

PHI 306
Applied Ethics
Fall 2024
Mondays, 4:50 PM-7:35 PM
SANDS 211

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY WEST
School of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies

Dr. Bertha Alvarez Manninen

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(best way of getting a hold of me)

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Zoom Link: <https://asu.zoom.us/j/9794135014>



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Required Readings and Texts:

You do not need to purchase a book for this course. All of the reading will be given to you as a PDF in each respective module on Canvas. There were also be required videos for you to watch, also available in the modules on Canvas.

Course Description

In this course we will first explore two of the most prominent moral theories (utilitarianism and deontology) and then apply those theories in order to critically analyze contemporary ethical issues. The issues are centered around pursuing justice and the common good when dealing with matters such as economic, sexual, and racial inequity, and considering what moral responsibilities we have to others who may have been socially marginalized. You will be acquainted with a range of moral theories, that will help you sharpen for capacity for moral observation, and to help you to philosophically apply this knowledge to timely events affecting our society. Another prominent goal, which will be developed through classroom discussions and writing assignments (which includes well thought-out discussion posts, essay exams, and a final paper), is to foster skills in civic communication, which will include listening, deliberating, and considering and rationally responding to ideas and arguments with which you may disagree. Students will be encouraged to think critically about how ethics functions in their own lives as citizens living in a diverse society.

In this class you will be challenged about your ethical beliefs – no matter what your beliefs are. This is **not** an attempt to dissuade you from those beliefs, or offend you, but to encourage you to think deeply about them. This will also to encourage and teach you to consider arguments from other people's point of view and civilly respond to those with whom you may disagree. You are welcome to share your beliefs and thoughts about the course content, but remember that you are expected to defend those beliefs using well-thought out arguments. The goal is to get you to a point where you can rationally defend your beliefs, whatever those may be. Consequently, I will not be revealing my own personal beliefs on any of these topics, so that you feel free to express your own.

Course Objectives

1. Students will learn to describe and critically assess utilitarianism and deontology.
2. Students will describe and critically assess classical and contemporary arguments in philosophy and applied ethics.
3. Students will express their thoughts about the week's topic via discussion posts.
4. Students will argue their personal beliefs about class topics using the course's literature; they will also be expected respond to differing beliefs civilly using rational argumentation.

Learning Outcomes

This course fulfills the ASU **Governance and Civic Engagement** General Studies requirement. Students completing a Governance and Civil Engagements will be able to:

1. Articulate diverse perspectives on the common or collective good.
2. Demonstrate the ability to collaborate effectively in the presence of dissenting opinions and experiences.
3. Communicate arguments, narratives, or information using qualitative or quantitative evidence.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to, through discussion and completing class assignments:

1. Articulate and analyze different perspectives relating to ethical/social issues.
2. Use critical thinking and analysis to be able to effectively respond to dissenting opinions.
3. Communicate arguments, narratives, or information about ethical dilemmas using qualitative or quantitative evidence.

Class Format

Classes will usually be conducted in a seminar format: the instructor and students will discuss the assigned readings together. The instructor will also utilize Power Points in order to emphasize the main points of the readings. *Although the instructor will use Power Points, the student is still expected to take his/her own notes in addition, since much of the elaboration of these main points will not be on the Power Points.* The instructor's role will primarily involve moderating and guiding the discussion, and answering technical questions about the readings, many of which are quite challenging. Students are *strongly* encouraged to contribute to discussions and to ask questions. All the Power Points will be available to the students and can be located in the appropriate module of the Canvas.

Participation: This format of this course balances lecture with discussion and debate. Your preparedness and participation is vital. Participation includes reading, listening, and discussing. Disruptive behavior (e.g., talking out of turn, being disrespectful to others, conducting your own personal conversations during class) or distracted behavior (e.g., sleeping, completing work for other classes, reading a newspaper, texting etc.) will earn you a pass out of the class. I want us to learn, be kind, and civilly interact with people who have opposing viewpoints.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

You are 100% responsible for EVERYTHING that you missed in class: lectures, assignments, and extra credit offers etc. The following are the pre-emptive answers to the most FAQs in reference to attendance.

Did I miss anything important?

Yes, if I bring it up in class, I do so for a reason. Everything that you miss is important.

