

Syllabus
Ethics (PHIL 2312)
The University of Texas at Arlington
15 January 2008

Instructor: Keith Burgess-Jackson, J.D., Ph.D.

Classroom: 300 Preston Hall

Meeting Time: 8:00 to 9:20 A.M., 9:30 to 10:50 A.M., Tuesday and Thursday

Office: 303 Carlisle Hall

Office Hours: 12:30 to 1:30 P.M., Tuesday and Thursday

E-mail: kbj@uta.edu

Website: <http://kbjcourseblog.blogspot.com/>

Course Description. Ethics is the philosophical study of morality. The focus of this course is normative ethics, which is, according to the author of our textbook, “the attempt to discover, formulate, and defend the most fundamental principles about morally right action.” Among the normative ethical theories to be examined in this course are act utilitarianism, rule utilitarianism, egoism, Kantianism, social-contract theory, formalism, and, time permitting, conventionalism. At no point will you be evaluated on the basis of the *content* of your beliefs or values. There are no prerequisites, but the course is technical in nature, as you will soon see, and may not be suitable for freshmen or for those who have had neither Critical Thinking nor Logic.

Materials. There is one book: Fred Feldman, [*Introductory Ethics*](#) (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978), ISBN 0-13-501783-1. The book is available at the UTA bookstore and (I assume) at privately owned bookstores near the UTA campus. You may also order it online. From time to time, I will post additional materials on the course blog. You are responsible for all postings, so please print and study them as they appear.

Requirements. There are two: (1) A 75-minute, in-class examination, which constitutes half your grade. This examination will be given during class on Thursday, 6 March. (2) A 75-minute, in-class, noncomprehensive examination, which constitutes half your grade. This examination will be given during the first 75 minutes of our regularly scheduled final-examination period. The aim of the examinations is to test the breadth and depth of your knowledge and skill. You are responsible for *all* the readings, handouts (if any), blog posts, lectures, and discussions. Yes, *discussions*. I do not duplicate lectures in my office or provide notes to students; nor do I allow audio or video recording of my lectures. If you miss a class, you must ask another student for assistance. I *strongly* recommend that you find a study partner the first week of class and meet regularly throughout the semester to keep the material fresh in your mind. I do not give quizzes, assign homework, take attendance, or permit extra credit. There are no early examinations. Makeup examinations are given only for the first examina-

tion and only in emergencies. All emergencies must be documented (for example, by a note from a physician). I am the arbiter of what constitutes an emergency. If you miss the final examination, you will receive a grade of either X (Incomplete) or F (Failure), depending on whether you notified me in advance.

Grading Procedure. The maximum score on each examination is 100 points. At the end of the semester, I will add your two scores and divide by two (to reflect the equal weighting). I will assign grades on the basis of a 10% scale, which means that a final score of 90 or above is an A, 80 to 89.9 a B, and so on. In principle, everyone in the course can receive an A. In principle, everyone in the course can receive an F. How you do depends solely on your performance. In other words, there is no grading curve.

Office Hours. I have set aside two hours per week for discussion of course material with students. If you have questions about the course, come to see me. It will help (i.e., be more efficient) if you have the questions written down. Since all students have access to e-mail, which is less intrusive than office visits or the telephone, feel free to make use of it.

Academic Dishonesty. The UTA policy on academic dishonesty is as follows (from the [Undergraduate Catalog 2007-2008](#)):

All students are expected to pursue their academic careers with honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test or other course work, plagiarism (offering the work of another as one's own) and unauthorized collaboration with another person. Students found responsible for dishonesty in their academic pursuits are subject to penalties that may range from disciplinary probation to suspension to expulsion from the University.

I will enforce this policy.

Disabled Students. UTA complies with the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#). For information, see the website of UTA's [Office for Students with Disabilities](#).