

**AGRICULTURAL ETHICS — AGR/PHIL 330**  
**SPRING 2012**  
(rev 2)

<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Instructors</b>	<p>Thomas O. Holtzer– 491-5843  Thomas.Holtzer@ColoState.edu  Department of Bioagricultural Sciences and Pest Management  C129 Plant Sciences Building</p> <p>Harold Gamble – 491-1787  Harold.Gamble@ColoState.edu  Department of Philosophy  222 Eddy Hall</p>
<b>Lecture Periods</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30-1:45, 9 Eddy
<b>General Course Objectives</b>	<p>Agriculture is the most important human activity. It makes life possible. Agriculture is the source of our food and most of our fiber and provides employment for many of the world's people. It is the most important and largest human interaction with the environment. Because of its importance, size, and distribution, agriculture unavoidably interacts with social, political, economic, and all other realms of human activity.</p> <p>Agricultural education typically emphasizes learning to do things that increase food and fiber production. This course will examine the values underlying agriculture's productive practices. Students will be encouraged to think about the values implicit in agricultural practices and reasons supporting present agricultural practices and practices that may replace them in the future.</p> <p>Agriculture is under attack from many quarters because it is no longer uniformly regarded as serving the public interest. Agricultural practitioners and many critics of agriculture typically lack knowledge of their ethical foundations and are often unable to articulate and defend their values. This course is designed to bring clarity to the debate surrounding some agricultural issues and explore the ethical dimension of operative values. However, in one semester, no course can examine every ethical issue in agriculture. This course addresses a broad spectrum of issues, but also emphasizes issues important to Colorado. Skills gained will help students pursue analyses of other important agricultural issues.</p> <p>The course will enable identification of value conflicts and provide a framework for discussing them. Students should develop the ability to understand their own views as well as opposing views of ethical issues and be able to articulate and defend various views and the values they represent. Students who complete the course successfully should be able to define and interpret basic concepts in ethics and ethical decision making and be able to use these concepts in discussions of contemporary agricultural issues.</p>

**GENERAL INFORMATION  
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**Specific Course Objectives**

1. To define and interpret basic concepts in ethics and ethical decision making and be able to use these concepts to discuss contemporary agricultural issues.
2. To examine the values underlying agricultural practices.
3. To bring clarity to the debate surrounding some agricultural issues and explore the ethical dimension of operative values.

**Instructional Method**

There will be lectures, but they will not be the dominant mode of instruction. Students will be expected to complete reading and writing assignments on time and come to class prepared to ask and discuss questions about the day's topic and the assigned readings. Students who do not do the reading and other assignments and think about the issues raised in them are unlikely to do well in the class. The instructional objective is not to convince students that a particular position or argument is correct but to guide students toward development of the skills of analysis and evaluation of arguments. To do this, all must participate and be willing to challenge and be challenged. Ethical argument and philosophical analysis are not easy things to do. Regular attendance and reading are essential to success in this class. The dominant instructional technique will be questioning and dialogue, not lecture. Participation is expected.

**Methods of Evaluation**

There will be several (about 3 or 4) announced or unannounced quizzes. Quizzes will emphasize assigned readings and ethical concepts and typically will be a combination of multiple choice and essay." If missed, these quizzes cannot be made up unless there is a documented reason for the absence. There will be a "take-home" midterm exam and a final exam that will have both "take-home" and "in-the-final-exam-period" components. Both will consist entirely or almost entirely of essay type questions. In addition, there will be a writing assignment (described below).

**Writing Assignment**

Students will submit an in-depth exploration of the ethical arguments on both sides (in some cases multiple sides) of an agricultural issue. Students are encouraged to investigate issues that are not listed for discussion on the class schedule and develop a topic of particular interest to them. Alternatively, students may choose a topic that has been or will be discussed in class. All students are encouraged to discuss topic selection with Holtzer or Gamble. Topics and a 2-4 sentence initial description of the specific ethical questions that are relevant to the topic area must be submitted via email to Holtzer or Gamble no later than February 16th (earlier is better). Topics must be approved by one of the instructors. The paper is due via email before class on Thursday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> with a hard copy provided in class on Thursday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>. One of the instructors will read and comment on it. Students will have the opportunity to revise the paper, addressing the instructor's comments for additional credit. The revised version of the paper is due via email before class on Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> with a hard copy provided in class on Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> (together with a copy of the paper as turned in on March 22<sup>nd</sup>).

