

# *Sul Ross State University*

Introduction to Ethics  
PHIL 2306 Course Syllabus | Spring 2026

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**Course Title:** Introduction to Ethics

**Class Times:** MW, 8:35 am - 9:50 am | Blackboard Class Collaborate

**Required Text:** *Living Ethics: An Introduction with Readings* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Russ Shafer-Landau

**Contact Information:** Josef Mathews

**Email:** Josef.Mathews@sulross.edu

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This course entails doing a systematic evaluation of ethical theories concerning the good life, human conduct in society, morals, and standards of value.

## **Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO)**

<b>Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO)</b>	
PSLO 1	Describe and critically analyze chief doctrines, theories, and ideas of the great philosophers of the past and present.
PSLO 2	Demonstrate critical thinking by recognizing good and bad arguments and constructing cogent and sound arguments to defend or refute philosophical views.
PSLO 3	Demonstrate proficient writing skills.
PSLO 4	Demonstrate proficient reading comprehension skills of philosophical texts.
PSLO 5	Develop original arguments on philosophical issues that fairly consider different and opposing perspectives.
PSLO 6	Evaluate how philosophical concepts, ideas, theories, and principles affect one's obligations to others and society.

## **2306 Introduction to Ethics**

	<b>CSLO</b>	<b>PSLO</b>
2306 CSLO 1	Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts	PSLO 1 and 4
2306 CSLO2	Define and appropriately use important terms such as relativism, virtue, duty, rights, utilitarianism, natural law, egoism, altruism, autonomy, and care ethics.	PSLO 1 and 4
2306 CSLO3	Demonstrate knowledge of major arguments and problems in ethics.	PSLO 2 and 5
2306 CSLO 4	Present and discuss well-reasoned ethical positions in writing.	PSLO 3 and 5
2306 CSLO 5	Apply ethical concepts and principles to address moral concerns.	PSLO 5 and 6
2306 CSLO 6	Apply course material to various aspects of life.	PSLO 5 and 6

2306 CSLO 7	Discuss ways of living responsibly in a world where people have diverse ethical beliefs.	PSLO 6
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**Course Conduct:** Refer to the Student Conduct and Discipline section of the [SRSU Student Handbook](#).

**SRSU Disability Services:** Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Alpine students seeking accessibility/accommodations services should contact SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432.837.8203. For more information, see <https://www.sulross.edu/counseling-and-accessibility-services/>.

**The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine:** This library offers free resources and services to the entire SRSU community. The library's website is [library.sulross.edu](http://library.sulross.edu). Off-campus access requires logging in with your Lobold and password. Librarians are a great resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or by phone (432.837.8123).

**Academic Honesty:** Any instance of academic misconduct such as (1) turning in an identical written assignment for another course without approval, (2) copying from any source without proper citation, (3) crossing the boundary of what is allowed in a group project, (4) lying in connection with your academic work, (5) cheating, (6) plagiarism, (7) misrepresenting facts and/or collusion are contrary to the purpose of any educational institution and may be dealt with most severely to the extent of the university's disciplinary policy and/or through legal action if indicated. An instructor who determines that a student has been dishonest academically can, at a minimum, issue no credit for the assignment/exam and/or pursue more severe penalties, including but not limited to failing the course. Before the penalty is imposed, the student has the right to appeal to the division chairperson or Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs. Information about *Academic Honesty* can be read in the [SRSU Student Handbook](#) and procedures for dealing with these acts are outlined in the [Academic Honesty Policy](#) under Undergraduate Academic Regulations.

**Class Participation:** You are expected to come prepared to participate in class and engage in class discussions.

**Class Attendance:** The SRSU Undergraduate Academic Regulations policy governs attendance stated in the schedule of classes. If you are unable to participate in class every week, please discuss the reason with the instructor and ensure that you are keeping up with the coursework. Excused absences entail established religious observance or providing emergency, university-authorized, legal, or medical documentation. **Excessive unexcused absences (more than 2 weeks) result in a failing grade for the course.**

**Distance Education Statement:** Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies on academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

**Complaints:** Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the [Student Handbook](#).

**Communications with the instructor:** You may contact me through email at [Josef.Mathews@sulross.edu](mailto:Josef.Mathews@sulross.edu). General questions are to be posted to a discussion board for all. For personal or private issues, please email me or make an appointment. I will try to respond within 24 hours Monday-Friday.

