

PHIL 2306: Introduction to Ethics (Online) Course

Syllabus: Fall 2026 (1st 8-Week Session)

“Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide personal, dynamic learning experiences empowering students to succeed.”

Instructor: Dr. Ron Clinton

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Weekday	Office Hours
Monday	By appointment
Tuesday	By appointment
Wednesday	By Appointment
Thursday	By Appointment
Friday	By Appointment

This syllabus serves as the documentation for all course policies and requirements, assignments, and instructor/student responsibilities.

Information relative to the delivery of the content contained in this syllabus is subject to change. Should that happen, the student will be notified.

Course Description:

(3 credits) The systematic evaluation of classical and/or contemporary ethical theories concerning the good life, human conduct in society, morals, and standards of value.

Prerequisite(s): none

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts.
2. Define and appropriately use important terms such as relativism, virtue, duty, rights, utilitarianism, natural law, egoism, altruism, autonomy, and care ethics.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of major arguments and problems in ethics.
4. Present and discuss well-reasoned ethical positions in writing.
5. Apply ethical concepts and principles to address moral concerns.
6. Apply course material to various aspects of life. 7. Discuss ways of living responsibly in a world where people have diverse ethical beliefs.

Evaluation/Grading Policy:

The breakdown of the course requirements is as follows:

%	Requirement
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15%	Online Course Journal
33%	Quizzes & Tests
20%	Final Essay
32%	Graded Discussion Boards

Semester grades will be earned as follows

Percentage	Letter Grade
90% and above	A
80 %–89%	B
70 %–79%	C
60%–69 %	D
59.9% and below	F

Required Instructional Materials:

All readings are available on Blackboard in .pdf format.

Optional Instructional Materials:

All optional readings are available on Blackboard in .pdf format

Minimum Technology Requirements:

All students must have access to a computer, internet, and Blackboard, and should be comfortable using Blackboard for all course materials.

Required Computer Literacy Skills:

Basic proficiency with Blackboard

Course Structure and Overview:

Readings:

Each module has an associated reading. These readings are assigned at the beginning of each module, and you will find the file (in .pdf format) for that reading within the module itself. (A copy of each reading can also be found in the “Course Readings” link on the course page.) You will need to read the reading in order to complete the activities within each module. Furthermore, each module will contain a series of written and video “lectures,” along with some helpful handouts and articles; you should read all of this material as you work your way through the course.

Quizzes:

After you have read the assigned reading for each module, you will take a short reading quiz. Each reading quiz will be 5 questions, multiple choice; its purpose is simply to check that you've done the reading. **Quizzes are timed:** you will have only ten minutes to complete the quiz, and you will only be allowed one attempt. **Quizzes must be completed in one sitting, and quizzes will not be restarted for any reason**—so be sure to have a stable internet connection when you begin the quiz. Because I know that problems can and do occur, **I will drop your lowest quiz score** at the end of the semester—so a bad grade on one quiz due to technical errors will not hurt your grade. **Submitting the reading quiz will unlock the rest of the module;** you must take the reading quiz before you go through the rest of the module activities.

Graded Discussions:

The course modules contain a series of discussion boards. The open question threads at the end of each module are optional and ungraded, but the other discussion boards are graded activities. Each graded discussion will require you to make at least two posts: Your first post will be an answer to the question prompt for the thread, while your second post will be a substantive response to a classmate. You should have something productive to contribute when you respond to a classmate; comments like “I agree,” “I like this,” or “I don’t know” are unproductive and should be avoided. **You must make your initial post before you can see the posts your classmates have made.** Your initial post will be graded out of ten points, while your response to a classmate will be graded out of five. Each discussion thread has a due date; **late posts will receive no credit.**

Tests:

Each module will end with a 5-question, multiple-choice “knowledge check.” The questions in these tests will draw upon the material presented within the module; if you pay attention as you work your way through the module, you should be able to answer all five questions easily. However, you will be allowed two attempts at the knowledge check tests. After you take the test the first time, you will see which questions you have gotten right and wrong (but the correct answers will not be displayed for the questions you have missed). This will give you a chance to go back through the module, if you wish, in order to rediscover the information you’ll need. You may take the knowledge check up to twice, and your final score will be whichever attempt is better. The **knowledge checks are timed:** you will have **30 minutes** to complete each one, and the quiz will auto-submit at the end. Just like the quizzes, then, you should make sure that you have a stable internet connection when you sit down to start a test. **Submitting the knowledge check will unlock the next module;** you must attempt the knowledge check at least once before you can move on to the next module.

