I. Overview

This course will review and analyze some central questions regarding right and wrong. What follows is a tentative thematic list of the topics to be covered. This list is tentative because it might mutate and evolve slightly to reflect the class’ interests and composition. The course will be roughly divided into four broad sections:

1) The nature and practice of philosophical inquiry and the logic of argumentation.
2) The question of the existence of good & evil (or, are such things as good & evil really out there?).
3) The nature of good & evil (or, how does one determine what is right & wrong?).
4) Applying what we’ve learned to some current moral dilemmas.

II. Texts

Collection of Blackboard readings. You are expected to carefully study the material by the course’s day number in the table below. **You’re expected to have read the first two chapters of the “Fact Finding” document by day number: 1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERes Reading</th>
<th>Day #</th>
<th>Topic Breakdown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical and Scientific Thinking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>a) Facts &amp; How to find them</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Induction</td>
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<td>c) Deduction</td>
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<td>d) Abductions</td>
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<td>e) Argument reconstruction</td>
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<td>Steven Pinker’s &quot;Nature vs Nurture&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>a) Evolution</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>b) The origins of your moral brain</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c) The nature versus Nurture controversy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morality &amp; The Brain 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>a) The Science of Right and Wrong</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Brain Roots of right &amp; wrong</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>c) Infant origins of human kindness</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>d) Beyond intuition</td>
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<td>e) Do your worst, virtually</td>
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<td>f) Morality put to the test</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Religion & Ethics | 5 | a) Religion & Ethics 1  
b) The new atheism  
c) The search for ethical theories |
|------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------|
| Ethical Theory   | 6 | a) Utilitarian Theory  
b) Happiness versus Pleasure  
c) The Utilitarian Calculus |
|                  | 7 | a) Utilitarian Theory: Objections  
b) Rule versus Act Utilitarian  
c) Case studies |
|                  | 8 | a) Kantian Deontology  
b) Objections  
c) Case Studies |
|                  | 9 | a) Aristotelian Virtue Ethics  
b) Happiness Revisited |
|                  | 10| a) Sam Harris’ Naturalized Ethics Documentary  
b) Wrap up & discussion |

### III. Grading

- **Total Points for Semester: 100 points, Final Grade Distributed as Follows:**
  - A+ (100-98); A (97-94); A- (93-90)
  - B+ (89-87); B (86-84); B- (83-80)
  - C+ (79-77); C (76-74); C- (73-70)
  - D+ (69-67); D (66-64); D- (63-61)
  - ≤60=F
- **Numerical Equivalencies for Grades**
  - A+ = 4.0  A = 4.0  A- = 3.7
  - B+ = 3.3  B = 3.0  B- = 2.7
  - C+ = 2.3  C = 2.0  C- = 1.7
  - D+ = 1.3  D = 1.0  D- = 0.7
  - F = 0.0

### IV. Course Policies, Course Goals, and Student Learning Outcomes

- **A.** Readings for each class will be assigned in advance. You will be expected to critically study this material **before** class (i.e. read it seriously enough to be able to participate in class discussions by answering and having questions regarding this material). My lectures **will not repeat** the reading material but **critically analyze and supplement** it. Attendance to class is mandatory and class participation is highly recommended.
- **B.** By the conclusion of the course you will hopefully improve in three skills, demonstrated in your oral participation in class discussion, oral presentations, and in your writing assignments: (1) exposition of text, (2) reconstruction of argument, (3) critical evaluation of argument.
C. *Office hours, or emails, are not alternatives to missed classes.* You **should not email your professor requesting a report of the class material covered, or an enquiry regarding homework, or other assignments. Emails requesting any of the above will not be answered.**

D. Any other email inquiries are welcomed and you should expect to receive a response within 24 hours. All emails should be written in proper English (e.g. no emoticons); in proper form (not as if you were chatting).

E. **Every** email subject area you should provide the your course’s correct name and number.

F. To ensure that I receive your email, you should use your UAF email address – other email providers might be spammed.

G. **Every** email should end with your signature: your full name -- as it appears in the class roster.

V. **Disabilities Services**

You should also be aware that the UAF Office of Disability Services implements the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and insures that UAF students have equal access to the campus and course materials. I will work with the Office of Disabilities staff (located at Center for Health and Counseling, Whitaker Building.474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities.

VI. **Course Policies**

A. **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend every class and actively participate in the discussion of the assigned readings. Students having more than **ONE** unexcused absence may, at the discretion of the instructor, be withdrawn from the course (see below).

B. **Incomplete Grades:** Students should consult with the course instructor well in advance of the final examination to establish that an incomplete grade for the course is warranted. Students must have been performing minimally at “C” level and completed more than 50% of the required coursework to warrant an incomplete. According to UAF grade policy, an “I” not changed to a letter grade converts to an “F”.

C. **Late Assignments:** Assignments are to be submitted when due unless previous arrangement has been made with the instructor to allow for mitigating circumstances. Papers submitted late without prior arrangement might not be accepted or they might be assigned a late penalty.

VII. **Evaluation**

*Four Exams  (25% each)* These exams will require the application of the material discussed in class. These exams will be about 1/4 of the course apart (2-3 days of class), and refer to the material discussed in their particular 1/4 of the class.