The ultimate purpose in studying ethics is not as it is in other inquiries, the attainment of theoretical knowledge; we are not conducting this inquiry in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good, else there would be no advantage in studying it.

-Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

**Texts:** Ethics - Oliver Johnson 10th edition  
You Decide, Current Debates in Contemporary Moral Problems - Bruce N. Waller

**Reading Assignments:**

I. Ethical Theories - Johnson 1-11  
   A. Hedonism  
      Epicurus: Enjoying Peace of Mind - Johnson 88-92  
      The Utilitarians: The Greatest Happiness for the Greatest Number - Johnson 207-240  
      Jeremy Bentham - 207-215  
      John Stuart Mill - 215-240  
      Illegal Drugs - Waller 78-100  
   B. Formalism - Johnson 131-135  
      Kant: Willing Universal Principles - Johnson 182-205  
      Christianity: Obeying Divine Commands - Johnson 105-130  
      St. Augustine - 105-110  
      St. Thomas Aquinus - 111-130  
      Homosexual Sex Moral or Immoral - Waller 122-139  
   C. Rationalism  
      Stoicisim: Equanimity Even in the Face of Catastrophe - Johnson 93-104  
      Plato: The Righteous Rule of Reason - Johnson 16-59  
      Socrates: Euthyphro - Johnson 17-26  
      Plato: The Republic - Johnson 27-59  
      Performance Enhancing Drugs - Waller 102-121  
   D. Classic Asian Philosophies as Guides to Life - Handout  
      Confucius - 59  
      Mencius - 77  
      The Bhagavad-Gita - 42

II. Practical Applications  
   A. Famine, Affluence and Morality - handout  
      Lifeboat Ethics - Harden  
      The Solution to World Poverty - Singer  
      Some Moral Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid - Anderson  
      The Food-Aid Racket - Maren
El Camino College Course Outline Objectives

1. Analyze and apply various sources of moral standards to specific moral problems.
2. Explain the difficulties of basing moral standards on supernaturalism, utility, reason, or egoism.
3. Determine whether moral values are relative or universal.
4. Analyze the concept of justice and determine whether it is defined by the laws of society or, if justice is established by universal standards.
5. Distinguish teleological from deontological ethical theories by applying them to current issues in the media.
6. Compare the solutions to contemporary moral dilemmas resulting from the application of a teleological (consequentialist) versus a deontological (formalism) approach in areas such as euthanasia and physician assisted suicide.
7. Evaluate ethical theories that either preclude or allow for free choice such as psychological Hedonism and ethics based on supernaturalism.
8. Differentiate varying notions of freedom and their impact on moral responsibility.
9. Discuss the relationship between ethical theory and metaphysics.
10. Examine the relationships among the concepts of freedom, responsibility, and theories of punishment. II. Describe the different forms of Hedonism and relate them to contemporary moral problems.
11. Trace the development of ethical theory from the Greeks to contemporary moral theory and apply these theories to various contemporary moral dilemmas.
12. Differentiate among various metaethical theories.

SLO

When presented with various kinds of written and/or public debates on issues of value, students will be able to identify the type of ethical theory being discussed and be able to apply it as a logical evaluation tool in analyzing the issues.

Examinations

There will be three in-class essay exams, one following each of the Sections A, B, and C under Part I of the reading assignments. These essay exams will be valued at 100 points. There will be one take home exam in Part II of the reading assignments. The take home exam will be valued at 100 points and call for you to take a position on the issues under consideration and defend them using the assigned course materials.
Grading Policy

In grading the essay, exams, and semester paper I will award points for: a) presenting and defining the philosophical concepts found in the ethical theories and assigned articles; b) the ability to relate those concepts to contemporary issues; c) utilize those concepts in formulating your position and; d) how well you are able to critically evaluate the philosophical positions we will explore. The semester grade will be based upon the number of points you have accumulated throughout the semester. The grades for each of the essay exams and take home exam will be graded as follows:

100-90=A  89-80=B  79-60=C  59-50=D

Quizzes

Throughout the semester unannounced writing assignments will be given. These writing assignments will be graded and recorded. If you are absent when these assignments are given you will not be permitted to make them up or turn them in late.

Final Exam

The first day of the semester you will be required to analyze a moral dilemma I will give you. I will collect them and return them to you as your final exam. The final exam will consist of a reanalysis of what you wrote on the first day based upon what you have learned during the semester.

Cell Phones/Pagers

These devices are not permitted in class. Any phone calls or text messages (including instant messaging, and paging) sent or received during class will result in 20 points taken off your final grade for the course. Each recurrence will result in a subtraction of 20 points.

At the end of the semester you will have an understanding of the major ethical theories of Western Tradition and the ability to apply them to contemporary moral problems.