Can you tell me what I missed in class?

If you do not understand something after you have done the readings, looked at the Power Points, and read over the notes, I will be happy to meet with you to clarify any holes you need filling.

What is your policy on late assignments?

Given that all the class assignments are given to you in advance with clear due dates, I generally do not give extensions unless there is an emergency or something important you need to tend to. In these cases, I will gladly work with you to come up with an alternative date. **I do advise you to manage your time effectively and not procrastinate on assignments. Procrastination will not get you an extension.**

Why did I get a ____ in the class? Can you give me a ____ instead?

If you get a bad grade in this class, it will most likely be the result of one or more of the following: poor attendance, failure to read the material, failure to pay attention in class, failure to ask the teacher questions in cases you do not understand something, or failure to take responsibility for this class or your education. I don't "give" grades; I simply communicate the grade you have earned. Therefore, I do not give a grade that you have not earned, so please do not ask me to improve your grade without you putting in the effort. If you know up front that you need a certain grade in this class, then please work from the very beginning to achieve that grade.

In short, here is my philosophy: I will go to the end of the world and back to help a student that really wants to learn and really puts in the effort. I am there for you 100%. I don't have time for students who do not take their education, or my class, seriously. It is up to you to decide which type of student you will be, and whether you will get the most out of this class.

Attendance and Personal Responsibility

There is no mandatory attendance in this class. You are adults and may choose to attend class as you see fit. However, keep in mind that, given the difficult nature of the material, missing a lecture may very well place you behind. I will also present extra credit opportunities that will only be accessible to people who were in class. In fact, here is an opportunity to earn one. Email me at any point during the semester a picture of your pet. If you don't have a pet, email me a picture of a friend's pet, or any animal you find cute. I will add 5 points to one of your discussion posts.

Absences due to religious observances/practices that are in accord with [ACD 304-04](#), will always be excused. Absences related to university sanctioned events/activities that are in accord with [ACD 304-02](#), will also always be excused. Absences related to any disability accommodations that you have through SAILS will also always be excused.

Course Requirements:

2 exams : These will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and an essay. The multiple choice section will test your knowledge of the course's content, while the essay will require to explain and critically analyze one of the topics in our lectures and readings. A study guide will be handed out for each one. Exam 1 will be available from 12:00 AM Tuesday October 15 and then will close at 7:35 PM (when class would have ended) on Monday October 21. Exam 2 will be available from 12:00 AM Tuesday November 19 and then will close on Monday November 25 at 7:35 PM (when class would have ended).

Final Paper: 10-15 pages, typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-font, one-inch margins. You will have two choices for your final paper. The first is an argumentative paper, where you will be able to argue in favor or against any of the ethical issues we have discussed in class. The other is what we will call an “ethical will”, and it is a chance to integrate the class material with your personal life. The paper will be *in lieu* of a final exam; that is, there is no final exam for the course. A more detailed instruction sheet will be distributed. **(100 points)**

Discussion Posts: You are expected to post a well-thought out comment on the discussion posts for each module, showing that you did the reading, watched the videos, and went through the PowerPoint lecture. You will be asked to include at least 2 direct citations from the readings (not the Powerpoints), and you are also to respond (thoughtfully and respectfully) to another student’s comment as well. This is an opportunity to express your views and civilly interact with others who may not share those views. You will get 6 points for your own discussion post, and 4 points for your response to another student (a total of 10 possible points per module, so you must do BOTH each week to get full credit). Each module is available for a 5 days (Monday through Friday) and is due by **noon on each Friday** (100 points).

Therefore, the total number of points possible for this class is **400** points.

Grading Scale: I use a +/- scale with the following breakdown:

A+ = 395+ (4.33)	C+ = 314 - 299 (2.33)
A = 394 – 379 (4.00)	C = 298 - 268 (2.00)
A- = 378 - 363 (3.67)	D = 267 - 237 (1.0)
B+ = 362 – 347 (3.33)	E = 236 and below
B = 346 - 331 (3.00)	
B- = 330 – 315 (2.67)	

I will not negotiate grades, either during or after the term is over. If you have a problem with the grade you are receiving in the class, or any other class policy, you need to speak with me early in the semester, and not at the last minute.