Final Essay:

For a full description of the assignments, see the “Final Essay Assignment” link on the course page. The essay assignment will be your opportunity to apply what you’ve learned and to critically engage with some of the assigned readings. Your essay will be submitted through Blackboard and TurnItIn. **Late essays will not be accepted.**

Course Journal:

The course journal will be kept all semester long, due at the end of the semester. For each module, I will give you a few response question(s); a few paragraphs should be sufficient in each case, but journals will be graded on relevance, completeness, and use of course material (your journal responses should show that you have read, and are applying, the assigned reading). You will keep your journal in Blackboard, and you can find it by following the “Course Journal” link on the course page. Journals will be due at the end of the semester, and should be complete by the final day of class. **Late entries will receive no credit.**

Communications:

During the semester, I will check my Blackboard email at least once per day; you should expect a response to any emails within 24 hours. Blackboard email is the best way to get in touch with me; however, phone calls to my office will also be returned as soon as possible.

Individual Course Policy:

1. Academic honesty is taken very seriously. In a philosophy class, this means that sources used in papers or journals should be cited somehow (MLA style, Chicago style, etc.), and quotations from any text clearly indicated. It also, more importantly, means not taking credit for the work of another. Plagiarism, handing in papers downloaded off of the internet, or any other case of a student handing in something he or she has not written will be grounds for immediate failure of the class, no exceptions. If you have any questions at all, please consult the university's policy, and/or see me directly: "I didn't know this wasn't okay" is not an excuse.
2. **No outside sources are allowed for the essay!** The essay packet, primary texts from the course, class notes, and your thoughts are the only allowable sources. Use of outside sources will result in a zero for the assignment.
3. **The use of AI to generate content for assignments is strictly prohibited.** Because this technology is still new, there is a fair amount of grey area here. However, any questionable cases will be fed to an AI-detection program (<https://www.zerogpt.com/>), which will estimate the likelihood of AI usage. **Any text that is determined to be 70% or more likely to contain AI-generated content will receive a zero**, and there will be no possibility of redoing the assignment. This applies to all discussion board posts, the course journal, and the final essay assignment. Any course journal using AI-generated text will receive a zero for the complete assignment, even if some posts were not composed using AI text generation. Any final essay utilizing AI-generated content will receive a 0, even if some paragraphs are written by the student.

NTCC Institutional/Course Policies:

Alternate Operations During Campus Closure and/or Alternate Course Delivery Requirements:

In the event of an emergency or announced campus closure due to a natural disaster or pandemic, it may be necessary for Northeast Texas Community College to move to altered operations. During this time, Northeast Texas Community College may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include, but are not limited to, online through the Blackboard Learning Management System, online conferencing, email messaging, and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor NTCC's website (<http://www.ntcc.edu/>) for instructions about continuing courses remotely, Blackboard for each class for course-specific communication, and NTCC email for important general information.

Additionally, there may be instances where a course may not be able to be continued in the same delivery format as it originates (face-to-face, fully online, live remote, or hybrid). Should this be the case, every effort will be made to continue instruction in an alternative delivery format. Students will be informed of any changes of this nature through email messaging and/or the Blackboard course site.