**GENERAL INFORMATION  
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**Writing  
Assignment  
(Continued)**

Papers should be analytical, not expository. Analysis means breaking a subject into pieces and considering how each piece relates to the whole. The best papers will be open-minded, reflective, challenging, and more likely to question than assert. Well written papers will demonstrate that the writer understands the arguments of all sides and is capable of making distinctions that hold differences open rather than excluding and rejecting. The papers should use arguments that persuade the reader, rather than reducing the reader to silence by refuting or ignoring other views. Analysis involves stating a hypothesis and then presenting arguments that defend and refute the hypothesis. Analysis considers questions of causation (why questions). In analytical writing, one is frequently not sure of the answer and does not assume there is only one answer.

In developing ethics analysis papers, it is often useful to ask yourself the following question: The action proposed is good or correct because? Then give the ethical reason or reasons why the action is good. Answers could, but do not have to, include the following kinds of reasons:

1. The proposed action could be regarded as a universal good thing if applied to all people, in all places, and in all times.
2. The proposed action will lead to a net increase in the happiness (broadly defined) of creatures (perhaps, but not necessarily, only humans) who are affected by the act. There will be less suffering and more happiness, less pain and more pleasure.
3. The proposed action treats all sentient creatures with respect. The action does not treat others as simply a means to an end.

**Guidance:** Saying "I don't like it" or "it is true to me" is not sufficient. Arguing that it has always been done this way, or if we do some proposed act, the farm/ranch will fail economically, will not be persuasive. Reasons must be provided for judgments or preferences (such as likes or dislikes) and they must be backed with evidence and good arguments. Quotes from religious texts providing advice or commands may be used, but they are not arguments. To prepare an adequate paper, students must allow sufficient time to study articles and arguments carefully, think about them, develop criticisms, and organize their paper into a coherent, consistent, and complete work.

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<b>Writing Assignment Deadline Summary</b>	Topic Selection and Approval	No later than February 16 <sup>th</sup>
	Completed Paper	March 22 <sup>nd</sup>
	Revised Paper	April 24 <sup>th</sup>

<b>Grading</b>	Quizzes, short writing assignments, and participation in class discussion	16%
	Exam I	20%
	Exam II (Final)	29%
	Writing Assignment First Version	25%
	Revised Version	10%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Attendance**      Attendance is required. The final grade of students who miss more than three classes may be lowered by one letter. Absences for University approved reasons must be submitted before the absence. Students are responsible for learning what is covered in classes that they miss.

**Assigned Readings and Other Media**      There is no required text for the course. However, there are a number of assigned readings and media presentations. They are available on RamCT unless otherwise noted under "Preparation and Notes (below)". In addition, there are many of good references covering ethics topics that students may find useful. One example is: James Rachels and Stuart Rachels. 2010. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. 6th Edition. McGraw Hill. 203 pp.

**Academic Integrity**      Cheating on examinations and plagiarism in papers is not acceptable and will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Simply stated, plagiarism is the use of another's thoughts or words as if they were your own. It is dishonest use of another's work. Whenever you use a general concept, idea, quotation, fact, statistic, or illustration that is not yours, cite the source. Proper citation of sources in the paper (including internet sources) is expected. When plagiarism is suspected, papers may be checked with one of several plagiarism detection programs. The instructors of this course expect students to comply with the CSU Honor Pledge: *"I will not give, receive, or use any unauthorized assistance."*

## CLASS SCHEDULE (TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS)

(How to access assigned readings and other media is noted below. "(RCT)" indicates they are posted on RamCT. During the semester, substitutions may be made for some readings. However, the time required to complete the assignments will not be changed substantially.)

