



University of Northern Colorado  
**SYLLABUS for *Ethics in Theory and Practice***  
PHIL 150-006; CRN 10365; GE 4e; LAC 3c, gtP)  
Fall 2009 (T/R 12:30-1:45 in CAND 1260)

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**Office Hours:** T/R 2pm-3pm, and by appointment. Office hours are held simultaneously in my campus office and online via Pronto (a free voice and/or text chat service you can download from the course Blackboard site). I have Pronto turned on whenever I am at my computer and available (typically several times throughout the day); my username is nancy.matchett. Instructions for downloading Pronto can be found on the course overview page of Blackboard. If you choose not to download Pronto or have trouble catching me online, you can also schedule a specific meeting time via email or phone.

**Required materials:**

- ➔ Boss, *Analyzing Moral Issues*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (McGraw Hill, 2008); ISBN# 978-0-07-338663-8.
  - Paperback copies of the 4<sup>th</sup> edition are available at the UNC Bookstore and many other vendors; the third edition is minimally acceptable but contains outdated statistics and is missing some articles that will be required reading so I recommend that you use the fourth if this is at all possible.
  - An electronic version containing only the chapters that are required reading for this course is available at a substantial discount from Primis Online (<http://ebooks.primisonline.com>). Detailed instructions on how to purchase and download a copy of the eBook are available on the Syllabus&Schedule page of Blackboard; if you choose this option, you will need to download a second eText after the class has voted on additional issues to explore, but this option will still be much less expensive.
  - *Note: a copy of the textbook is on 2-hour reserve at Michener Library.*
- ➔ Regular access to Blackboard, which is used to conduct all course activities.
  - ***Because Blackboard messages get sent to your UNC bearmail account, make sure you check that account regularly.***
  - To access the course Blackboard site, go to [bb.unco.edu](http://bb.unco.edu) and log in with the first 8 characters of your bearmail address and your current university password. If you have technical difficulties accessing or using Blackboard, contact IT at 1-4357 or [LMS.support@unco.edu](mailto:LMS.support@unco.edu). If you find a problem with content on the site, please contact me immediately.

**OVERVIEW:** This course will help you develop your capacity for moral reasoning through the philosophical exploration of a variety of ethical issues. Although we will begin by studying the most influential theories of ethics and learning how to analyze and construct moral arguments, the emphasis of the course is on practical ethical decision-making in real world contexts. There are no prerequisites, and no background in philosophy or ethics is expected or assumed. *You should not take this course if you took PHIL 305 prior to 2006 (it is the same course with a different number).*

**Course Format:** Despite our large size, this course is conducted in a seminar format to the fullest extent possible. *This means that it is essential for you to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading material and engage in class discussion.* This does not mean that you are expected to fully comprehend the readings on your own; class meetings are carefully planned to help you develop and more detailed understanding of the material presented in the text, as well as to improve your skills at interpreting, applying, analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing that material. However, the seminar format does mean that you must take responsibility for your first exposure to the material, and that you will be expected to share your initial reactions to and questions with the rest of us. If you are terribly uncomfortable discussing controversial issues, or if you simply prefer lecture-based

instruction, this may not be the best class for you (though if you are interested in the course content please see me to discuss ways in which I can make your learning experience as comfortable as possible). In any case, please remember to bring your thinking brain as well as your body to each class meeting.

**Course Outcomes:** PHIL 150 is designed to help you progress toward the learning goals of the Liberal Arts Core, Area 3 (for more information about the LAC, see [http://www.unco.edu/general\\_education/](http://www.unco.edu/general_education/)). The following table indicates how the specific learning outcomes for this particular course relate to the broader LAC goals:

| Upon <i>successful</i> completion of this course you should be able to   | Associated LAC Area 3c Learning Goals  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Explain why ethics is the subject of philosophical inquiry.</li> <li>➤ Distinguish between descriptive and prescriptive (normative) claims.</li> <li>➤ Locate contemporary moral debates within their historical, social and legal contexts.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ understand the historical frameworks of and interactions between diverse disciplines</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify and explain fundamental ethical concepts.</li> <li>➤ Understand and apply philosophical arguments about both the nature of moral reasoning and the resolution of concrete moral problems.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ understand and apply research techniques from different disciplines</li> </ul>                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recognize the ethical dimension of human choices and actions.</li> <li>➤ Identify and critically examine the main sources of your own and others' ethical views.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ learn how to collect, organize and interpret data using current technology</li> </ul>           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Analyze and evaluate a variety of ethical arguments</li> <li>➤ Articulate and defend philosophically satisfying ethical positions of your own.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ assess the validity of diverse sources of information.</li> </ul>                               |

You are strongly encouraged to communicate with me about how well you think the course is helping you achieve these learning outcomes. To facilitate this, I have created a Blackboard discussion forum entitled "Rant & Rave" that allows you to post *anonymous* feedback about the course at any time (this is the only forum where you can post anonymously).

