

Philosophy 212-3000  
Ethics

***Totally Online***

**Instructor:** Dr. Alessandro Tomasi

**Contact Info:** [atomasi111@gmail.com](mailto:atomasi111@gmail.com) (preferred) and [atomasi@mail.uri.edu](mailto:atomasi@mail.uri.edu) Please, indicate in your subject header that you are in one of my classes (give course and section number). Also, please include your name in the email.

**Department Phone:** 401-874-2418

**Availability:** I will be active in the discussion forums and other work areas in Sakai at least five days each week. That will be where most of our class interaction will happen. Communication, when in the blackboard environment, benefits the entire class. Email should be reserved for concerns of a personal/sensitive nature.

**Required Texts:**

(EMP) James Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (McGraw-Hill)

(RTD) James Rachels, *The Right Thing to Do: Basic Readings in Moral Philosophy*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (McGraw-Hill)

**Course Description and Objectives:** This course is **ENTIRELY ONLINE**. Course Description and Objectives: In this course, we will evaluate major ethical theories and apply moral reasoning to topics such as virtues and vices, human dignity, conscience, responsibility, moral dilemmas, and reasons to be moral.

**Course Format and Requirements:** The course is divided into 6 assignment periods. For each assignment period there is a reading assignment and study questions. During each assignment period, students are required to post messages that answer the study questions. Rules for the quality and quantity of the messages are described below. Deadlines for each assignment period are listed in the Schedule below. In addition to participation in class discussions, students will be required to take three exams, though the lowest grade will be dropped, and a final examination. Instructions on all these requirements are given below in the grading information section.

Final Grade Calculation:

Assignments	Percent
Online Participation (6 assignments: 6% each assignment)	36%
Exams (20% each)	40%
Final Examination	24%

TOTAL	100%
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### Grading System:

NOTE: There is **no extra credit** available in this class. The only things for which you can receive credit in this class have been listed under the Grading Section.

NOTE: Makeup Exam Policy: Students are expected to take all exams and posts when scheduled. In the event of illness or extraordinary circumstances, the student must contact the faculty member and provide documentation to request an exception and approval to take a makeup exam. If the request is not approved, the grade will be recorded as a zero.

Online Participation is graded according to the number of acceptable messages (**messages include your four answers to the four study questions AND two replies to other students' messages**) posted by the student during each assignment period. Each assignment is worth 6% of your total grade. The course is divided into 6 assignments, for a total of 36% of your final grade. The grade for one assignment period is determined by the following formula:

Number of messages: 6 or more = between 85-100 (depending on the quality of your posts)  
5 = between 70-85  
4 = between 60-70  
3 = between 50-60  
2 = between 25-50  
Fewer than 2 = between 0-25

**Late conference posts** will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor at least one day before the Conference ends. If there is an extraordinary or last-minute circumstance that causes you to be late with a Conference post, contact the instructor so that some alternative can be arranged.

**Sending and Addressing Messages:** To post a gradable message, click on “discussion and private messages,” and then on the appropriate forum (if we are working on the first assignment, go to “first assignment”; if we are on the second, go to “second assignment”; and so on). Post your contribution following the instructions provided there.

In posting your initial messages directly answering the study questions, go to the appropriate conference, click on “add new thread,” and make sure you change the subject header using this formula “assignment number” + “question number” (for example, “A1Q1,” or “A4Q2”). If you are replying to another student’s message, then leave the original header unchanged.

Make sure that you are in the correct forum when you post your message. The instructor will create a variety of forums which will contain messages regarding specific subjects, such as technical problems, biographies, assignments, and so forth. Do not send assignment, gradable messages to the

instructor as personal (private) mail. The instructor reads all public messages that go to the class conferences.

**Rules Governing the Quantity and Distribution of Messages:** The messages that will count toward your grade in the course will be answers in part or whole to the main discussion questions and/or replies to other student's messages. In order to achieve maximum interaction, messages are to be evenly distributed over the whole assignment period.

**NOTE:** Messages are of two types: posts answering directly the study questions and replies to other students' messages. Unless specified, the term "message" will refer to both types.

1. Although you are free to post more, no more than 6 messages are required to receive a letter grade of an A for any given assignment period. Messages are judged according to both their quantity and quality. Criteria for the quality of the message are stated below. **NOTE: You MUST post 4 different messages answering all 4 study questions.**

2. Although you are free to post more, no more than 2 messages will be counted per day. The purpose of the rule is to insure that messages are distributed over the assignment period in order to allow for replies.

3. At least half of the total number of your messages must be posted during the first half of the assignment period. For all assignments, always follow the schedule below.

4. At least one third of the messages must be replies to other students' messages. Replies are evaluated using the same (except for one: see point 3 below, about length) criteria used to evaluate other types of messages.

**Quality of Messages:** In order to be counted toward your assignment grade, a message must:

(1) contain a relevant quote from the reading assignment. Messages that do not contain quotes from the text are not counted. All quotes must be placed in quotation marks and set off from the rest of the text of the essay by at least one empty line above and below the quote.

