animal rights, abortion or euthanasia, etc. Each section of the course will discuss the ethical issues from a different perspective, which will allow students to learn and understand the problems in a much broader and more detailed way. The course will cover selected topics from each of the mentioned areas of ethical study.

## **MEASURABLE STUDENT'S LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Since the subjects presented may generate many thoughts and ideas, the Moodle discussions will help you exchange your ideas with fellow students, as well as to better understand the concepts, deepen your comprehension of the presented issues, and help you and your fellow students learn from each other. The response papers and short reflection pieces will help assess your comprehension of the discussed matters in written form. Quizzes will allow me to assess your learning progress throughout the weeks.

## **PERFORMANCE BASED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of the class students should be able to:

- Develop and strengthen their personal approach to ethical issues as well as to formulate their own, individual perspectives;
- Think about and critically evaluate the moral issues and be able to formulate valid and sound philosophical arguments as well as assess other's arguments;
- Be able to comprehend and understand the complex philosophical readings
- Write coherent philosophical papers demonstrating the comprehension and evaluation of the discussed theories;
- Become understanding and tolerant of others' worldviews.

In order to successfully complete the course, please make sure to read all of the assigned reading for the week as well as fulfill the additional assignments such as listen to a podcast, watch a brief video or formulate your own idea on paper. Please be responsible for your own learning process – I will do my best to make sure I share my knowledge with you in an accessible and comprehensive manner but, in order for me to know you are actively learning, you need to apply yourself through the entire process.

## **LEARNING RESOURCES**

- Textbooks:  
1/ James & Stuart Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*; ed. 8 2/  
James & Stuart Rachels, *The Right Thing to Do*; ed. 7.
- Texts and articles (available on Moodle);
- Lectures supported by power point presentations;
- Audio, video and other resources available online.

### **Helpful internet links:**

- Guide to Study Philosophy: <http://www.philosophypages.com/sy.htm>
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>
- The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

## READING SCHEDULE

### WEEK I

#### ETHICS AND MORALITY

Reading: 1/ *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*; ch. 1 & ch. 4 2/ *The Right Thing to Do*, Introduction (1. and 2.)  
Weekly Assignment: Listen to: Philosophy Talk „Where does morality come from?“

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### WEEK II

#### CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Reading: 1/ *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*; ch. 2  
2/ Ruth Benedict, "The Case For Moral Relativism"  
(BB) Weekly Assignment: REFLECTION PIECE # 1

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### WEEK III

#### ETHICAL SUBJECTIVISM

Reading: 1/ *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*; ch. 3  
2/ *The Right Thing to Do*, J.L. Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values" (6.)  
Weekly Assignment: QUIZ #1

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### WEEK IV

#### ETHICAL EGOISM

Reading: 1/ *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*; ch. 5  
2/ Ayn Rand "In Defense of Ethical Egoism" (BB)  
Weekly Assignment: Watch: *The Fountainhead (1949)* and REFLECTION PIECE # 2

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### WEEK V

#### SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY

Reading: 1/ *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*; ch. 6  
2/ *The Right Thing to Do*, Thomas Hobbes, "The Social Contract" (BB)  
Weekly Assignment: QUIZ # 2

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### WEEK VI

#### CONSEQUENTIALISM

Reading: 1/ *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*; ch. 7 & ch. 8  
2/ *The Right Thing to Do*, J.S. Mill, "Utilitarianism", (3.)  
Weekly Assignment: Read: Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* and REFLECTION PIECE # 3

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### WEEK VII

#### DEONTOLOGY

Reading: 1/ *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*; ch. 9 & ch. 10  
2/ *The Right Thing to Do*, I. Kant, "The Categorical Imperative", (8.)  
Weekly Assignment: QUIZ # 3

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### WEEK VIII

#### VIRTUE ETHICS

Reading: 1/ *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*; ch. 12,  
2/ *The Right Thing to Do*, Aristotle, "The Virtues", (9.)  
Weekly Assignment: Philosophy Talk "Virtue" and REFLECTION PIECE # 4

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### WEEK IX

#### CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Reading: 1. Ernst van den Haag, "In Defense of the Death Penalty" (BB)  
2. Hugo A. Bedau, "The Case against the Death Penalty" (BB)  
Weekly Assignment: QUIZ # 4

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### WEEK X

#### BIOETHICS

Reading: 1/ *The Right Thing to Do*, J. Rachels "The Morality of Euthanasia" (37.)  
Weekly Assignment: FINAL PROJECT DUE

### **Evaluation of student performance:**

Your learning outcomes will be measured by:

a/	Participation in the blackboard discussions	40%
b/	4 Quizzes	25%
c/	4 Reflection pieces / journal entry	25%
d/	Final Project	10%

#### **a/ Participation in the Moodle Discussions (40%):**

Participation in the weekly discussion is very crucial for this online course. Please think of it as a normal class discussion (but without the pressure of public speaking). Make sure that every week you post at least two quality\* responses to the subject and discuss the subject matter with your fellow students.