Student Responsibility:

Students are responsible for all information given to them by me during this class. This includes all verbal communication that occurs during the class and all written communication provided in the form of handouts, such as this syllabus. Absence and/or tardiness are not excuses for ignorance of any of this information. Students are also responsible for keeping up with all assigned readings and for all of the information contained in the readings. It is vital that students come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material. **Please set your cell phones on silent or vibrate during the class lecture. There is also no texting, e-mailing, social media, or any variation thereof in class. If I have reason to believe you are doing these, I will first address this in private, hoping we can resolve the matter this way.** I will also post several announcements and pertinent course information on the Canvas. Students are responsible for frequently checking the Canvas and their ASU e-mail in order to ensure that all information pertaining to the class is received.

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Academic Dishonesty:

In short, DON'T DO IT! I do not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty!

Any form of academic dishonesty, including any form of cheating or plagiarism, will be punished in accordance with University guidelines. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

1. Copying someone else's work from ANY source (e.g., article, book, internet website, or a friend's paper) and passing it on as something that you wrote for this class. **Using AI to write your paper is also a form of academic dishonesty.**
2. Using a paper or assignment written for another class, written either by you or someone else. I expect all the work in the class to be original, specifically for this class, and written by you.
3. Directly quoting someone and not using quotation marks to denote that it is a direct quotation rather than a paraphrase.
4. Failing to correctly cite ANYTHING that is not your idea, either within the text or in the bibliography page. You should use the Chicago Manual of Style, the APA style, or any other professional citing method to cite and create your bibliography. All styles can be found on the internet.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. Students in this class must adhere to ASU's academic integrity policy, which can be found at <https://provost.asu.edu/academic-integrity/policy>. Students are responsible for reviewing this policy and understanding each of the areas in which academic dishonesty can occur. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the New College Academic Integrity Office (AIO). The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to: appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification, and dismissal. The AIO maintains records of all violations and has access to academic integrity violations committed in all other ASU college/schools. If you have been reported to the Academic Integrity Office for violating the Student Academic Integrity Policy, you may not try to avert the sanctions by withdrawing from the course.

Statement of Disability:

SAILS provides information and services to students with any documented disability. Individualized program strategies and recommendations are available for each student as well as current information regarding community resources. Students may also access specialized equipment and support services. The office of SAILS will contact me with your needs, and we will work on getting all that you need to get support for this class. Absences according to your SAILS accommodations will always be excused and I will provide you with any material you may have missed in class, including extra credit opportunities.

For convenience, students will find offices located at the Downtown, Polytechnic, Tempe, and West Valley campus. You can contact any Student Accessibility office:

Phone: 480-965-1234

FAX: 480-965-0441

Email: Student.Accessibility@asu.edu

Downtown Phoenix, Post Office, Suite 201

Polytechnic, Wanner Hall - Suite 101

Tempe, Matthews Center building, 1st floor

West Valley, University Center Building, Room 304

Copyright

All course content and materials, including lectures, are copyrighted materials and students may not share outside the class, upload to online websites not approved by the instructor, sell, or distribute course content or notes taken during the conduct of the course (see [ACD 304-06](#), “Commercial Note Taking Services” and ABOR Policy [5-308 F.14](#) for more information).

Students must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student’s original work, unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement.

Course/Instructor Evaluation

The course/instructor evaluation for this course will be conducted online 7-10 days before the last official day of classes of each semester or summer session. Your response(s) to the course/instructor are anonymous and will not be returned to your instructor until after grades have been submitted. The use of a course/instructor evaluation is an important process that allows our college to (1) help faculty improve their instruction, (2) help administrators evaluate instructional quality, (3) ensure high standards of teaching, and (4) ultimately improve instruction and student learning over time. Completion of the evaluation is not required for you to pass this class and will not affect your grade, but your cooperation and participation in this process is critical. About two weeks before the class finishes, watch for an e-mail with "ASU Course/Instructor Evaluation" in the subject heading. The email will be sent to your official ASU e-mail address, so make sure ASU has your current email address on file. You can check this online at the following URL: <http://www.asu.edu/epouupdate/>.

Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eooss.asu.edu/counseling> is available if you wish discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits [discrimination](#), [harassment](#), and [retaliation](#) by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

Student Success

To be successful:

- check the course daily
- read announcements
- read and respond to course email messages as needed
- complete assignments by the due dates specified
- communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
- create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track
- access [ASU Student Resources](#)

Policy Against Threatening Behavior

All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student (whether on-or off campus) must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. If either office determines that the behavior poses or has posed a serious threat to personal safety or to the welfare of the campus, the student will not be permitted to return to campus or reside in any ASU residence hall until an appropriate threat assessment has been completed and, if necessary, conditions for return are imposed. ASU PD, the Office of the Dean of Students, and other appropriate offices will coordinate the assessment in light of the relevant circumstances. For more information please visit <https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/PoliciesAndProcedures> and <https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/safety/ThreateningBehavior>.

MISC.

As a caregiver myself, I understand that sometimes life throws you curveballs. If you are a caregiver who finds yourself without a sitter for a child for whom you are responsible, you are welcome to bring that child to class, rather than having to miss class altogether, so long as you are reasonably confident that the child will not disturb your, or your fellow classmates', learning. If you inform me sufficiently in advance, I can bring in one of my children's tablets for their use to keep them occupied.

Also, if you are ever hungry while on campus, or facing food insecurity, please come let me know. I can provide you with a quick bite to eat, and then point you toward resources that may be able to further help you.

We are partners in your learning experience. I expect you to do your part to the best of your ability and responsibility. I will do what I can from my end to make sure you leave my classroom a more educated human being.

Reading Schedule – Subject to revisions with ample notice; all reading assignments must be completed *before* you come to class.

8/26: Introduction to class

8/30: Discussion Post # 1 due by 12:00 PM.

9/2: LABOR DAY; NO CLASS!

MORAL THEORIES (this is a single document on the Canvas, but we will read it in two parts)

9/9: Read: Act v. Rule Utilitarianism

9/13: Discussion Post # 2 due by 12:00 PM

9/16: Read: Kantian and Rossian Deontology

9/20: Discussion Post # 3 due by 12:00 PM

DIETARY ETHICS

9/23: Read: Animal Liberation and The Conscientious Carnivore

9/27: Discussion Post # 4 due by 12:00 PM



AhoAhold Delhaize

MORAL OBLIGATIONS TO DISTANT OTHERS

9/30: Read: On the Obligation to Keep Informed About Distant Atrocities

[How To Stay Informed While Maintaining Your Mental Health](#) (5 minute read)

[Big Numbers Makes You Emotionally Numb](#) (5 minute read)

Also read: [The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas](#)

Watch: [iPhone Factory Struggles with Suicide](#)

[Uncovering Eight-year Old Children Working in Factories](#)

[The Dark Secret Behind Your Favorite Makeup Products](#)

[A Dutch Chocolate Company's Fight to End Illegal Child Labor](#)

[How Does Child Labor Still Exist in America?](#)

10/4: Discussion Post # 5 due by 12:00 PM

10/7: Read: [What Should a Billionaire Give – and What Should You?](#)

Watch: 30 Days – Minimum Wage

10/11: Discussion Post # 6 due by 12:00 PM

10/14: FALL BREAK; NO CLASS!

10/21: EXAM 1 will be available from 12:00 AM Tuesday October 15 and then will close at 7:35 PM (when class would have ended) on Monday October 21. The exam will close promptly at that time and will not be reopened unless there is a documented emergency. There is no class today (Monday) to give you time to go through the test during class time if you need to.

10/28: Special Presentation: Library Resources and Research Skills – Fletcher Library Classroom 101

11/1: Discussion Post # 7 due by 12:00 PM

DEHUMANIZATION

11/4: Read: (1) Less Than Human and (2) Learning From Genocide
(warning: graphic content)

Watch: Black Mirror: Men Against Fire

11/8: Discussion Post # 8 due by 12:00 PM



11/11: VETERAN'S DAY; NO CLASS!