(2) contain a commentary on the quoted passage and a reason and justification for the statement or claim that the comment is making.

(3) be at least 300 words in length, for your initial responses to the study questions, and be at least 200 words in case of replies to other students' contributions. Long quotes over three lines in length are not counted in determining message length.

(4) attempt to answer the main discussion question in part or in whole.

(5) contain quotations that are short and relevant. The commentary should interpret the quote.

(6) contain good grammar, syntax, punctuation and spelling.

**Note to Students:** Students are expected to meet the standards of collegiate academic writing in all Conferences and other assignments. It is your responsibility to express yourself clearly and properly. This usually requires rewriting and polishing a text several times. Experience shows that waiting until the day an assignment is due to produce a first draft often leads to disappointing outcomes for students and instructors.

Messages that do not conform to the above criteria will not be counted toward the total number of messages that a student posts. Students will be informed if a message is not acceptable. In that case, students are free to resubmit the message after making the appropriate changes. Messages can be revised any time.

**Exams and Final Exam:**

Three **hourly exams** will be given. The two highest grades will be recorded. Students will drop one hourly exam grade if all three exams are taken. A missed exam (**for whatever reason**) becomes the dropped exam. Students who miss more than one hourly exam will receive zero (0) credit for the missed exam.

All students **must** take the final exam. The final examination will be comprehensive.

Detailed instructions about the exams and the final exam will be provided at the beginning of the semester (see in Resources). Exams and Final Exam will be made available for a period of time (usually, 2 days before the due date) during which you can decide when to take it. Once you start the exam or final exam, however, you will have a limited number of minutes to finish it (usually, 50 minutes). The questions will be multiple-choice and true/false questions and will be chosen by Sakai randomly from a large pool of questions.

**Assignments & Schedule:**

More detailed instructions concerning the exams, the readings and the study questions will be given in the appropriate conference area.

<p>First Assignment</p> <p><b>May 20- May 31</b></p> <p>NOTE: All deadlines are to end at 12:00 a.m. EST/EDT.</p>	<p><b>First Assignment</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Elements: Chapters 1, 2 and 4 RTD: Chapter 1</p> <p><b>Assignments: First-half of As1: May 20-25</b> Biography Conference Posts: post at least 2 gradable messages by May 25</p> <p><b>Assignments: Second-half of As1: May 26- 31</b> Post the remaining 4 gradable messages by May 31</p>
<p>Second Assignment</p> <p><b>Jun.1- 10</b></p>	<p><b>Second Assignment</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Elements: Chapter 5</p>

	<p>RTD: Ch.21: The Ethics of War by Lackey</p> <p><b>Assignments: First-half of As2: Jun.1-5</b>  Second Assignment Readings  Conference Posts: post at least 2 gradable messages by Jun. 5.</p> <p><b>Assignments: Second-half of As2: Jun.6- 10</b>  Post the remaining 4 gradable messages by Jun.10</p> <p><b>First Exam</b> Due Jun.10</p>
<p>Third Assignment</p> <p><b>Jun.11- 20</b></p>	<p><b>Third Assignment</b>  <b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Elements: Chapters 6 and 8</p> <p><b>Assignments: First-half of As3: Jun.11-15</b>  Third Assignment Readings  Conference Posts: post at least 2 gradable messages by Jun. 15.</p> <p><b>Assignments: Second-half of As3: Jun.16- 20</b>  Post the remaining 4 gradable messages by Jun.20</p>
<p>Fourth Assignment</p> <p><b>Jun.21- Jun.30</b></p>	<p><b>Fourth Assignment</b>  <b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Elements: Chapters 9 (including section 10.1 of ch.10, p.139)  Handout (see copy in Resources): The Singer Solution to World Poverty by Singer</p> <p><b>Assignments: First-half of As4: Jun.21-25</b>  Fourth Assignment Readings  Conference Posts: post at least 2 gradable messages by Jun. 25.</p> <p><b>Assignments: Second-half of As4: Jun.26- 30</b>  Post the remaining 4 gradable messages by Jun.30</p> <p><b>Second Exam</b> Due Jun.30</p>
<p>Fifth Assignment</p> <p><b>Jul.1- 11</b></p> <p>Jul.4: Independence Day - No Classes</p>	<p><b>Fifth Assignment</b>  <b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Elements: Chapters 11 and 12</p> <p><b>Assignments: First-half of As5: Jul.1-6</b>  Fifth Assignment Readings  Conference Posts: post at least 2 gradable messages by Jul.6</p>

	<b>Assignments: Second-half of As5: Jul.7- 11</b> Post the remaining 4 gradable messages by Jul.11
Sixth Assignment  <b>Jul.12- 21</b>	<b>Sixth Assignment</b> <b>Readings:</b> Elements: Chapter 13 RTD: Ch.33: Is Racial Discrimination Arbitrary? By Singer  <b>Assignments: First-half of As6: Jul.12-16</b> Sixth Assignment Readings Conference Posts: post at least 2 gradable messages by Jul.16.  <b>Assignments: Second-half of As6: Jul.17- 21</b> Post the remaining 4 gradable messages by Jul.21  <b>Third Exam</b> Due Jul.21
Final Week:  <b>Jul.22- 25</b>	Preparation for Final Exam
<b>Jul. 26 - 27</b>  <b>Aug.2</b>	<b>Final Examination</b>  Final Grades Due in e-Campus by noon

### Participation Policy and Additional Information

As ongoing collaboration and dialogue are essential for effective online course delivery, it is imperative that students participate regularly. Those who do not participate regularly according to the guidelines outlined above may receive no credit for participation, and are subject to course failure at the discretion of the instructor.