Please submit your response by Wednesday and Sundays. Firstly: you need to respond to the given question. Secondly you need to show me that you read what the fellow students have to say by posting a meaningful response or comment to at least two of the fellow students. **Three posts are the minimum, your response to the weekly topic is worth max. 4 points and the replies max. 3 points. The total max. week points are 10.**

\*Quality posts are those which further the discussion, ask relevant questions, and add information to the discussion. Quality posts are not of the kind: "I agree" or "I think it is wrong". Each post will be evaluated weekly according to the below scale.

- 1 point: Minimal response to the module question. No contribution to discussion.
- 2- 3points: Posting responds to the question but does not stimulate further class discussion.
- 4points: Posting fully addresses the module question and stimulates at least one substantial follow-up posting. Add new and interesting information

Topics will be given at the beginning of each week.

If you have any questions concerning the class, please post them in the General Q&A Folder. If you feel like adding more posts to the subject, which is of interest to you, you are welcome to do so. Please do not start new forums without consulting me (this will be my job).

#### **b/ 4 Quizzes (20%)**

Every other week (3-5-7-9) you will be asked to take a test which will consist of 10 questions, each worth 5points. The test will be a partial test covering the information gathered throughout the proceeding 2 or 3 weeks (e.g. on the week 3 you will be tested from the materials covered during the week 1 and 2 and 3).

Tests will be available every other week from Sunday till Sunday Midnight. You are welcome to take them any time suits you best. Remember that they will evaluate your knowledge from all of the covered materials, so before taking the test make sure that you are familiar with the material. Once you enter the test, you will have 15 minutes in order to finish it. You can't retake the test. **Each test is worth 10 points.**

#### **c/ 8 Short Reflection pieces (20%)**

Almost every week, you will need to write one page long (about 400-500 words) reflection piece on the assigned question and post it online under in the appropriate Folder. **Each piece is worth 10 points.**

#### **d/ Final Project (10%)**

For Final Project, you are required to do two things: watch one of the movies depending on what you have found to be the most interesting theory (titles of the movies are given in the Course Information Folder), and write a 4-5 page critical essay which summarizes what you have learned about the particular theory and answer the given question.

## NETIQUETTE & CONFIDENTIALITY

This online course highly values the virtual etiquette rules, especially the mutual respect of each other's views and opinions. Because the issues discussed are of a fragile, sometimes personal nature, I will expect all of you to keep the academic level of communication and refrain from engaging in any sort of offensive behavior and communication.

In your on-line discussions you may choose to share personal anecdotes about your own family. Remember to speak from your own perspective. In addition, please protect the confidentiality of others in your life. Refer to them by first initial only (e.g. "T" rather than Thomas). You may also refer to "my sister", "my uncle", "my neighbor" or "my friend".

## GETTING STARTED

To get started:

- Be sure that your LBCC e-mail address or other gmail address (needed for working in google docs); a graphic / picture and an introduction are all in your profile. If you have never accessed your LBCC e-mail address, [this page will let you know how to go about it.](#)
- Review the syllabus and all other course documents.
- Post questions that you have in the class forum or Q&A section. This is the fastest and most efficient way for you to get an answer. If you have the question, it is likely someone else does too.
- Read posted announcements

As the course progresses, plan to:

- Review weekly announcements, discussions, assignments, and textbook readings.
- **Participate in weekly sessions.**
- Make on-line contact with me and other students through the Forums.
- Submit weekly assignments by Sunday at midnight.
- Complete the Final Project based on what you have learned in class this term.

## SYLLABUS / WORKLOAD

On-line courses take the place of three hours of lectures and outside class assignments required in a traditional face-to-face class. You should expect to devote about 10 hours per week on the on-line interactions and other class assignments.

**On-line classes require that you are able to comprehend concepts and data primarily through reading** so if you struggle with the first week's reading you will need to consider dropping this class. If you want help with reading strategies, schedule a meeting with me and / or visit the LBCC Learning Center. I highly recommend taking notes as you read; it will help immensely when you proceed to work on your Weekly assignments.

## MY ROLE/RESPONSIBILITIES

I will plan to provide feedback on your assignments 7 days of the due date, I will grade your assignments as they come in to me and post points on larger assignments (essays, grids) within 14 days of the assignment due date. If you have questions about the grading, please let me know right away. I will do my best to respond to emails within **24 hours** most week days and occasionally on weekends.

I will enter the **Forums** to "observe" your progress and sometimes join the discussion. The forum is a good way for you to interact with others in the class and share your perspective and questions. You will enhance your learning in this class by processing your thoughts and ideas in writing and with others. This kind of sharing has the potential to move your experience and thinking to a higher level. Make good use of it!