**Course Behaviors, Respect and Disruptions.** Watch the VIDEO on NETTIQUETTE - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWMk\\_Zv7nB8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWMk_Zv7nB8) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80uRE972uQ0>. You are encouraged and expected to openly engage in discussions, ask questions, share ideas, and express your thoughts in this web-based course in the same manner as in a face-to-face course. Please treat each other with dignity and respect and avoid disruptive behaviors. You are responsible for knowing what behaviors are acceptable and which

ones are unacceptable, as referred to in the Student Conduct and Discipline section of the SRSU Student Handbook ([http://www.sulross.edu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/users/docs/stulife/student\\_conduct\\_discipline.pdf](http://www.sulross.edu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/users/docs/stulife/student_conduct_discipline.pdf)).

**Cell phone and computer use:** You should be fully engaged in the class's activity during the entire class period. Laptop computers or phones are welcome for academic purposes, such as note-taking or following along with the instructor's lesson. Off-topic activity (e.g., reading texts or posts, checking email, game playing) not directly related to the class is considered disrespectful. It can result in being marked "absent" for the day.

**Late Assignments:** You are expected to meet the deadlines. Assignments submitted after their due dates without a legitimate excuse will be marked down 25%.

**Final Exam:** It is optional if the following two conditions are met: (1) you miss no more than four classes (the equivalent of two weeks), and (2) you have at least an A in the course. If you meet both conditions, you may elect to opt out of the final and keep the grade you have. The final will be comprehensive and will consist of multiple choice questions.

Quizzes	20 points (10 quizzes, 2 points each)
Essays	20 points (5 essays, 4 points each)
Exam 1	15 points
Exam 2	15 Points
Reflection Paper 1	15 points
Reflection Paper 2	15 points
Final	30 points
 TOTAL	 130 points

A (90%)  
B (80%)  
C (70%)  
D (60%)  
F (<60%)

Final grades are based on exact numerical scores; they are not rounded up.

Quizzes: open book/notes + closed book/notes

Exams: closed book/notes

Essays: 250 words  $\pm$ 50

Reflection Papers: 500 words  $\pm$ 75

## *Course Outline* (schedule and topics subject to modification by the instructor)

WEEK	DATES	WORK
Week 1	Jan 14	Syllabus Review, Introductions
Week 2	Jan 19	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. No classes.

	Jan 21	Chapter 1: <i>What is Morality</i>
<b>Week 3</b>	Jan 26 Jan 28	Chapter 1: <i>What is Morality?</i> <b>Quiz 1</b> due Tuesday Chapter 2: <i>Moral Reasoning</i>
<b>Week 4</b>	Feb 2 Feb 4	<b>Quiz 2 (in class)</b> <b>Essay 1</b> due Tuesday Chapter 3: <i>Skepticism about Morality</i>
<b>Week 5</b>	Feb 9 Feb 11	Chapter 3: <i>Skepticism about Morality</i> <b>Quiz 3</b> due Tuesday Chapter 4: <i>The Good Life</i>
<b>Week 6</b>	Feb 16 Feb 18	<b>Quiz 4 (in class)</b> <b>Essay 2</b> due Tuesday Chapter 5: <i>Consequentialism</i>
<b>Week 7</b>	Feb 23 Feb 25	Chapter 5: <i>Consequentialism</i> <b>Quiz 5</b> due Tuesday Chapter 6: <i>Kantian Ethics</i>
<b>Week 8</b>	Mar 2 Mar 4	<b>Quiz 6 (in class)</b> <b>Essay 3</b> due Tuesday Exam 1 Review <b>Reflection Paper 1</b> due Friday
<b>March 9-13 - Spring Break - No Classes</b>		
<b>Week 9</b>	Mar 16 Mar 18	<b>Exam 1</b> (in class) Chapter 9: <i>Virtue Ethics</i>
<b>Week 10</b>	Mar 23 Mar 25	Chapter 9: <i>Virtue Ethics</i> <b>Quiz 7</b> due Tuesday Chapter 11: <i>Abortion</i>

<b>Week 11</b>	Mar 30 Apr 1	<b>Quiz 8 (in class)</b> <b>Essay 4</b> due Tuesday Chapter 12: Animals
<b>Week 12</b>	Apr 6 Apr 8	Chapter 12: Animals <b>Quiz 9</b> due Tuesday Chapter 13: Environment
<b>Week 13</b>	Apr 13 Apr 15	<b>Quiz 10 (in class)</b> <b>Essay 5</b> due Tuesday Exam 2 Review
<b>Week 14</b>	Apr 20 Apr 22	<b>Exam 2 (in class)</b> To be determined <b>Reflection Paper 2</b> due Friday
<b>Week 15</b>	Apr 27 Apr 29	To be determined To be determined
<b>Final Exam Week</b>	May 1, 4-6	<b>Final Exam (in class)</b> optional if you miss no more than four classes (the equivalent of two weeks) and you have at least an A in the course