Use of TURNITIN: Please understand that in taking this course your assignments may be submitted to Turnitin.com and reviewed for textual similarity suggestive of plagiarism.

Submission of Original Work: All work submitted must be written for this course during the term in which the course is being completed. Work from other courses or from other academic or non-academic settings, past or present, is not acceptable and may be subject to immediate failure. If students wish to submit extensively revised or expanded work previously submitted in this or another course, they must obtain the approval of the class instructor in advance.

Discussion Concerning Syllabus: Because this is an electronic classroom and we are not reviewing the syllabus orally, the student is encouraged to discuss items within the syllabus. This discussion

should clear up any ambiguous or vague language that may be in the document. It also serves to clarify the students understanding of course, expectations, goals and direction. If the student does not have questions or comments, then I will assume that there is understanding. There is no reason to feel intimidated about getting into a discussion. Post your questions and comments in the “General” conference.

*Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact me as early in the semester as possible so that we may arrange reasonable accommodations. As part of this process, please be in touch with Disability Services for Students Office at 330 Memorial Union, 401-874-2098 (<https://web.uri.edu/disability/>) or the Academic Skills Center, 239 Shepard Building, Alan Shawn Feinstein Providence Campus, 401-277-5221 (<https://web.uri.edu/ceps/academic-skills-center/>)*

### **Academic Enhancement Center and Writing Center**

Nearly all students recognize that regardless of how well or poorly they are doing in a given class, there are ways to improve their learning and studying. The Academic Enhancement Center (AEC) and Writing Center (WC), located in Roosevelt Hall, offers several kinds of support that help students improve their learning and academic performance in this class as well as other classes. For information on any of these programs, visit [uri.edu/aec](http://uri.edu/aec), call the AEC’s main number at (401) 874-2367, or follow the specific suggestions below.

- **Subject Specific Tutoring**, located on the fourth floor of Roosevelt Hall, helps students navigate 100 and 200 level math, chemistry, physics, biology, and other select STEM courses. Options for peer tutoring are designed to enable you to get the kind of help you need when you need it. Students can join a **Weekly Tutoring Group** with others in their courses (information on groups will be made available to you in supported classes), stop by a subject-specific **Drop-In Center** as needed, or make a one-time **Group Appointment**. Information on what these programs offer, when they are available, and how to utilize them are available at [uri.edu/aec/tutoring](http://uri.edu/aec/tutoring).
- **Academic Skills and Strategies** programs help students identify their individual planning and studying needs in this or any other course, and can teach you to implement new, more effective ways of studying, planning, managing time and work, and dealing with challenges like procrastination and motivation. **Academic skills sessions** are 30-minute, 1 to 1 appointments that students can schedule online by visiting the AEC on Starfish and making an appointment with Dr. David Hayes, the AEC’s academic skills development specialist. **UCS160: Success in Higher Education** is a one credit course, offered each semester to all undergraduates on learning how to learn and excel in college academics. For more information on these programs or assistance with setting an appointment, visit [uri.edu/aec/academic-skills](http://uri.edu/aec/academic-skills) or contact Dr. Hayes directly at [davidhayes@uri.edu](mailto:davidhayes@uri.edu)
- **The URI Writing Center**, located in Roosevelt Hall 009 (lower level, Memorial Union end), offers one-on-one and small group peer tutoring for student writers in all majors who need help developing ideas or would benefit from advice on any aspect of

writing. The WC serve all student writers, not just “beginners.” Writers are encouraged to bring a draft, notes, syllabus, or any relevant information to help facilitate the session. Appointments are 45 minutes in length and can be scheduled online at [uri.mywconline.com](http://uri.mywconline.com). It's best to make appointments in advance, especially during midterms and finals, but we often have same-day and drop-in appointments available throughout the day so writers can stop by to see what's open. For more information visit [uri.edu/aec/writing](http://uri.edu/aec/writing).

With regard to academic honesty:

*Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. The following are examples of academic dishonesty.*

- *Using material, directly or paraphrasing, from published sources (print or electronic) without appropriate citation*
- *Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently*
- *Unauthorized possession or access to exams*
- *Unauthorized communication during exams*
- *Unauthorized use of another's work or preparing work for another student*
- *Taking an exam for another student*
- *Altering or attempting to alter grades*
- *The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams*
- *Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references*
- *Facilitating or aiding another's academic dishonesty*
- *Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the instructors.*