Topic/Lead Instructor	Date	Preparation and Notes
Introduction to the course and to ethical theory / Holtzer and Gamble	17 Jan	
Understanding utilitarian moral theory (1) / Gamble	19 Jan	<p>Before Class: Read Bentham, Jeremy. 1780. Principles of Morals and Legislation.  <a href="http://www.justiceharvard.org/">http://www.justiceharvard.org/</a></p> <p>In class video: Episode 1, part 1 at <a href="http://www.justiceharvard.org/">http://www.justiceharvard.org/</a>.            Watch the remainder of the video as homework.</p>
Understanding utilitarian moral theory (2) / Gamble	24 Jan	<p>Before Class: View Episode 2, Part 1 and read "The Queen vs. Dudley and Stephens."  <a href="http://www.justiceharvard.org/">http://www.justiceharvard.org/</a>.</p> <p>Before Class: Read Mill, J.S. 2009. Utilitarianism. Pp. 67-73 in Barbara McKinnon (Ed.) Ethics. Wadsworth. (RCT)</p> <p>Before Class: Read <u>Impact of Genetically Engineered Crops on Farm Sustainability in the United States</u>. Pp. 1-18. National Academy of Sciences website  <a href="http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12804&amp;page=1">http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12804&amp;page=1</a></p>
Understanding Kant's moral theory (1) / Gamble	26 Jan	<p>Before Class: View Episode 2, part 2  <a href="http://www.justiceharvard.org/">http://www.justiceharvard.org/</a>.</p> <p>Before Class: Read Kant, E. 2011. The Moral Law. Pp. 47-54 in Mark Timmons (Ed.) Disputed Moral Issues. Oxford. (RCT.)</p> <p><b>In class: 20 pt Quiz</b></p> <p>In class video: Episode 6, part 1  <a href="http://www.justiceharvard.org/">http://www.justiceharvard.org/</a>.</p>
Understanding Kant's moral theory (2) and Understanding Aristotle's teleological moral ethics / Gamble	31 Jan	<p>Before Class: Read Wisner, R. Market Risks of Genetically Modified Wheat. (Executive Summary)  <a href="http://www.worc.org/userfiles/file/wisner-final-2003.pdf">http://www.worc.org/userfiles/file/wisner-final-2003.pdf</a>.</p> <p>In class video: Episode 6, part 2  <a href="http://www.justiceharvard.org/">http://www.justiceharvard.org/</a></p>

CLASS SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)		
Topic/Lead Instructor	Date	Preparation and Notes
Understanding Aristotle's teleological moral ethics (2) / Gamble	2 Feb	<p>Before Class: View Episode 7 part 1 <a href="http://www.justiceharvard.org/">http://www.justiceharvard.org/</a>.</p> <p>Before Class: Read Aristotle. 2011. Virtue and Character. Pp. 58-66 in Mark Timmons (Ed.) Disputed Moral Issues. Oxford. (RCT)</p> <p>In class video: Episode 9, part 2 and Episode 10, part 1 <a href="http://www.justiceharvard.org/">http://www.justiceharvard.org/</a></p>
Understanding Aristotle's teleological moral ethics (3) / Gamble	7 Feb	<p>Before class: View Episode 10 part 2 <a href="http://www.justiceharvard.org/">http://www.justiceharvard.org/</a>.</p> <p>Before class: Read Aiken, W. 1991. The Goals of Agriculture. Pp. 56-62 in Charles Blatz (Ed.) Ethics and Agriculture. University of Idaho Press. (RCT)</p> <p>Before class: Read Rollin, B. 1986. The "Frankenstein Thing": The Moral Impact of Genetic Engineering of Agricultural Animals on Society and Future Science." (RCT) (Focus only on pages 282-285 for now.)</p> <p><b>In class: 20 pt Quiz</b></p>
Meeting in CSU Library with research librarian on using electronic databases for class research papers	9 Feb	
Pesticides / Holtzer	14, 16 Feb	<p>Before class: Read Lehman, H. 1993. Values, Ethics, and the Use of Synthetic Pesticides in Agriculture. Pp. 347-379 in D. Pimentel and H. Lehman (Eds.) Economics and Ethics. Chapman and Hall. (Focus on 371-379.) (RCT)</p>
Natural Resources and the Environment / Holtzer	21, 23, 28 Feb	<p>Before class: Read "Case Study." (RCT)</p> <p>Before class: Read White, L. 1967. The historical roots of our ecological crisis. Science 155: 1203-1207. (RCT)</p>
Sustainability / Holtzer	1, 6 Mar	<p>Before class: Read Allen, P. and C. Sachs. 1993. Sustainable agriculture in the United States: Engagements, silences, and possibilities of transformation. Pp. 139-167. in P. Allen (Ed.) Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability. Wiley. (RCT)</p>