A very big thank you to all of who have served, and your families as well. MichaelCandelol/Shutterstock



11/18: Read: Depicting Women as Sex Objects in Television Advertising: Effects on Body Dissatisfaction

Watch: [Killing Us Softly](#)

Read (or listen to podcast): [Men, Masculinity, and Mental Health.](#)

Watch: The Mask You Live In

11/22: Discussion Post # 9 due by 12:00 PM

11/25: EXAM 2 will be available from 12:00 AM Tuesday November 19 and then will close on Monday November 25 at 7:35 PM (when class would have ended). The exam will close promptly at that time and will not be reopened unless there is a documented emergency. There is no class today (Monday) to give you time to go through the test during class time if you need to.

12/2: Watch: The Human Experience

12/6: Discussion Post #10 due by 12:00 PM

12/8: FINAL PAPER DUE ON CANVAS by 11:59 PM

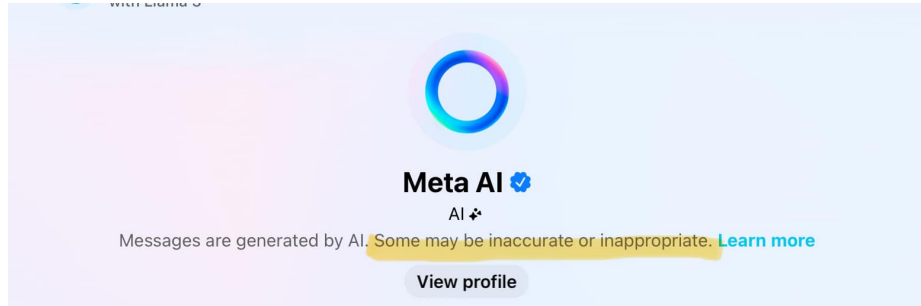


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Human Experience (movie)

[A NOTE ABOUT A.I. USE AND PLAGIARISM IN THIS CLASS](#)



I take the use of A.I. and plagiarism to complete all writing assignments in my classes very seriously, and I will be randomly checking assignments for A.I. use and plagiarism. I highly suggest you use Google Docs for all your writing assignments so that you can track the writing process and be able to show it if the question of A.I. use or plagiarism comes up. Here is why I care so much about this.

1. As the above picture shows, A.I. often gets stuff really wrong, and has been even caught using non-existent citations. It is unreliable.

2. [73% of employers want employees who have strong written communication skills](#). Relying on A.I. or plagiarism to do your writing for you will not cultivate these skills. The assignments in this class are meant to help you improve these capacities.

4. John Spencer talks about the effects of A.I. in contributing to cognitive atrophy:

“We are experiencing a phenomenon called cognitive atrophy. We typically think of cognitive atrophy as a phenomenon related to aging and to cognitive decline through dementia and Alzheimer’s. On a biological level, cognitive atrophy refers to the gradual decline in cognitive functions due to the degeneration of brain cells or a decrease in brain mass, not unlike a muscle that atrophies. This process can affect various aspects of cognitive ability such as memory, decision making, and problem-solving skills. But I see the same phenomenon when we allow technology to do an entire thinking process for us... One of my biggest concerns with AI is cognitive atrophy. I love the question and answer nature of a chatbot but I worry about the lack of productive struggle it might cause. I worry about instant answers and the loss of things like boredom and confusion that are so necessary for the learning process. I love how AI can help with ideation but I never want it to be my default in brainstorming. I worry about people using AI for writing and failing to understand that we learn to think deeply *through* writing. It's not merely the way we demonstrate our learning. It's often how we learn. I worry that we might become so dependent on AI that we lose the ability to engage in certain types of thinking.”

While I understand the desire to use your education for economic success, and there is absolutely *nothing* wrong with that, I encourage you not to let your college education be *only* about that. This is your time to explore new ideas, learn critical thinking skills, learn how to civilly disagree with people with whom you disagree, take time to contemplate important questions about human existence and the meaning of life, and cultivate your mind and your soul. The human mind can be a powerful and beautiful thing – don’t let yourself experience cognitive atrophy.

As a teacher, I am dedicated to belief that education is supposed to help you become a better human being in many ways – intellectually, economically, ethically, and spiritually. Relying on a machine to do all your thinking for you is equivalent to throwing that opportunity away. So please, don’t do it. If you need help writing, or want to improve your writing and critical thinking skills, come to me so I can help you achieve those goals. It’s my job to help you, and it is one I value and take very seriously.

- Prof. Manninen.