**GRADING POLICIES:** Your final grade in this course will depend on the assignments listed below. If *at any time* you have *any* questions about what is required of you or why you received a particular grade, you should contact me for clarification. Please do not be shy about this...it is your education that is at stake!

➤ **Weekly Participation (200 points total): 20% of final grade**

You are *expected* to come to class prepared to discuss the reading material assigned for *each* class day. While no points are awarded simply for showing up, I recognize that participation can be difficult in such a large class. Hence, participation points can be earned in a number of ways both in class and by preparing for class.

➔ **Submitting the quiz by noon on the date at which rewrites will be due: 1 point**

For example: you would receive 1 participation point for submitting Quiz 1 by noon on Thursday, 9/3. This helps me ensure that I focus on the most challenging concepts during the last class meeting before the quiz is due, and gives you plenty of time to prepare "rewrites" of any questions you missed. It also ensures that you are keeping up with the reading material (which is the minimum expectation in the course).

➔ **Arriving in class with a prepared question or comment (or emailing a question/comment before noon): 1-2 points**

This helps me focus each lecture on the material that is most challenging and/or intriguing for you. Questions and comments that are particularly well informed by the reading material will earn 2 points, but

any good faith attempt to grapple with the course material will earn at least 1 (even if it is not informed by the reading).

➔ **Participating during class discussion: 1-3 points**

Here again, any good faith attempt to grapple with the course material (even if it is not informed by the reading) will earn at least 1 point. Participation that is well informed will earn 2 points, and in cases, where students make a truly exemplary contributions I have been known to award 3 points.

➔ **Extending class discussion via the online discussion board: 1-2 points**

*Please be advised that the discussion board is not a substitute for attending class.* Posted questions must be relevant to the current week's reading material and/or a class discussion that occurred during the week to earn credit. Most posts will earn 1 point, but posts that extend class discussion or raise questions or comments about the material that were not explicitly covered in class may earn 2. All posts will be answered. *Note: here again I reserve the right to delete any post that is rude or derogatory, though of course I don't expect this to occur.*

➔ **Asking or answering a question during the special Master Class or the Public Lecture given by Dr. Reiman: 1-3 pts**

Dr. Reiman's visit is a unique opportunity and I want to encourage you to take full advantage of it. Most comments will earn 2 points, though comments that aren't obviously relevant to Reiman's topics may earn only 1, and those that are especially good may earn 3.

There are also two regularly scheduled class days when I will be presenting at conferences and will be unable to meet during class. On each of these days you have an online assignment to complete (see the weekly schedule for details). **Please note that failure to complete these assignments will result in a reduction of 1 point from your participation score for that week** (if your overall participation score is already a zero, failure to complete these assignments on time will result in a 10 point reduction to your participation total at the end of the term).

At the end of each week, your total points earned will be multiplied by 10 to determine your score for that week. With rare exceptions, participation scores will be posted each Friday, and if you have any question about your score or believe I have made an error you should notify me immediately so that I can correct or explain your grade. If you don't notify me in a timely fashion, it may be impossible for me to remember your past participation accurately enough to give credit.

If you are doing the math, you have undoubtedly noticed that it is possible to earn much more than the full 200 participation points by submitting all your quizzes early and participating regularly in class discussions! While this is indeed true, please note that you may not earn more than 3 points in any given week or more than 250 points total for the entire course. In other words, you can earn a maximum of 50 points (1/2 of a letter grade) through extra credit. This limit is necessary to ensure that every student who wishes to is able to participate during class meetings, though of course you are welcome to participate more frequently so long as time permits. In addition, since participation is the best way to ensure that you really understand the material and hence to prepare for the other assignments and the final exam, any participation beyond the point limit will still indirectly contribute to your final grade.

Please be advised that excellent participation is the *only* extra credit option available in this course, and that because there are extra points available, **there will be no exceptions to the participation policy** (except in truly exceptional circumstances).

