

## Introduction to Ethics

PHIL 2306-01  
Spring 2005

Mark Bernier  
Academic O-3  
Conference hours: M-F 8:10 - 9:25 and by appointment

MWF 10:00 – 10:50 a.m.  
Academic 1

www.blinn.edu/humanities  
mbernier@blinn.edu  
979 830 4412

### Course Description

Philosophy 2306: Introduction to Ethics surveys basic problems and perspectives in ethics and leads to a critical analysis and thence to an understanding and toward an evaluation of contemporary moral concerns including abortion, capital punishment, poverty, affirmative action, animal rights, the environment, and rights and responsibilities. Three semester hours credit. (adapted from the [Bulletin of Blinn College 2004-2005](#) 114)

### Course Objectives and Student Learning Objectives

Philosophy 2306 increases the students' awareness of contemporary social issues through the investigation and discussion of the moral perspectives from which such issues can be addressed. The course should help students develop both critical reasoning skills and communications skills. Specifically, students will become familiar with and work toward an understanding of

- ethics as a field of inquiry within the general scope of philosophy;
- meta-ethical theories including ethical relativism and ethical absolutism;
- normative theories including virtue ethics, Kantianism, and Utilitarianism;

thus ensuring informed critical analysis of contemporary social issues.

### Required Texts

Rosenstand, Nina. [The Moral of the Story: An Introduction to Ethics](#). 4th ed. Boston: McGraw, 2003.  
Standard college-level dictionary.

### Recommended Handbook

Fowler, H. Ramsey, and Jane E. Aaron [The Little, Brown Handbook](#). 9th ed. New York: Longman, 2004. (8th ed. suffices)

### Course Requirements

The student is required to bring the Rosenstand--and he or she should bring a college-level dictionary--to every class meeting.

The student is required to bring highlighter(s), pen or pencil, paper, etc. to every class meeting.

The student is required to annotate the textbook [while preparing for class](#).

The student will compose and submit

- seven two-page (absolute minimum) typed, double-spaced (MLA-format) papers; once every two weeks, and
- one typed (MLA-format) six-page project (instructor's approval required).

The student will complete three major examinations (essay and objective) and a final examination (essay and course inventory).

The student should prepare himself or herself for unannounced quizzes.

**NB:** The researched explication must reflect a sincere effort in order for the student to earn credit for the course.

### Grade Determination

unannounced quizzes and participation	10%
three major examinations	30%
seven biweekly essays: due by Friday of the week	35%
documented project (submit two copies)	10%
final examination (required to earn credit)	15%

### Important Dates: Tentative

14 February	major examination
23 March	major examination
27 April	major examination
12 May (9:00 a.m.)	researched project due
5 May	final examination

**All written assignments must be submitted in a timely fashion for the student to earn credit for the course. Biweekly essays not submitted in a timely fashion will earn a zero. Neither essays nor the researched explication will be accepted via e-mail.**

First biweekly essay submitted by	28 January	Fifth biweekly essay submitted by	24 March
Second biweekly essay submitted by	11 February	Sixth biweekly essay submitted by	8 April
Third biweekly essay submitted by	25 February	Researched explication submitted by	22 April
Fourth biweekly essay submitted by	11 March	Seventh biweekly essay submitted by	6 May

The student should retain for his or her own folder photocopies of all essays, etc. submitted.

## Due Dates

No late work is accepted without severe penalty unless the student and the instructor agree on a different due date well in advance of the original due date. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments are due at the beginning of the class. Severe penalty means one letter grade off for each calendar day the assignment is late.

