

# Phil 2 **ethics**

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CSU Sacramento, Fall 2025

**instructor:** jonathan chen | [www.jonsmyth.com](http://www.jonsmyth.com)

**contact:** jonathan.chen@csus.edu

**office hours:** Monday | 8:50 – 9:35pm | Mendocino Hall 3036

**class meets:** 6:00 – 8:50pm | Mendocino Hall 2009

**class section:** section 10, course #86073

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## the **syllabus short version**

### ➤ **What book do I need?**

Steven M. Cahn, *Exploring Ethics: An Introductory Anthology*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (Oxford University Press, 2020)

### ➤ **Where can I find the readings and assignments for each week?**

You can find them under 'IMPORTANT: Course Schedule' in the 'Start Here / Orientation' Module on Canvas.

### ➤ **Can I submit late work?**

Yes, but don't do it. You'll get a ton of points taken off. It's not worth it. If you're curious about penalties for tardiness, scroll down to the 'Late Assignments' section of the syllabus.

### ➤ **What happens if I plagiarize or cheat?**

You fail the *entire* class and you get reported. For more information, scroll down to 'Academic Honesty.'



# the syllabus **long** version

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### 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

This course satisfies **GE Area C2**: Introduction to the Humanities.

### Learning Objectives & 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, discussions, and a final 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.

### Required Text

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Steven M. Cahn, *Exploring Ethics: An Introductory Anthology*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (Oxford University Press, 2020)

*Note #1: An E-Book version should also be available to rent for cheaper.*

*Note #2: You can also purchase the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, though a couple of the articles might be missing and the page numbers will be off.*

### Accommodations

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1. Services to Students with Disability (SSWD)  
 "Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class, please immediately contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided."  
<https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/>
2. Student Health and Counseling Services  
 "Your physical and mental health are important to your success as a college student. Student Health and Counseling Services (SHCS) in The WELL offers medical, counseling, and wellness services to help you get and stay healthy during your time at Sac State. SHCS offers: Primary Care medical services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, transgender care, and immunizations; urgent care for acute illness, injuries, and urgent counseling needs; pharmacy for prescriptions and over-the-counter products; mental health counseling, including individual

sessions, group counseling, support groups, mindfulness training, and peer counseling; athletic training for sports injury rehabilitation; wellness services, including nutrition counseling, peer-led health education and wellness workshops, and free safer sex supplies; violence and sexual assault support services. Most services are covered by the Health Services fee and available at no additional cost.”

<https://www.csus.edu/student-life/health-counseling/>

### 3. Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support (CARES)

“If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away. The CARES office provides case management support for any enrolled student.

<https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/crisis-assistance-resource-education-support/>

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & REQUIREMENTS

### Canvas & Announcements

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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 (except weekends). If I do not respond within that time, assume I did not receive your e-mail and resend it.

### Reading

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All of the assigned reading should be done *before* class. The readings will often be *very challenging*, though reading through them two or three more times will help to clarify the material.

### Quizzes

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#### *Reading Quizzes*

There will be fourteen online reading quizzes. I will drop the lowest four quiz scores. These quizzes will be available on *Canvas* as multiple choice and/or true/false questions, and they must be taken before you can access the rest of the class material for that week.

#### *Lecture Quizzes*

There will be five in-class closed-book lecture quizzes for this class. You will be given a study guide before each quiz.

### Online Discussions

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I will be facilitating mandatory discussion forums on *Canvas*. There will be two kinds: (1) short discussions and (2) critical discussions. Short discussions are merely an opportunity to share your thoughts about a topic; no justification is required. Critical discussions, on the other hand, are an opportunity to critically assess the arguments of the authors and your peers and determine the persuasiveness of their argument.

You can find a detailed account of how the online discussions work on *Canvas*.

### Final Paper

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You will be assigned a final 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.

Your paper is due on **December 15<sup>th</sup> (Monday)** at 11:59pm.

Due to the sheer volume of work, I will only look over paper drafts during my office hours (or by appointment before November 24<sup>th</sup>) I am happy and willing to look over as many drafts as necessary.

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.

*Note: Online tutoring is currently available.*

### Assignments and Grading

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Who is You?	10 pts	1%
Lecture Quizzes (4)	360 pts	36%
Reading Quizzes (9)	90 pts	9%
Short Discussions (10)	100 pts	10%
Critical Discussions (3)	240 pts	24%
Final Paper	200 pts	20%
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<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 pts</b>	<b>100%</b>

**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:

- ✓ -2 points for each 24-hour period that the **'Who is You?'** assignment is submitted late.
- ✓ -2 points for each 24-hour period that a **short discussion** post is submitted late.
- ✓ -3 points for each 24-hour period that a **reading quiz** is submitted late.
- ✓ -6 points for each 24-hour period that a **lecture quiz** is taken late.
- ✓ -5 points for each 24-hour period that a **critical discussion** post is submitted late. After 48 hours, you can no longer make up the discussion post.
- ✓ -50 points for each 24-hour period that your **final paper** is submitted late.

For instance, if you submit an online short discussion post 3 hours after the due date, you will be penalized -2 points. If you submit it 25 hours after the due date, you will be penalized -4 points.

\*Relevant documents can excuse tardy work. These documents must describe an injury or illness, death in the family, military service, or athletic responsibilities.

Note: When submitting your assignments 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.”

In addition to using TurnItIn, this course may use rapidly evolving technology to help detect when student writing has been assisted by AI technology (like Chat GPT). Improper use of AI technology can be grounds for a charge of plagiarism or other academic misconduct, leading to academic penalties (like failing a course) and administrative penalties (like expulsion from the university), regardless of when the academic misconduct is discovered.

If you are still unsure of what counts as plagiarism, please speak with me or read Sacramento State’s [Academic Honesty Policy](#).

### **Course Schedule**

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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.

The course schedule is available on Canvas or via [www.jonsmyth.com/teaching](http://www.jonsmyth.com/teaching).