

Syllabus
LAIS 320/BELS 320
Ethics

Instructor: Sandy Woodson
Office: 402 Stratton Hall
Office Phone: 303/384-2335
Email: swoodson@mines.edu (the best way to contact me)
Office Hours: Mondays 3-4, Thursdays 12-4, and by appointment

Course Objectives: The purpose of this course is to “do” philosophy. We will be reading, writing, and talking ethics, which means we will examine major concepts, e.g., “evil,” and the “big” theories, like Utilitarianism. We will be reading both primary and secondary texts, and some of the readings are difficult. By working through the texts, concepts, and theories, however, students will improve their analytic skills and gain tools to formulate and evaluate arguments, including their own.

Texts: 1) *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 6th Edition, by James Rachels & Stuart Rachels.
2) *Morality and the Good Life*, 5th Edition, by Robert C. Solomon, Clancy Martin & Wayne Vaught.
3) Other readings on reserve or Blackboard.

* We will start the course with the Rachels and Blackboard texts, so feel free to get a less expensive copy of the Solomon/Clancy text. I’ve had good luck on bestbookbuys.com, but do make sure to get the correct edition of each text.

Attendance: Regular attendance is vital—there will material presented in class that will be unavailable elsewhere. If you simply skip class, it is YOUR responsibility to contact ANOTHER STUDENT to get the information about what happened in class. If you are ill (or have some other serious excuse), first try to get the information from another student, and contact the instructor for clarification. If you have a legitimate reason for missing class, please let me know. If you’re skiing, I don’t need to know about that.

Grading & Class Structure: The final grade is comprised of a number of different requirements, and a description of each requirement is provided below. There are 1000 points possible for this course.

Weekly reading summary: (Almost) every Wednesday, students are required to submit a 400-600 (total) word summary of the all the readings for the entire week. Each submission will receive a “golden checkmark,” but it is possible to get a “minus”: if your summary is clearly incomplete and only cursory effort has been expended, or it comes in late there’s no reason to assign full credit. EACH SUMMARY IS SUBMITTED TO TURNITIN.COM. I will read them from the turnitin site. *100 points. Late summaries (not submitted by class time) will receive half credit, but will not be accepted at all over one week late.*

Tests: there will be three tests that cover the readings and information presented during class. There are NO make-ups for the test, unless you have a brain tumor or some other equally serious, DOCUMENTED, emergency. *Tests are open notes (including the summaries, above), but NOT*

open book. Obviously, taking good notes and writing complete summaries will be to your advantage. 150 points each, 450 total.

Papers: A total of two papers—an “ethical autobiography” (50 points), and a final paper (150 points). The final paper is in lieu of a final exam. Detailed instructions will be provided in class. A hard copy must be submitted in class and an electronic copy must be submitted to turnitin.com, **on the due date**. Papers are considered late if either one of those submissions is not made, and late papers lose _ letter grade per day (weekends included). Papers will not be graded until they are submitted to turnitin.

Presentation: will be in the form of a **case study**. Each student will sign up for a team (of 5-6) and then work together to present a *single controversial issue* that exemplifies some element of the reading for that week. The issue is your choice, but it must not duplicate any other presentation topic (so choosing a date earlier in the semester is beneficial). Presentation of the case study should include enough background information that a class discussion will be possible, and the presentation of information (not including discussion) should last 30-40 minutes. *100 points*

Participation: This class will be MUCH more enjoyable for all concerned if the instructor isn’t the only one talking. This means students need to discuss (out loud) ideas and issues. Clearly, participation grades will be negatively affected by absences and lack of preparation (reading). This part of your grade will also be negatively affected by doing homework for other classes, taking a wee nap, or checking Facebook. For those who are petrified/hate talking in class, use the discussion board on blackboard to meet the participation requirements. Do note that participation grades accrue throughout the semester. If you aren’t talking in class every week, you should be posting to the Blackboard discussion board every week instead. Posting four times the last week of class is too late. *100 points* (Note* some in-class work, e.g., presentation evaluations, are also used in determining this score.)

Golden Rotary Club Ethics in Business Award: Students in the Mines’ ethics classes will be choosing a winner (and judgment criteria) for this annual award. Details to follow in class. *50 points*

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Minimally, that means that sources should be cited—even in short papers and reading responses—and if four words in a row are used verbatim, quotation marks (and a citation) must appear. Direct quotes should ALWAYS be cited (including a page number). Finally, every paper submitted should be uniquely created for this class, which means you cannot submit the same paper for two different classes. *Always err on the side of caution*, and don’t hesitate to ask questions at any time. A documented case of plagiarism will receive a “0” for the assignment, and particularly heinous instances will result in an “F” for the course.

Decorum: while having fun and laughing are good, do not allow silliness to overcome serious thinking. Written work should always be professional in appearance and content, and class discussions should always be respectful and civil. Disagreements will happen, but remember that discussion isn’t about winning the argument; discussions are to allow exploration of ideas, testing of your own and others’ thinking.