COURSE DESCRIPTION AND ORGANIZATION
We will begin by studying the nature of philosophy and philosophical ethics. The main kinds of ethical theories will then be discussed (this will include various versions of consequentialism, deontology, natural law, and contractarianism). In the remainder of the course, we will put this background to use in an exploration of various ethical issues arising in professional and personal life. The student will have an input about what kind of issues we will discuss. However, we will focus, among others on issues related to the morality of suicide and euthanasia, animal rights and social and environmental responsibilities of professionals, just war theory, and so on.

Theoretical and applied ethics are also studied in the Core's Capstone Professional Ethics course. Honors Ethics course differs substantially in the breadth and depth. In particular, we will discuss topics in metaethics and normative ethics that are frequently neglected in non-honor courses. Furthermore, the addition of both classical and contemporary readings will allow students to develop a broad range of philosophical skills, and will give them unique opportunity to explore topics in applied ethics.

J. Rachels,
The Elements of Moral Philosophy
ed., McGrawHill)
Additional readings will be provided on the web [W], and/or distributed in class as handouts [H]. If you miss a class, you are responsible for making sure that you have copies of any additional handout distributed in the class. Please remember that outlines and handouts do not cover all of the material on which you may be tested, and they do not contain complete accounts of the topics that are covered in lectures and readings. Merely memorizing the handouts will not enable you to pass the course.

OBJECTIVES
Content
you should acquire an advance level of understanding of both moral theory and various moral problems that arise in professional practice and life.
The course should develop a degree of proficiency in recognizing, evaluating and constructing moral arguments on more than one side of a moral issue.
Motivation
We hope that you will acquire an interest in moral thought, which will lead you to continue thinking about ethical issues, and develop your own views on moral issues.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO DO TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

The instructor assumes that students enrolled in this course are good-faith honors students. Bona fide honors-program behavior is distinguished in the following ways:

Students read assignments on time, completely, to the last page. They know that reading is only the first step; and they are working toward taking commend of the material, and come to class with serious responses and a willingness to learn.

Students do not assume that an assignment is legitimate only if it will be "tested." The work is done for its own sake. Students also make connections between the material at hand and what has been explored in previous classes.

Students expect that they will attend 100% of the time, and make home arrangements that this will happen. They don't assume that there are a certain number of allowable "skips." Barring natural catastrophes, faithful attendance and preparation are expected.

Students assume that open and equitable discussion and critique is the soul of an honors course. Everybody listens attentively to the instructor and to each other. Everybody participates. Students don't put the burden on the teacher or on other students to originate or maintain discussion. They themselves take on the responsibility to keep some class members from dominating others, and they do it by offering their share of talk and thinking of questions that will help the class explore course content more deeply.

Students think "outside the box" and are not afraid to take risks and try out new things.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS AND ATTENDANCE
35% -- Two papers, 6-8 pages long each (15% +20%)
45% -- Three tests (10% + 15% + 20%)
20% -- The reading summaries / quizzes / homework. In particular, unless specified otherwise, every Monday students are required to turn it a short (about 2 pages long, standard margins, font 12pp or less) reflection on the material to be discussed on a given day

Grading will be on the standard 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, etc.

Attendance policy: You can miss 1 class without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will result in the subtraction of 4 points from your overall grade. Coming to class significantly late, or leaving early, counts as a missed class.
MAKE-UP TESTS AND INCOMPLETES
Make-up exams will be permitted at the discretion of the instructor (in general, the student must have a good verifiable reason for the request). Make-up test should be taken few days after the original test, at a time arranged with the instructor. An incomplete for the course will be given at the discretion of the instructor and will only be considered in cases where course work is nearly complete, and the student has a good excuse for not completing the course work by the end of the semester.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
As a student at TAMU-CC, you are bound by the student code of conduct. Cheating, plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty is grounds for failing the course.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

August 27 (W): Classes Begin
September 01 Labor Day Holiday

WEEK 1 September 8: Organization and general introduction; What is Ethics?; Readings: Rachels, chapter 1, "What is Morality?" Sencerz, What is Ethics?

WEEK 2, Sept 15: Cultural Relativism
Rachels, Chapter 2, The Challenge of Cultural Relativism
C.E. Harris, Limited Moral Relativism

WEEK 3, Sept 22: Consequentialism: Egoism
Rachels, Chapter 5. Ethical Egoism
Plato, The Myth of Gyges; Rand: The Virtue of Selfishness;

WEEK 4, Sept 29, Consequentialism (continued): Utilitarian Ethics
Rachels, Chapters 7-8;
Also J.S. Mill, Utilitarianism

WEEK 5, October 06, Environmental Ethics
Singer, Animal Liberation,
VanDeVeer Interspecies Justice
Test #1 (10%)

WEEK 6, October 13, Deontology and the Ethics of Respect for Persons
Rachels, Chapters 7-8, Kant, The Categorical Imperative
Sencerz, Deontology (I) and Deontology (II) [H & W]

WEEK 7, October 20, Deontology continued
Paper #1 (15%)
WEEK 8, October 27, Does Morality Depend on Religion
Rachels, Chapter 4, Does Morality Depend on Religion
Harris, Ch. 6, Natural Law Theory, Aquinas: Ethics and Natural Law
Sencerz, Natural Law Theory [all H, and W]

WEEK 9, November 02, The Natural Law Theory (continued)
Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide [readings will be distributed in class]
Test #2 (15%)

WEEK 10, November 09, The Ethics and War
Readings, Just War Theory, Singer,
The President of Good and Evil

WEEK 11, November 17, The Idea of Social Contract
Readings, Rachels. Chapter 11

Week 12, November 24, What Would Satisfactory Theory Be Like?
Rachels, Chapter 13

WEEK 13, December 01, Extended Examples
Topics to be decided in class
The Final Paper is due (20%)

WEEK 13, December 01-08, Extended Examples
Topics to be decided in class

The Final Test (20%): M, Dec 15, 7:15 p.m.