## Grading Criteria

The **A** paper represents original outstanding work; it shows careful thought, fresh insights, and stylistic maturity. Having practically no mechanical errors to distract the reader, it is free of jargon, clichés, and other empty language. Word choice is marked by a high degree of precision and a varied, advanced vocabulary; sentences are structured in a manner that creates interest and rhetorical power. The tone is appropriate for the designated audience. The reader moves through the **A** paper effortlessly because of its effective transitions, lucid organization, and thorough, purposeful development. Having finished, the reader feels that he has learned something, that he has received some unexpected and welcome illumination. In the **A** paper all research material is correctly documented, and formatting adheres to current standards of the Modern Language Association. Directly quoted passages are gracefully integrated into the text with appropriate attribution.

The **B** paper is significantly more than competent. Besides being almost free of mechanical errors, the **B** paper delivers substantial information and makes cogent, fresh arguments—that is, in both quality and interest-value. Its specific points are logically ordered, well developed, and supported, and unified around a clear organizing principle that is apparent early in the paper. The **B** paper's relatively few syntactic, usage, and mechanical errors do not seriously distract the reader, but the language, while neither trite nor bureaucratic, probably lacks the candor and the precision of the most memorable writing. Its transitions, while appropriate, emphasize the logical turnings of the writer's mind, making the reader occasionally more aware of the efforts taken to unify and control an idea than of the idea itself. In the **B** paper all research material is correctly documented, and formatting adheres to current standards of the Modern Language Association. Directly quoted passages are integrated into the text with appropriate attribution.

The **C** paper represents average college-level work. It is a competent expression of ordinary thoughts in ordinary language; its **content/focus** is general, commonplace, or trivial, or not adequately related to the assignment; its **development** is vague, incomplete, or inconsistent; its **organization** lacks adequate or appropriate transitions or relation of ideas. The **C** paper, in addition to meeting all the requirements of the assignment, exhibits a **writing style** that is basically correct and is marred by a relatively few syntactic, usage, and mechanical errors. By relying on generalities rather than precise, illustrative details, the writer of a **C** paper leaves the reader feeling not much better informed than when the reader first picked up the essay. In the **C** paper all research material is correctly documented, and formatting adheres to current standards of the Modern Language Association. Directly quoted passages are integrated into the text with appropriate attribution.

The **D** paper has only skeletal development and organization. Its serious mechanical errors, together with the awkwardness and ambiguity of its sentence structure, make the reader feel slighted, as if his time and attention were of little concern to the writer.

**NB:** A paper exhibiting major weaknesses in any specific area—**content, development, organization, grammar and mechanics, documentation conventions, writing style**—or, indeed, a failure to address the assignment is usually considered, at best, a **D** paper.

As writing that falls below minimal standards for college-level literacy, the **F** paper shows lack of thought and purpose, little or no organization, numerous mechanical errors, and a garbled or immature style. Sometimes inadequacy in one area is enough to fail a paper—the writer, for instance, may not have control of punctuation, producing fragments or comma splices in almost every paragraph; however, serious weaknesses usually occur in several areas of concern.

A paper should earn the grade **zero** if it contains plagiarized content in any form, including the failure to acknowledge the source of any borrowed material (summarized, paraphrased, and directly quoted) and unmarked exact wording (directly quoted from either a primary or a secondary source), whether a specific well-chosen word, a phrase (two or more words), a clause, or full sentence(s). A paper can earn a **zero** if it does not address the assigned topic or if directions have been either ignored or not followed.

Editing symbols and chapter-section references used in the marking of student papers are found on the end sheets in [The Little, Brown Handbook](#).

The following common, inexcusable errors, absent from **A** and **B** papers, occur infrequently in **C** papers and guarantee, when they occur with any frequency, the paper's earning a **D** at best.

agr; s-v; p-a	= error in subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement	Chapter 8a	-	8b
ap	= apostrophe needed or misused	23a	-	23d
cs	= comma splice	11a	-	11b
frag	= sentence fragment	10a	-	10d
fs; r-o; ro	= fused sentence; run-on sentence	11c	and	21; 22
ref	= error in pronoun reference and/or shift, including the indefinite you	12a	-	12f
sp	= misspelled word	34		
vb	= error in verb form or verb tense	7a	-	7f
ww	= wrong word	31b		
wc	= word choice: perhaps a synonym study, not a thesaurus, is the appropriate resource!			
SLN	= see lecture notes			

