

Course Syllabus
Engineering Ethics
PHIL 342, Fall, 2006

Instructor: Matt Zwolinski

Office Hours:

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Required Books:

C.E. Harris, M.S. Pritchard, & M.J. Rabins, *Engineering Ethics: Concepts and Cases*, 3rd ed. (Wadsworth 2004) (Abbreviated below as *EE*)

Articles on reserve at Copely Library. (These are also available electronically, through the library's course reserve website.)

Content:

Any activity to which you are considering devoting at least 8 hours a (week)day for the next 30+ years should be the subject of some careful thought. This is especially true when that activity has the potential to harm or benefit others. What does it take to be a good engineer? And how does this fit in with being a good person? And what does morality have to do with any of this?

There are two immediate aims of this course. The first aim is to enable you to reason critically and philosophically about ethical issues pertaining to engineering. Attention will be given to forming and evaluating rigorous arguments as well as to the clarification of concepts. For instance, what does it mean to say that a particular business practice is 'fair' or 'unfair'? Is saying that a given practice is unfair enough to show that it ought to be prohibited? Why or why not?

The second aim is to enable you to express your thoughts on these ideas clearly. In-class writing assignments will make up a significant portion of your grade, and it is important that you be able to (1) give a clear explanation of the views you are trying to discuss, and (2) provide logically sound arguments for your own reasoned opinion on the matter. The essence of philosophic writing is thoroughness and precision. These are skills that will help you in any career.

As with any course on ethics, however, the ultimate goal of this course is to help you lead more thoughtful, reflective and worthwhile lives. The questions we study are all ones I find theoretically interesting, but I think the even greater value lies in their practical interest. These are real-world issues, and some of the most important and perennial ones around. Take it personally!

Course Requirements:

This class requires a *lot* of reading. It is vital to your success that you not fall behind. Philosophy is difficult reading if you haven't mastered the skill, and the readings will probably take longer than you are used to. Nevertheless, this is an **upper division philosophy class**. You should expect to be challenged.

Your grade will be determined as follows. Dates for all midterms and quizzes are indicated on the course schedule below. Unless otherwise noted, exams will take place on the last day of the week during which they are scheduled.

- **Midterms:** The two exams will be taken in class and they will consist of a series of short essay questions. The exams each will be worth 25% of your grade.
- **Quizzes:** There will be five in-class quizzes given, each one lasting 10-15 minutes. Each quiz will cover the material since the previous quiz (or since the beginning of the term, in the case of the first quiz), *and may also include the material assigned for the day the quiz is given*. Your overall score for your quizzes will be the average of your five best quiz scores. Quizzes determine 15% of your final grade.
- **Final Exam:** The final exam will be a two-hour, in-class, essay-exam, covering only material covered since the last exam. The university has scheduled your exam for . The exam cannot be taken early or late. The final exam will count for 35% of your final grade.

Class Participation

You are expected to be an active participant in class. No excuses will be accepted for work/participation missed due to absences: accidents happen, life intrudes, and I understand that. But there's just no substitute for performance. You must make a commitment to attend this class and be a regular and lively participant. If you can't do that, you should drop the course. **You cannot receive credit if you miss any of the in-class writing assignments or quizzes.**

Academic Integrity

You are expected to know and follow University Policies on cheating and plagiarism. See the Code of Academic Integrity. If it is determined that you have cheated, you will fail the course and I may recommend that you be expelled from the University.

Schedule of Readings for PHIL 342: Engineering Ethics
Fall, 2006
Matt Zwolinski

- Week 1 (Sept 8) – **Introduction to the Course**
- Week 2 (Sept 11-15) – **Professionalism**
EE Ch. 11, Ch. 1 (*The Challenger Disaster* plus sections 1.1 – 1.3)
Reserve: “Engineers Creed,” “Code of Ethics for Engineers,”
“Attributes of a Profession” (Greenwood), “Conflicts of Interest”
(Davis)
- Week 3 (Sept 28-22) – **Philosophical Ethics**
No class September 22 (this course only)
EE Ch. 4
Quiz 1
- Week 4 (Sept 25-29) – **Ethics Continued & Social Responsibility 1**
Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics” and Hursthouse, “Neo-Aristotelianism”
EE Ch. 2, 6 [**Cut chap 6?**]
- Week 5 (Oct 2-6) – **Social Responsibility 2**
Reserve: “Ethical Responsibilities of Engineers in Large
Organizations” (DeGeorge), “Engineers and Social Responsibility”
(Cohen & Grace), “The Bureaucratic Ethos and Dissent” (Jackall)
**Quiz 2 (cut 1 reading from this week – Cohen and Grace? Or move
cohen and grace closer to the coverage of chapter 2) Move Jackall
closer to whistleblowing?**
- Week 6 (Oct 9-13) – **Risk 1**
EE Ch. 7
Reserve: “The Public Health, Safety, and Welfare” (McFarland)
Exam 1
- Week 7 (Oct 16-20) – **Risk 2**
No class October 20 (Fall Holiday)
Reserve: “The Conceptual Risks of Risk Assessment” (Shrader-
Frechette), “Health Risk Valuations Based on Public Consent” (Cassedy)
- Week 8 (Oct 23-27) – **Environmental Ethics 1**
EE Ch. 9
Reserve: “The Role of Technology in Sustainable Development” (Beder)
Quiz 3
- Week 9 (Oct 30-Nov 3) – **Environmental Ethics 2**
Reserve: “Distributing Costs of Global Climate Change” (Byrne,
Hadjilambrinos & Wagle)
Exam 2
- Week 10 (Nov 6-10) – **Ethics of International Business 1**
EE Ch. 10

Reserve: “Multinational Decision-Making” (Donaldson)

Week 11 (Nov 13-17) – **Ethics of International Business 2**

Reserve: “The Ethics of Global Risk” (Donaldson)

“Ethics and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act” (Pastin & Hooker), “The Phenomenon of International Bribery” (Kaikati)

Quiz 4

Week 12 (Nov 20-22) – **Whistle Blowing**

No class November 24th (Thanksgiving Break)

We will have class on Wednesday, November 22nd

Reserve: “Whistle Blowing” (De George), “Whistleblowing and Employee Loyalty” (Duska)

Week 13 (Nov 27-Dec 1) – **Employee Rights and Safety**

EE Ch. 8

Reserve: “Employee and Employer Rights in an Institutional Context” (Werhane)

Week 14 (Dec 4-8) – **Employee Testing and Privacy**

Reserve: “Privacy, Polygraphs, and Work” (Brenkert), “Drug Testing and Employment” (Des Jardins & Duska)

Quiz 5

Week 15 (Dec 11-15) – **Computer Ethics and Exam Prep**

EE Ch. 5

Final Exam Wednesday, December 20: 8:00-10:00 AM.