

PHIL 2244: Engineering Ethics (3 credits)

SECTION 001: LA 372, F, 1:00 –1:50 p.m.

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Edward Johnson
Office: Liberal Arts 395
Office Hours: 9:30 – 10:00 MWF and 2:00 – 3:30 F (and by appointment)
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Course Webpages: [Moodle](#) login page

Required Text

[1] Harris, Charles E., et al., *Engineering Ethics: Concepts and Cases* (Wadsworth, 2014), ISBN-13: 9781133934684

Course Description

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: This course will examine ethical issues arising in the professional and social-policy aspects of engineering. Coverage includes such topics as: codes of professional ethics, methods of moral problem solving, honesty, risk, responsibilities to employers and to the public, technology and the environment, and moral issues in management, research, and consulting.

COURSE OVERVIEW: We will study concepts and cases relating to ethical problems encountered in the profession of engineering, including the requirements of responsibility; the challenges of technology; the role of trust, risk, and liability; environmental impact; and the effects of globalization.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- Identify features of practical situations relevant to moral evaluation in engineering
- Define key concepts in ethics
- Evaluate the persuasiveness of moral arguments of different types
- Apply ethical concepts studied to new kinds of cases in engineering
- Synthesize, in effective presentations, central aspects of ethical debate in this area
- Articulate the importance of the concept of “conflict of interests”
- Explain the relevance of professional standards to engineering contexts

Grades will be based on a 100 point scale distributed as follows:

Requirement		Final grade	
Participation	(10%) 10 points	A	90 – 100 points
Case Presentation	(15%) 15 points	B	80 – 81 points
Exam 1	(25%) 25 points	C	70 – 79 points
Exam 2	(25%) 25 points	D	60 – 69 points
Final Exam	(25%) 25 points	F	0 – 59 points

PARTICIPATION: The class will meet on Fridays, from 1:00 to 1:50, in LA 370. The Undergraduate/Graduate Catalog states: "Students are expected to attend all classes regularly and punctually. **A student who is not present when attendance is checked in a class is considered absent.**" The Attendance Policy of the Department of English states: "When a student has missed a total of 1½ weeks of classes ... the instructor may request that the student's dean put the student on attendance probation. ... Continued absences from any ... class will subject the student to full penalties ... including failing the course..." That reasonable policy, in the case of a class meeting once a week, would allow for, say, two absences. **Each additional absence (beyond the two) will incur a four-point penalty deduction from the student's final semester average.** Attendance means attending the entire class: **attendance may be checked more than once during class.** Students who leave early without permission will be assessed ½ absence for that day. Students should be on time; those who arrive more than 20 minutes late will be assessed ½ absence for that day. Attendance at public events requires a commitment to contribute to the maintenance of public order for the sake of a shared benefit: this includes paying attention and participating appropriately.

LATE WORK: Late work will be accepted solely at the discretion of the instructor, and only with a sufficient, documented excuse, for a limited time (depending, of course, on the excuse).

EXAMS: There will be two in-class exams, and a final exam, in which you will respond to questions about the material covered. The format may include essay/short answer. You will be expected to demonstrate in your answers that you have thought about the issues in an informed, thoughtful, and articulate way, in language showing an appropriate mastery of college-level communication skills.

CASE PRESENTATIONS: The class will be divided into assigned groups, and each group will be responsible for a ten-minute group presentation at the end of the semester. The presentation will analyze the ethical problem in some practical case. Each group will submit a written summary, due at the time of the presentation, and will receive a group grade based on the presentation and the summary. This is a collaborative project, and the members of each group will be responsible for meeting as needed during the course of the semester.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu> [This section is quoted from mandated University language.]

ATTENDANCE: Required. See the section Participation above.

ELECTRONICS: Use of electronic devices is, in general, not allowed during class. You may use a laptop computer or a tablet to take notes, but not during exams (unless required for disability accommodations). Use of phones, e-mailing, texting, online surfing, etc., are not permitted during class.

MAKE-UP EXAMS: Make-up exams are strongly discouraged, as the absence of support staff makes scheduling flexibility difficult. Any make-up exam (if the instructor determines that it is warranted) will have to take place during the instructor's office hours.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS: It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu> [This section is quoted from mandated University language.]

ASSESSMENT: You will be required to complete a Pre-instruction Assessment document at the first class, and a Post-instruction Assessment document at the last class. These will not be graded, but good-faith completion of both assessments is a requirement of the course. This is a component of our department's effort to evaluate and improve instruction by measuring learning outcomes. You will have a separate opportunity to provide an evaluation of the course.

WARNING: Learning philosophy requires the ability to examine critically, from a variety of perspectives, one's most basic assumptions about what is true and what is valuable. Critical examination involves challenging what we take for granted. Students occasionally find such an experience unsettling, as it may instill doubt about matters thought to be secure, or may require a serious engagement with ideas, language, or viewpoints the student finds threatening, or offensive, or absurd. This is especially possible in connection with controversial topics in ethics, politics, and religion. We will deal with any controversial matters in an explicit, candid, and analytical fashion. Your continued enrollment in this course constitutes acceptance of the right of other students, and the right of the professor, to explore relevant ideas, language, and viewpoints in a frank and open manner. If you object to that – if you think rational adults should be prevented from discussing certain subjects, or speaking certain words, or viewing certain images – then this is not the course for you.

PHIL 2201 Timeline *(subject to revision)*

DAY	TOPIC/READING
Jan 16	Introduction and pre-instruction assessment
Jan 23	Engineering ethics (Harris, Ch. 1)
Jan 30	Tools of Ethics (Harris, Ch. 2)
Feb 6	Responsibility (Harris, Ch. 3)
Feb 13	First Exam
Feb 20	Technology (Harris, Ch. 4)
Feb 27	Reliability (Harris, Ch. 5)
Mar 6	Risk and Liability (Harris, Ch. 6) [Final Drop Date: March 11]
Mar 13	Second Exam
Mar 20	Organizations (Harris, Ch. 7)
Mar 27	Environment (Harris, Ch. 8)
Apr 3	No class – spring break
Apr 10	Globalization (Harris, Ch. 9)
Apr 17	Case presentations
Apr 24	Case presentations
May 1	Conclusion, post-instruction assessment, and course evaluations
May 8	Final Exam (12:30 – 2:30 p.m.)

Syllabus Acknowledgement

PHIL 2244-001, Spring 2015

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the syllabus for this course, and I understand that it is my obligation as a student to read it, familiarize myself with its contents, and inquire in a timely way about any points on which I have questions.

I acknowledge, in particular, that it is my responsibility to be aware of the timeline of course activities (reading assignments, exam dates, paper deadlines, etc.) and am aware that nonperformance or tardy performance will affect my final course grade adversely.

I acknowledge also that failure to comply with course and university policies and requirements regarding academic integrity will expose me to serious academic sanctions.

Finally, I acknowledge that the instructor and the institution reserve the right to make reasonable changes during the semester, as circumstances warrant.

Student's name (printed): _____

Student's signature: _____

Date: _____