

Philosophy 312: Ethics – Ethics Bowl  
Autumn 2023  
MWF 12:20p – 1:10p / Humanities 109

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Office: 225A Fitz Center (1401 S. Main St.)

Office Hours: M 1:30p – 2:30p in Humanities 408 / Th 12:00p – 1:00p in 225A Fitz Center

#### Required Text:

There is **no required text**. There is, however, one optional text:

- *Why We Argue (and how we should)* by Aiken & Talisse; ISBN: 978-1-138-08742-2

#### Course Description

The Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl involves teams of students who prepare analyses of a variety of cases created to explore a variety of topics within practical and professional ethics. Cases are drawn from areas such as: the classroom (e.g. cheating or plagiarism), personal relationships (e.g. dating or friendship), professional ethics (e.g. engineering, law, medicine), or social and political ethics (e.g. free speech, gun control, etc). During each competition match, a case is selected from the set and a moderator poses questions based on that case. These questions seek to delve deeper into the multiple ethical dimensions of the case. Rating criteria are based on intelligibility, focus on ethically relevant considerations, avoidance of ethical irrelevance, and deliberative thoughtfulness. The Ethics Bowl Course will be focused on giving students the time and space to gain crucial background ethical education, develop their analyses of the cases, prepare their presentations and strategies, and compete in the Regional and National Competitions.

#### Learning Goals

1. To build a foundation of ethical discernment and action.
2. To develop, refine, and articulate one's values.
3. To engage with contemporary ethical problems through Ethics Bowl Cases.
4. To work together with a team to understand diverse perspectives and propose responses to ethical challenges.
5. To cultivate one's presentational skills.

#### General Course Etiquette

There will on occasion be passionate disagreement—it is vital that we remain courteous to each other and to each other's point of view. It is possible to criticize arguments without showing disrespect for the people who endorse them—that is what we will strive to do. In particular, I will often remind the class that we operate under two fundamental assumptions: **no one in the class is stupid, and no one in the class is evil**. No matter what is said, lean on those truths and respond in kind. In addition to this basic tenant of charity, I will also challenge students to themselves have a **“willingness to be disturbed”**. That is, we must all have a willingness to have our beliefs and ideas challenged. Finally, it is important that we all **monitor our airtime**, ensuring both that we do not take up too much space, but also that we step up and are heard.

## Standard Classroom Expectations and Attendance Policy

Everyone is expected to come to class, on time, having completed the assigned reading. In class, students are expected to be engaged. Failures will result in deductions to the citizenship grade for the course. In particular, for each unexcused absence exceeding four, students will receive a 10% deduction on their citizenship grade. I regularly excuse absences when kept in the loop.

## Assignments and Evaluation

### Citizenship (15%)

Philosophy is an activity. Like many activities, you'll only get as much out of doing philosophy as you put into it. To encourage engagement, 15% of your grade will depend in part on your being an active, appropriate, and interesting contributor to the class, both in class and group discussions. I understand that speaking up in class is difficult for some students. To that end, this grade encompasses more than hand-raising. I primarily ask that all students are good citizens of the course. Thus, students who are present, clearly attentive, and who show engagement in other ways will also be rewarded.

### Research – informal write ups (15%)

For each case you are primary or secondary on you will need to do background research. That should begin by investigating the sources given in the case itself but should also include more sources that you dig up on your own. You will be sharing your sources to the google docs file for the relevant case, along with a short summary of the key points of each source. These can be updated over the semester but must be completed before the competition.

### Written Case Prep (24%)

Each case will require a crafted, structured argument anticipating different possible questions, and highlighting 2-3 main arguments on both sides of the issue. This write up will be the basis for the oral presentation, so it should be clear, organized, and comprehensive. You will share them on the google docs file for the relevant case. These can be updated over the semester, but a first draft should be posted before the first Mock Bowl for the case, and the final draft must be posted before the competition.

### Feedback to Team Members & Other Teams (11%)

Your team members rely on you to backstop them, notice flaws in their arguments, help them improve their presentation. When the case being discussed is one where you're neither primary nor secondary on you will be required to give feedback to those who are. Moreover, when you are not participating in a Mock Bowl, you will be required to give feedback to the teams competing.

### Final Presentations (15%)

1-2 weeks before the competition we will organize a series of final practices that will mimic, as close as possible, the actual conditions of the real competition.

### Non-Bowl Papers (20%)

There are two weeks of class before Bowl Prep begins and two weeks of class following the competition, in which we will discuss ethical theory and additional ethical topics. You will be required to write two short papers (3-4 pages) in these weeks bookending Ethics Bowl.

### A Rough Guide to Citizenship Grade

A: the student excels in the foregoing by contributing significantly and substantively to class discussion, engaging respectfully with other students, exhibiting excellent preparation for class, and attending class regularly.

B: the student does well in the foregoing by occasionally contributing to class discussion, engaging respectfully with other students, exhibiting good preparation for class, and attending class regularly.

C: the student does a fair job in the foregoing by contributing infrequently, listening respectfully but engaging fellow students very little, exhibiting only cursory preparation for class, or attending class less than regularly.