### **Class Attendance: Class Attendance Is Expected**

Students are expected to attend all classes. An accurate record of each student's attendance is kept by each instructor. It is the student's responsibility to officially drop a class he or she is no longer attending. To officially drop a class the student must obtain [a] class withdrawal form from an admissions office, complete the withdrawal form, secure the required signatures, and return the completed form to an admissions office. A student who is subject to the Success Initiative rules and who acquires the equivalent of two weeks of absences in a required developmental course(s) will be withdrawn from the course and not allowed to attend class. Likewise, a student who is NOT subject to the Success Initiative rules and who acquires the equivalent of two weeks of absences in a developmental course will be withdrawn from the course. An appeals process is in place for these students. Students are not assessed absences when representing Blinn College but are responsible for work missed. Class days missed due to inclement weather will be made up as appropriate. A student on scholastic or disciplinary probation should not have any unexcused absences. (Bulletin of Blinn College, 2004-2005 60)

**NB:** The instructor is not responsible for ensuring that the student who elects not to attend class and who chooses not to complete a Change of Registration Card is dropped from this course. It is the student's responsibility to officially drop the class. The student should check the academic calendar for Last Day to Drop dates. The student accruing six hours of absences during the course of a long or short academic term is well on the way to ensuring his or her failing the course.

**NB:** This instructor views arriving to class late and, especially, leaving class before it is dismissed inexcusable. A student should not expect to successfully complete the course if he or she chooses not to attend class. Arriving late is grossly inconsiderate and inappropriate. Repeated tardiness can negatively affect a student's performance in this class. Leaving the room before class is dismissed—except in extremely dire circumstances—is also grossly inconsiderate and inappropriate and can negatively affect a student's performance in this class.

Conference [office] hours are reserved for students who come to class on a very regular basis: These students are encouraged to seek clarification or to pursue a line of questioning stemming from either classroom discussion or individual reading. If, however, the student's need for a conference is more along the lines of academic progress, the student—no matter how many classes he or she might have missed—should come by to discuss viable options.

### **Make-Up Policy**

The student is responsible for all assignments, including those made during any class meeting from which the student has absented him- or herself. Any clarification of directions, etc. for any assigned work will take place during the instructor's conference hours. All assigned work is due before or on the designated day and time. Unless indicated otherwise, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day designated. If a student is unable to attend class on the day that an assignment is due, he or she should nevertheless ensure that the instructor receives the assignment by the designated time. In-class essays and daily quizzes can be made up only if the student's absence is excused in accordance with Blinn attendance policy. No late work is accepted without severe penalty unless the student and the instructor agree on a different due date well in advance of the original due date. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments are due at the beginning of the class. Severe penalty means one letter grade off for each calendar day the assignment is late.

### **Manuscript Form**

All papers should be written in dark ink or typed (dark ribbon, etc.) on standard-size paper—one side only—in accordance with the MLA format as outlined in the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 5th or 6th edition. (See LBH and hand-outs.) Handwritten papers must exhibit an understanding of the MLA format, including adherence to margin requirements. All bibliographies and works-cited pages, as well as the researched essays, must be typed. Papers must be argued from the third-person and in the literary present tense. All essays and papers submitted must have a title that is both appropriate and adequate. Philosophy 2306 is not a course in creative writing: Be certain that the paper's title indicates fully the paper's contents.

----- **No staples; use a paper clip. Do not align right.** -----

### **Scholastic Dishonesty**

Pride of accomplishment is the boon of any academic achievement. It should be the goal of each student to put forth the best effort possible for each assignment; progression toward better writing is the reward of diligent application to the tasks assigned. The student who demonstrates a lack of integrity by seeking academic gain (good grades, scholarships, etc.) through avenues that circumvent the rigors and rewards of truthful scholarship will be, at some point, thwarted and ill-prepared to work within an honest system.