➤ **Ten Reading Quizzes (20 Points each/200 points total): 20% of final grade**

These *open-book* quizzes are designed to help you understand the reading (and encourage you to keep up with it!). They are administered and graded automatically by Blackboard so that you can take them when you think you are ready and receive immediate feedback on how much you understood. Quizzes become available

in the order you take them: Quiz 1 is already available; Quiz 2 will appear once you submit Quiz 1, etc. **Note that failure to submit each quiz by noon on the rewrite deadline dates provided on your syllabus means that you forfeit 10 participation points and deprives you of the opportunity to take advantage of the “Rewrite Option” described below.**

Links to the quizzes can be found on the Reading Quizzes page of Blackboard. *Note that you may access each quiz as many times as you like before submitting it for grading. To save any completed answers without submitting the quiz for grading, click “Save” at the bottom of your screen and log out of Blackboard. Click the “Submit” button ONLY when you are ready to have your quiz graded.* Once you have submitted your answers for grading, that quiz cannot be taken again. You will receive an immediate score report which includes the correct answers.

**Quiz Rewrite Option:** If you are dissatisfied with your score on any quiz *and have submitted it prior to the rewrite deadline indicated on your syllabus*, you may prepare a brief explanation (typed or neatly hand-written) which contains (1) the complete text of any question(s) you missed, (2) a brief statement of what led you to give an incorrect answer (why you thought that answer was correct), and (3) a brief statement of why the correct answer is in fact *better* than the one you originally gave. Assuming your answers are cogent your quiz score will be appropriately revised, but *please note that you must convince me that you understand the reasoning in support of the correct answer in order to get full credit back* (an example is provided on the quiz page of Blackboard). **Rewrites must be submitted by the deadlines provided on the weekly schedule—because they are competely optional they will NOT be accepted late.** You may email your rewrites directly to [schr9384@bears.unco.edu](mailto:schr9384@bears.unco.edu); they may be submitted within the email message or as a separate attachment.

➤ **Two Author Expert Worksheets (50 points each/100 points total): 10% of final grade**

Your first worksheet is due by the end of Part 1 and requires you to analyze and apply the reasoning of one of the authors we read on the abortion issue. Your second worksheet is due by the end of Part 2 and requires you to analyze and apply the reasoning of one of the authors we read on the death penalty issue. Both of these worksheets must be completed online. More detailed guidelines will be available as the first deadline approaches. Barring exceptional circumstances, late worksheets will not be accepted unless this has been approved in advance.

**Second try option:** If you are dissatisfied with your score on either of the required author expert worksheets you may submit a third worksheet on any author we discuss in Part 3. *This is completely optional.* If you choose to take advantage of this option, you must submit your “Second Try” by **Tuesday, 12/1** (because this is optional, there will be absolutely no exceptions to this deadline); I will use the best two scores you received when computing your final grade. *Please note that this is not an opportunity for extra credit, it is an opportunity to increase your learning. Also note that this is not an opportunity to make up for missed work if you fail to submit one of the required worksheets.* You cannot receive three scores for the author expert assignment, and you cannot submit a second try unless you submit your first tries by the deadline. However, you can use a second try to replace a low score if you struggled with the assignment previously (and if your second try ends up worse, you will not be penalized *unless* your second try was plagiarized).

➤ **Final Paper (200 points each): 20% of final grade**

You are required to write a 3-5 page (roughly 1000 word) essay on a topic related to the course. No outside research will be required, but you will be expected to make use of at least two of the authors/articles that were assigned reading during the course (making a reference to Dr. Reiman’s public lecture will also fulfill this requirement). Much more detailed assignment guidelines and a grading rubric

will be distributed as the deadline approaches. Your essay must be submitted to Safe Assignment by noon on Thursday, 12/3 (the last official class day). It is worth 100 points

➤ **CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM (300 POINTS): 30% OF FINAL GRADE**

An open-book final exam will be given at 10:45 am on Wednesday, 12/9. *Please note that this is not our usual meeting day or time!* The exam is open book and questions may cover anything from the required reading assignments and class meetings; it will contain a combination of short identifications (3-5 sentences) and brief essay questions (5-7 paragraphs) and is designed to test your *understanding of basic concepts* and your ability to *apply and evaluate the arguments* studied in this class. More details about the format of the exam and how it will be graded will be made available as the deadline approaches.