D-F: student does poorly in the foregoing, rarely contributing if at all, perhaps disrupting class, exhibiting little or no preparation for class, or attending class infrequently.

### Late and Make-Up Work

No make-ups or extensions will be granted for any assignment unless you provide either (1) written (and approved) notice of absence beforehand, or (2) written documentation of an emergency situation afterward.

### Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is a very serious issue. I will be vigilant about plagiarism and other forms of cheating. For all our benefit, please simply do the required readings and make use of the course resources (including your instructor) to do well in the course by appropriate means. I am here to help. This course will be governed by UD's Academic Honor Code: [https://udayton.edu/business/undergraduate-academics/advising/honor\\_code.php](https://udayton.edu/business/undergraduate-academics/advising/honor_code.php).

## Schedule of Topics/Readings:

### Week 1-2: Introductions and Ethics 101

- 8/21: Syllabus & Introduction
- 8/23: Watch Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl Nationals 2022
- 8/25: Ethics 101: Utilitarianism
- 8/28: Ethics 101: Deontology
- 8/30: Ethics 101: Virtue Ethics
- 9/1: Ethics 101: Alternate Theories: Care Ethics, Pluralism, and Social Contract

### Week 3: Case Assignments

- 9/4: Labor Day – No Class**
- 9/6: Read Through Cases
- 9/8: Case Assignments

### Weeks 4-12: First Round Case Prep

\*\*\* This is a tentative schedule based on the number of cases from 2022.  
The schedule will be finalized after the cases have dropped. \*\*\*

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|--|---|
| 9/11 & 13: Case 1                        | <b>10/13: Class Canceled</b>              |
| 9/15 & 18: Case 2                        | <b>10/16: Fall Break – No Class</b>       |
| 9/20 & 22: Case 3                        | <b>10/18: Mock Bowl – Cases 5 &amp; 6</b> |
| 9/25 & 27: Case 4                        | 10/20 & 23: Case 7                        |
| <b>9/29: Mock Bowl – Cases 1 &amp; 2</b> | 10/25 & 27: Case 8                        |
| <b>10/2: Mock Bowl – Cases 3 &amp; 4</b> | 10/30 & 11/1: Case 9                      |
| 10/4 & 6: Case 5                         | <b>11/3: Mock Bowl – Cases 7 &amp; 8</b>  |
| 10/9 & 11: Case 6                        | <b>11/6: Mock Bowl – Case 9</b>           |

### Weeks 12-13: Final Presentation Prep

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|---|---|
| 11/8: Final Presentations: Cases 1 & 2  | 11/15: Final Presentations: Cases 7 & 8 |
| 11/10: Final Presentations: Cases 3 & 4 | 11/17: Final Presentations: Case 9      |
| 11/13: Final Presentations: Cases 5 & 6 |   |

## 11/18: Ethics Bowl!

### Weeks 14-16: Ethics Beyond the Bowl – Topics TBD

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|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 11/20: Debrief & Topic Selection | 11/27 & 29: Topic #1 |
| <b>11/22: Thanksgiving Break</b> | 12/1: Topic #2       |
| <b>11/24: Thanksgiving Break</b> | 12/4 & 6: Topic #3   |

**Final Paper Due 12/12 @ 4:20p.**

## University Services

### Disabilities

I will strive to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. Students may experience academic barriers based on a range of disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions). Students requiring accommodation must provide me with appropriate paperwork in week 1 of the semester, so that I may implement the accommodation(s) in a timely fashion. For more information on accommodations, please visit [The Learning Center's Office of Learning Resources \(OLR\)](#).

### Mental Health Services

As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. UD offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the [Counseling Center](#) or by calling (937) 229-3141. 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

### Student Success Network

I will be using the Student Success Network (SSN) in this course as an early identification and intervention system designed to enable students' academic success and graduation. If I notice that you are struggling with issues such as attendance or assignment/test performance, I may choose to send notification through SSN to put you in touch with appropriate campus resources. These referrals are designed to maximize your chances for success at the University, not as punishment, so please respond to any communications you may receive. [Please see the Student Success Network website](#) for more information.

### Information Point

The Write Place and Roesch Library's reference services offer free research and writing assistance on any assignment, at any stage of the writing process. Additionally, UDit's TechExpress offers free technical support for printing, password troubleshooting and laptops. These services are offered at Roesch Library's first-floor Information Point. Hours are listed online at [libcal.udayton.edu/hours](http://libcal.udayton.edu/hours). For more information, visit Roesch Library or see the Get Help page: <https://www.udayton.edu/libraries/help.php>.

### Religious Accommodations

The University of Dayton strives for an inclusive climate and welcomes students from all backgrounds, faiths and experiences. If religious observance impedes your ability to participate fully in classroom activities or a principal holiday from your religious tradition occurs during the semester and conflicts with class meetings or activities, please make the professor aware of this immediately to determine if a reasonable accommodation is possible. [Find out more about how to request a religious accommodation](#).