College policy maintains that it is "the responsibility of instructors to maintain scholastic integrity at Blinn College by refusing to tolerate any form of scholastic dishonesty. [. . .] If there is compelling evidence that a student is involved in cheating or plagiarism, the instructor should assume responsibility and address the infraction" (Blinn College Student Handbook, 2004-2005 31).

Any degree of plagiarism appearing in any assignment submitted by the student will earn that student a zero for that assignment. Egregious plagiarism may result in the student's failing the course. The Blinn College Student Handbook states that the following penalty "may be imposed by the instructor and division chairman: an appropriate grade penalty ranging from a grade of zero on the assignment/examination up to and including the imposition of an F for the entire course [for egregious plagiarism]" (26). For clarification of the concept, see Joseph Gibaldi's MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6th edition, which is available for in-library use at the circulation desk, and/or The Little, Brown Handbook 8e, chapter 44 or 9e, chapter 47. And because the numerical equivalent for an F earned for an honest paper is 50, it is better to submit a poor paper than to submit a plagiarized paper.

Blinn Board Policy FLB (Local) defines plagiarism as the "appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own written work." All students should be aware of the several different types--not levels--of plagiarism, including the failure to properly indicate directly quoted passages, phrasings, or significant wordings as such by the proper use of quotation marks, as well as other failures, including misattribution of cited material, as early as possible in the semester. Students should also be made aware that collusion is considered to be as egregious an offense as plagiarism is.

Blinn Board Policy FLB (Local) defines collusion as the "unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of course requirements."

### **ADA Policy**

"[S]ervices and reasonable accommodations are available to students with documented disabilities. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) on the Brenham campus is located in [r]oom 104 of the Administration Building 979 830 4157." The ODS provides "direct services to students with documented disabilities and [makes] appropriate referrals to other resources on and off campus. The ODS promotes awareness of the special needs and abilities of students with disabilities through educational events and outreach activities" (Blinn College Student Handbook, 2004-2005 46).

### **Decorum / Civility Statement / Civility Notification Statement**

"Members of the Blinn College community, which includes faculty, staff, and students, are expected to act honestly and responsibly in all aspects of campus life. Blinn College holds all members accountable for their actions and words. Therefore, all members should commit themselves to behav[ing] in a manner that recognizes personal respect and demonstrates concern for the personal dignity, rights, and freedoms of every member of the College community, including respect for College property and the physical and intellectual property of others" (Office of Academic Affairs).

"If a student is asked to leave the classroom because of uncivil behavior, the student may not return to that class until he or she arranges a conference with the instructor; it is the student's responsibility to arrange for this conference" (Office of Academic Affairs).

### **Participation**

Students are encouraged, indeed expected, to actively engage the subject matter--an engagement that reflects the student's interest in academics and his or her willingness to join in productive discussion.

### **Other Considerations**

Because the nature of the course and the nature of the presentation both invite classroom discussion, any potential impediment to the free flow of ideas cannot be allowed; therefore, **no mechanical recording of class meetings is allowed**. See instructor.

The Internet cannot be considered a final, authoritative source of information; therefore, the Internet and information obtained therefrom should not contribute to any aspect of the research for any paper associated with this course unless it has been cleared with the instructor well beforehand.

The student will be held responsible for all assignments, even reading assignments not actually discussed during scheduled class meetings. Class meetings are designed to further understanding; therefore, class time will be spent exploring—not explaining—the assigned reading. In short, the student must come to class prepared to discuss any and all aspects of the assigned reading.

The student should bring to the classroom setting notebook paper, highlighter(s), functioning pen, dictionary, the Solomon textbook, and all handouts. The student should not at any time rely on borrowing; borrowing will be construed as a sign of ill preparedness, which, in turn, affects the student's participation grade.