**FINAL LETTER GRADES:** There are 1000 total points in the course *and as a general rule*, final letter grades will be assigned as follows:

|             |             |             |            |             |            |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| A: 930-1000 | A-: 900-929 | B+: 870-899 | B: 830-869 | B-: 800-829 | C+: 770-79 |
| C: 730-769  | C-: 700-729 | D+: 670-699 | D: 630-669 | D-: 600-629 | F: 0-599   |

In borderline cases, you are most likely to receive the higher grade if (i) your participation was consistently active and informed by the reading material, and/or (ii) there was a general trend of improvement in the quality of your work throughout the term. For example, a student who earns a total of 925 points but who was earning Bs at the beginning of the term and earned an A on the final exam could still receive a final grade of A for the course, especially if that student's participation score was an A.

**OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY GRADING POLICIES:** If you have questions concerning University grading policies, please visit <http://bulletin.unco.edu/2007-2008Output/2007-2008-09-17hg.html#wp1180746>. For information about academic appeals, see <http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/stuhndbk.htm#acadappeals>.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. The DSS website is [www.unco.edu/dss](http://www.unco.edu/dss) and the office is in Harrison Hall.

**A Final Note on Academic Integrity:** All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community's academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate. For more information, see the Student Handbook on the Dean of Students Website (<http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html>).

- ➔ **Please note that ALL work for this course (including quizzes and the final exam) is open book. Do not be misled by this!** Philosophy is an activity more than a specific body of knowledge, and your final grade will depend on how well you are able to reason with and about the course material by the end of the term. Regular participation in the discussion boards and other Blackboard activities is the best way to develop these skills, and hence is essential to your success in the course.
- ➔ **Remember that you MUST provide a page reference whenever you directly quote or paraphrase from the book or any other source!** There is a difference between *using* the book to develop and substantiate your own ideas (and check your memory), and simply copying someone else's thinking. Make sure you learn to do the former.

- ➔ **Failure to identify a source will result in a failing grade for that assignment or exam answer even if it was an “innocent mistake,”** since this still demonstrates a failure to understand citation requirements. Serious cases will be referred to the Dean of Students and may result in a failing grade for the entire course (even if you have enough other points to pass). Your grade is intended to be an evaluation of *your* thinking, so make sure your understanding and ability to reason with and about the course material shines through!

All that being said, note that you are welcomed – even encouraged – to work together on the chapter reading quizzes and other assignments, since the main point of these activities is to help you understand and make use of the course material. However, you may not simply copy another students’ answers into your own quiz, and you must complete your own writing assignments and take the exam on your own. The basic idea here is that **it is always OK to help yourself or your fellow students learn the material, but it is never OK to do another student’s work or to submit someone else’s work as your own.** Philosophers (lovers of wisdom) always do their own thinking! If you have questions or concerns relating to the honor code, please contact me sooner rather than later.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE:** Bulleted assignments (reading and writing) should be *completed by the day they appear* on the schedule. Unless otherwise indicated, written assignments may be typed or neatly handwritten. Please note that the schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard, so it is your responsibility to stay up to date if you miss a class. Any handouts provided in class will be available for download on Blackboard as well. *It is strongly recommended that you bring your book to class each day.*

### Part One (Weeks 1-9): Moral Theory and the Abortion Debate

| Week | Dates     | Tuesday   | Thursday  |
|------|-----------|---|---|
| 1    | 8/25-8/27 | Overview of course requirements/themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review syllabus and text after class</li> </ul>   | What is ethics anyway? And why is it so #@*! philosophical? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Supplement pp. 1-21 (the remaining pages are recommended)</li> </ul> <i>N.B.: Friday 8/28 is the last day to add a course</i>               |
| 2    | 9/1-9/3   | Universalism vs. Relativism; Prescription (Normativity) vs. Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read AMI pp. 1-17</li> </ul>   | Interpreting and beginning to analyze the US abortion controversy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read AMI, pp. 80-93</li> <li><b>Quiz 1 rewrite deadline (midnight)</b></li> </ul> <i>N.B.: Friday 9/4 is the last day to drop a course</i> |
| 3    | 9/8-9/10  | Morality, Religion and Natural Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read AMI pp. 17-20 and the selection by Aristotle (45ff)</li> </ul>   | Analyzing Noonan’s natural law argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Noonan selection (105ff)</li> <li><b>Quiz 2 rewrite deadline (midnight)</b></li> </ul>  |
| 4    | 9/15-9/17 | Consequentialism (Utilitarianism and Ethical Egoism) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read AMI pp. 20-27 and selections by Rand (50ff), Bentham (53ff) and Mill (55ff)</li> </ul> | Analyzing Marquis’s consequentialist argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Marquis selection (117ff); the selection by Foster (122ff) is also recommended.</li> <li><b>Quiz 3 rewrite deadline (midnight)</b></li> </ul>             |