Statement Regarding the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology:

Employees and students shall be permitted to explore artificial intelligence (AI) and implement its use in and out of the classroom in accordance with policy and administrative regulations. The use of AI shall only be as a support tool to enhance student outcomes or as necessary to engage in research and shall never take the place of faculty, staff, and student decisionmaking. Any use of AI must comply with law, policy, and administrative regulations relating to student and employee privacy and data security. A student shall only use AI tools with faculty permission and shall be expected to produce original work and properly credit sources, including AI tools used in creating the work.

Example:

APA (7th edition)

Employees or students who use AI tools to deceptively harm, bully, or harass others shall be disciplined in accordance with policy. [See DH, DIA series, FFD series, FFE, FLB, and the FM series] AI Use by Employees and Students. Northeast Texas Community College 225500 TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES CRB ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (LOCAL) DATE ISSUED: 12/8/2025 1 of 1 UPDATE 50 CRB(LOCAL)-AJC Adopted: 12/16/2025

NTCC Academic Honesty/Ethics Statement:

NTCC upholds the highest standards of academic integrity. The college expects all students to engage in their academic pursuits in an honest manner that is beyond reproach using their intellect and resources designated as allowable by the course instructor. Students are responsible for addressing questions about allowable resources with the course instructor. Academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and collusion is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. This course will follow the NTCC Academic Honesty and Academic Ethics policies stated in the Student Handbook. Refer to the student handbook for more information on these subjects.

ADA Statement:

It is the policy of NTCC to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodation as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student’s responsibility to request accommodation. An appointment can be made with the Academic Advisor/Coordinator of Special Populations located in Student Services and can be reached at 903-434-8264. For more information and to obtain a copy of the Request for Accommodations, please refer to the special populations page on the NTCC website.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children’s educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are considered “eligible students.” In essence, a parent has no legal right to obtain information concerning the child’s college records without the written consent of the student. In compliance with FERPA, information classified as “directory information” may be released to the general public without the written consent of the student unless the student makes a request in writing. Directory information is defined as: the student’s name, permanent address and/or local address, telephone listing, dates of attendance, most recent previous education institution attended, other information including major, field of study, degrees, awards received, and participation in officially recognized activities/sports.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Modules:	Due Date: (11:59 PM)	Points:
Module 0:		
Graded Discussion: Course Introductions	August 30	10

Test: Knowledge Check	August 30	5
Module 1:		
Quiz #1	August 30	5
Graded Discussion: Pleasure and the Good	August 30	10

Test: Knowledge Check	August 30	5
Module 2:		
Quiz #2	September 6	5
Graded Discussion: On Moral Obligations	September 6	10
Test: Knowledge Check	September 6	5
Module 3:		
Quiz #3	September 6	5
Graded Discussion: What Is Happiness?	September 6	10
Test: Knowledge Check	September 6	5
Module 4:		
Quiz #4	September 13	5
Graded Discussion: Happiness vs. Pleasure	September 13	10
Test: Knowledge Check	September 13	5

Module 5:		
Graded Discussion: What Is Justice?	September 13	10
Test: Knowledge Check	September 13	5
Module 6:		
Quiz #5	September 20	5
Graded Discussion: Friendship	September 20	10
Test: Knowledge Check	September 20	5
Module 7:		
Quiz #6	September 20	5
Test: Knowledge Check	September 20	5
Module 8:		
Quiz #7	September 27	5
Graded Discussion: What Does it Mean to Be a Good Person?	September 27	10
Test: Knowledge Check	September 27	5
Module 9:		
Quiz #8	September 27	5
Graded Discussion: What's Wrong with Lying?	September 27	10
Test: Knowledge Check	September 27	5

Module 10:		
Quiz #9	October 4	5
Graded Discussion: What Is Free Will?	October 4	10
Test: Knowledge Check	October 4	5
Module 11:		
Quiz #10	October 4	5
Graded Discussion: On Integrity	October 4	10
Test: Knowledge Check	October 4	5
Module 12:		
Quiz #11	October 11	5
Graded Discussion: Animal Rights?	October 11	10
Test: Knowledge Check	October 11	5
Module 13		
Course Journal	October 11	25
Final Essay	October 11	100