In an effort to enhance student engagement on the Brenham campus, **The Writing Room** provides, free of charge, a supportive, non-directive environment for all students at any stage of the writing process. Located in room 14 of the Academic Building, The Writing Room, while not providing proofreading or editing services, does provide activities for idea invention, computers and computer programs that simplify the task of composing, reference books to help students find the answers to their questions, and English consultants to offer feedback to students as they learn to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of their own writing. While computers in The Writing Room are available on a walk-in basis, students are encouraged to make appointments in advance to meet with Writing Room consultants.

Cell phones and beepers/pagers must be disengaged while the student is in the Blinn College Library or any classroom or lab.

Consumption of food and drinks is not allowed in Blinn College's library, classrooms, and labs.

### **Additional Notes**

**NB: The student is responsible for understanding the vocabulary found in the readings, the very words (familiar and unfamiliar to the student) that constitute the philosophical concepts and arguments. The student should annotate his or her textbook care-fully. Dates listed are dates by which the assigned reading should have been read.**

**Tentative Course Outline and Schedule of Readings**  
**Spring 2005**

W	19 January	introductions and course inventory	
F	21 January	Rosenstand, chapter 1: metaethics	3-24
M	24 January	Rosenstand, chapter 2: the moral of the story	25-64
W	26 January	Rosenstand, chapter 2: the narratives	64-73
F	28 January	Rosenstand, chapter 2: the narratives	73-84; handout
M	31 January	Rosenstand, chapter 3: ethical relativism	87-103
W	2 February	Rosenstand, chapter 3: refuting ethical relativism	103-14; handout
F	4 February	Rosenstand, chapter 3: the narratives	114-28
M	7 February	Rosenstand, chapter 4: psychological egoism; ethical egoism	129-49
W	9 February	Rosenstand, chapter 4: altruism	149-56
F	11 February	Rosenstand, chapter 4: the narratives	156-74
M	14 February	major examination	
W	16 February	Rosenstand, chapter 5: Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism	175-88
F	18 February	Rosenstand, chapter 5: John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism	188-203
M	21 February	Rosenstand, chapter 5: the narratives	203-12
W	23 February	Rosenstand, chapter 5: the narratives	213-18
F	25 February	Rosenstand, chapter 6: Kant's deontology	219-40
M	28 February	Rosenstand, chapter 6: the narratives	240-53
W	2 March	Rosenstand, chapter 7: personhood	255-81; handout
F	4 March	Rosenstand, chapter 7: distributive justice	281-88; handout
M	7 March	Rosenstand, chapter 7: criminal justice	288-95; handout
W	9 March	Rosenstand, chapter 7: the narratives	296-307
F	11 March	Rosenstand, chapter 7: the narratives	307-20
M	21 March	Rosenstand, chapter 7: summation	handout
W	23 March	major examination	
M	28 March	Rosenstand, chapter 8: Socrates and the good life	323-45
W	30 March	Rosenstand, chapter 8: Plato and the good life	323-45; handout
F	1 April	Rosenstand, chapter 8: the narratives	345-52
M	4 April	Rosenstand, chapter 8: the narratives	352-63
W	6 April	Rosenstand, chapter 9: Aristotle's virtue	365-82
F	8 April	Rosenstand, chapter 9: Aquinas's good	382-83; handout
M	11 April	Rosenstand, chapter 9: the narratives	385-400
W	13 April	Rosenstand, chapter 10: contemporary ethics	401-13
F	15 April	Rosenstand, chapter 10: the quest for authenticity	413-34
M	18 April	Rosenstand, chapter 10: the narratives	435-44
W	20 April	Rosenstand, chapter 11: feminist theory	445-74
M	25 April	Rosenstand, chapter 11: the narratives	474-96
W	27 April	major examination	
F	29 April	Rosenstand, chapter 12: compassion and gratitude	497-525
M	2 May	reports	
W	4 May	reports / project due 12 May by 9:00 a.m.	
R	5 May	final examination: 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	674- 94