| Week | Dates       | Tuesday   | Thursday   |
|------|-------------|---|--|
| 5    | 9/22-9/24   | Deontology Part I: Kant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read AMI pp. 28-34 and the selection by Kant (57ff)</li> </ul>   | Deontology Part II: Social Contract Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read the selection by Rawls (62ff)</li> </ul>  |
| 6    | 9/29-10/1   | Analyzing Warren's argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read the selection by Warren (110ff)</li> <li><b>Quiz 4 rewrite deadline (midnight)</b></li> </ul>   | No class meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Self-Assessment Survey and Issue Ranking due at 1:45 pm (complete online)</b></li> </ul>  |
| 7    | 10/6-10/8   | Rights-based Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read AMI pp. 35-40 and the selection by Locke (66ff)</li> </ul>  | Analyzing Hales's argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read the selection by Hales (126ff)</li> <li><b>Quiz 5 rewrite deadline (midnight)</b></li> </ul>  |
| 8    | 10/13-10/15 | Analyzing Thomson's argument, Part I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read the selection by Thomson (94ff)</li> </ul>   | Virtue Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read AMI p. 40-45 and the selections by Noddings (68ff) Confucius (72ff) and Premasiri (75ff); also re-read Aristotle (45ff)</li> </ul> <i>N.B.: Friday 10/16 is the last day to withdraw</i> |
| 9    | 10/20-10/22 | Analyzing Thomson's argument, Part II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-read the selection by Thomson (94ff). Foster (122ff) is also recommended.</li> <li><b>Quiz 6 rewrite deadline (midnight)</b></li> </ul> | No class meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Author Expert Worksheet #1 due at 1:45pm (complete online)</b></li> </ul>   |

### Part Two (Weeks 10-12): Justice and the Death Penalty

| Week | Dates       | Tuesday   | Thursday  |
|------|-------------|---|---|
| 10   | 10/27-10/29 | Interpreting and beginning to analyze the death penalty debate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read AMI pp. 249-63</li> </ul>  | Analyzing van den Haag's and Morris's arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read selections by van den Haag (264ff) and Morris (275ff).</li> </ul> |
| 11   | 11/3-11/5   | Analyzing Bedau's and Prejean's arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read selections by Bedau (275ff) and Prejean (293ff)</li> <li><b>Quiz 7 rewrite deadline (midnight)</b></li> </ul> | Analyzing Pojman's argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Chapter 1 of <i>The Death Penalty For and Against</i> (electronic reserve)</li> </ul> |

| Week | Dates       | Tuesday   | Thursday  |
|------|-------------|---|---|
| 12   | 11/10-11/12 | Analyzing Reiman's arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read AMI selection by Reiman (287ff) OR Chapter 2 of <i>The Death Penalty For and Against</i> (electronic reserve).</li> <li>• <b>Quiz 8 rewrite deadline (midnight)</b></li> </ul> | Master Class led by Jeffrey Reiman, William Fraser McDowell professor of philosophy at American University, and UNC Life of the Mind Visiting Scholar. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapters 3 and 4 of <i>The Death Penalty For and Against</i> (electronic reserve)</li> <li>• <b>Author Expert Worksheet #2 due by noon (complete online)</b></li> </ul> <i>N.B.: Friday 11/13 is the last day for a complete schedule withdrawal</i> |

### Part Three (Weeks 13-15): Selected Issue(s)

The final issue(s) to be discussed will be determined by student input, and a detailed schedule for Part Three will then be distributed. However, you may want to note the following deadlines now (they will not change)

- Quiz 9 rewrite deadline will be Thursday, 11/19
- There is no class on Thursday, 11/26 (Thanksgiving day)
- Quiz 10 rewrite deadline (and author expert "Second Try" deadline) will be Tuesday, 12/1
- Final papers will be due by noon on Thursday, 12/3
- The final exam will be given at 10:45 am on Wednesday, 12/9. *Please note that this is not our usual meeting day or time!* Final exams are scheduled by the registrar's office and cannot be modified. Please arrange your schedules accordingly.