<b>CLASS SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)</b>		
Topic/Lead Instructor	Date	Preparation and Notes
Climate Change / Holtzer	8 Mar	Before class: Read TBA 1. (RCT) Before class: Read TBA 2. (RCT)
<b>Midterm Exam</b>	<b>28 Feb 8 Mar</b>	<b>Distributed Due (via email before class, hard copy in class)</b>
<b><u>Spring Break</u></b>	<b>10, 18 Mar</b>	
Food vs Biofuel / Holtzer	20, 22 Mar	Before class: Read Samuelson, R.J. 12 Dec 2007. Food vs. fuel. Washington Post. (RCT) Before class: Read Martin, A, 8 Dec 2007. Food and fuel compete for land. NY Times. (RCT) Before class: Read TBA. (RCT)
Farm Animal Welfare and Animal Rights / Gamble	27, 29 Mar	Before class: Read Matheny, Gaverick. 2011. Utilitarianism and Animals. Pp. 333-341 in Mark Timmons (Ed.) Disputed Moral Issues. Oxford. (RCT) Before class: Read Rollin, B.E. 2004. Annual Meeting Keynote Address: Animal agriculture and emerging social ethics for animals. J. Animal Science 82:955-964 (RCT)
Biotechnology – Animals/ Gamble	3, 5, 10 Apr	Before class: Read Rollin, Bernard E. 1997. Send in the clones..., Don't bother, they're here. Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics 10, No. 1, 25-40. (RCT) Before class: Read TBA 1. (RCT) Before class: Read TBA 2. (RCT)

<b>CLASS SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)</b>		
Topic/Lead Instructor	Date	Preparation and Notes
Biotechnology – Plants and Agricultural Research / Holtzer	12, 17, 19 Apr	<p>Before class: Read “Case Study.” (RCT)</p> <p>Before class: Read TBA 1. Lappé, M. And B. Bailey. 2002. Biotechnology’s negative impact on world agriculture. Pp. 156-167 in G. E. Pence (Ed.) The Ethics of Food. Rowan &amp; Littlefield, New York. (RCT)</p> <p>Before class: Read Comstock, G. L. 2000. Conclusion. Pp. 285-288 in Vexing Nature? On the ethical case against agricultural biotechnology. Iowa State Univ. Press. Ames, IA. (RCT)</p> <p>Before class: Read Kirschenmann, F. 2001. Questioning biotechnology’s claims and imagining alternatives. Trans. WI Acad. Sci. 89:35-61. (RCT)</p> <p>Before class: Read Borlaug, N. 2000. Ending world hunger: The promise of biotechnology and the threat of antiscience zealotry. Plant Physiol. 124:487-490. (RCT)</p>
Water / Holtzer	24, 26 Apr	<p>Before class: Read Reisner, M. 1986, Cadillac Desert. Introduction. Pp. 1-14. (RCT)</p> <p>Before class: Read Postel, S. 2000. Troubled waters. Utne Reader. Jul./Aug. Pp. 62-66. (RCT)</p> <p>Before class: Read Sampat, P. 2000. Groundwater Shock. Worldwatch. Jan/Feb. Pp. 10-22. (RCT)</p> <p>Before class: Read Jon Gertner, The Future is Drying Up. The New York Times, Oct. 21, 2007. (RCT)</p>
International Aspects and Course Wrap Up / Holtzer and Gamble	1, 3 May	<p>Before class: Read Singer, Peter. “The Life You Can Save,” from <u>Disputed Moral Issues</u>, edited by Mark Timmons, (Oxford: 2011), pp. 571-585. (RCT)</p> <p>Before class: Read TBA. (RCT)</p>
<b>FINAL EXAM (Finals Week)</b>	Tuesday, 8 May, 6:20 – 8:20 pm	