

Contemporary Moral Problems

PHIL 102 Summer 2013

Instructor: Andrea Sullivan-Clarke

Class Times and Location: MTWThF 1200-100 THO 235

Office hours: M 10-12

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Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the basic issues, arguments, and methods of traditional and contemporary moral philosophy. As we examine different issues in applied ethics, we will learn about normative ethical theory, such as Utilitarianism and Kantianism. The issues to be analyzed using these theories include (but are not limited to): punishment, prostitution, killing noncombatants, animal rights, and abortion. While actively engaging these issues, students will develop their ability to critically reason, become better speakers and critically evaluate their own beliefs and views.

See Course Site on Catalyst:

<https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/weebs/38275/266879>

Required Texts:

Readings Provided on the Course Site via Catalyst

Recommended Texts/Resources:

Anthony Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments* (See Course Web Site)

Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*. (The first edition is available online for free: <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>)

Requirements:

Participation	5%	25 points
5 Homework Assignments @5 points each	5%	25 points
Class Presentation	10%	50 points
3 Exams @100 points each	60%	300 points
Term paper	20%	100 points
Total:	100%	500 points

Overview of Requirements:

Participation (5%) Students are expected to actively participate in class. This can be accomplished by actively listening, asking good questions, participating in class discussion/exercises, and attending office hours. Group work cannot be made up and the use of electronics, such as phone/computer/music players during class, may result in a lower participation grade. Our class is a philosophical community. In order to promote scholarly discussion, mutual respect is key. Discussion only works, when people are willing and able to share their beliefs and arguments – even if those beliefs are unpopular. Thus, participation includes respecting people even if they disagree with you.

Homework Assignments (5%). These assignments are intended to assist you in developing the skills to write a critical paper. Homework will be handed out in class and will be due at the beginning of class on the appropriate day, see schedule for dates.

Class Presentation (10%) Students will give a 10-minute presentation on a particular ethical issue or topic. The format of these presentations will be discussed early in the quarter. The issue/topic should be something not formally addressed in class or listed on the syllabus.

Exams (60%) The exams test for knowledge of the material presented in readings and lectures. Blue books are not necessary. Format: multiple choice, true/false, and short answer. **Dates for the exams are listed on the schedule.**

Term Paper: (20%) The term paper is to be a critical examination of one of the arguments presented in the assigned readings. The assignment is intended to be primarily an independent piece of scholarship; some additional readings may be necessary, but comprehensive knowledge of the literature is neither expected nor desired. The point is to struggle through the issue you choose in a philosophically sophisticated way, making sense of the issues involved and the arguments that surround them, and defending a position that you find tenable on the basis of those arguments.

If you have any further questions about these class requirements please see me.

Scales and Criteria for Grading

General grading information for the University of Washington is available at:
http://www.washington.edu/students/gencat/front/Grading_Sys.html

When converting total points to decimal grades the following scale will be used. To determine your overall class grade, add up all of the points you earned for each assignment, **double that total**, and then use the following chart.

Total Class Points	Decimal Points
1000-930	1000-965 = 4.0, 964-930 = 3.9
929-900	929-920 = 3.8, 919-910 = 3.7, 909-900 = 3.6
899-870	899-890 = 3.4, 889-880 = 3.3, 879-870 = 3.2
869-830	869-860 = 3.1, 859-840 = 3.0, 839-830 = 2.9
829-800	829-820 = 2.8, 819-810 = 2.7, 809-800 = 2.6
799-770	799-790 = 2.4, 789-780 = 2.3, 779-770 = 2.2
769-730	769-760 = 2.1, 759-740 = 2.0, 739-730 = 1.9
729-700	729-720 = 1.8, 719-710 = 1.7, 709-700 = 1.6
699-670	699-690 = 1.4, 689-680 = 1.3, 679-670 = 1.2
669-630	669-660 = 1.1, 659-640 = 1.0, 639-630 = 0.9
629-600	629-615 = 0.8, 614-600 = 0.7
599-0	599-0 = 0.0

There will be no curves and no extra credit in this class. You will not be graded relative to your fellow students. What this means is that it is possible for *everyone* to get an A (4.0) or an E (0.0) or anything in-between. ***In order to pass this course, you must complete all of your assignments with an additive percentage of 60% or higher.***

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

Week 1 Introduction to Philosophy and Argumentation

M	June 24 th	Introduction	No Assigned Readings
T	June 25 th	Ethics	Pojman, "What is Ethics?"
W	June 26 th	Argument Clinic	Basham, <i>et al.</i> "Recognizing Arguments"
TH	June 27 th	Argument Clinic	Basham, <i>et al.</i> "Basic Logical Concepts"
F	June 28 th	Argument Wrap-up HWK 1 DUE	No Assigned Readings

Week 2 Relativism, Psychological Egoism, and Ethical Egoism

M	Jul 1 st	Relativism	Rachels, "The Challenge of Moral Relativism" pp. 34-39
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T	Jul 2 nd	Egoism	Rachels, "The Challenge of Moral Relativism" pp. 39-46
W	Jul 3 rd	Egoism	Hobbes, "Leviathan" Rand, "The Virtue of Selfishness"
TH	Jul 4 th	Holiday- NO CLASS!	No Assigned Readings
F	Jul 5 th	Egoism HWK 2 Due	Pojman, "Egoism, Self-Interest, and Altruism"

Week 3 Normative Ethical Theories

M	Jul 8 th	Utilitarianism	Mill, "Utilitarianism"
T	Jul 9 th	Utilitarianism, Critique	NO Assigned Readings
W	Jul 10 th	Deontology	Kant, "Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals"
TH	Jul 11 th	Deontology, cont.	Feldman, "Kantian Ethics"
F	Jul 12 th	EXAM 1	NO Assigned Readings

Week 4 Is Failing to Contribute to Famine Relief Wrong?

M	Jul 15 th	Famine Relief	Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics"
T	Jul 16 th	Famine Relief, cont.	Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality"
W	Jul 17 th	Famine Relief, cont.	Arthur, "World Hunger and Moral Obligation"
TH	Jul 18 th	Famine Relief, cont.	O'Neill, "A Kantian Approach to World Hunger"
F	Jul 19 th	Presentation/Paper	NO Assigned Readings HWK 3 Due

Week 5 Is Having an Abortion Wrong?

M	Jul 22 nd	Abortion	Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral"
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T	Jul 23 rd	Abortion, cont.	McInerney, "Does a Fetus Already Have a Future-Like-Ours?"
W	Jul 24 th	Abortion, cont.	Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"
TH	Jul 25 th	Abortion, cont.	NO Assigned Readings
F	Jul 26 th	Abortion, cont.	Brody, "Thomson on Abortion" HWK 4 Due

Week 6 Is Killing Nonhuman Animals Wrong?

M	Jul 29 th	Animal Rights	Regan, "The Case for Animal Rights"
T	Jul 30 th	Animal Rights, cont.	Frey, "Why Animals Lack Beliefs and Desires" OR "The Case Against Animal Rights"
W	Jul 31 st	Animal Rights, cont.	Cohen, "In Defense of Speciesism"
TH	Aug 1 st	Movie: Earthlings	NO Assigned Readings HWK 5 Due
F	Aug 2 nd	EXAM 2	NO Assigned Readings

Week 7 Is Euthanasia Wrong?

M	Aug 5 th	Student Presentations	NO Assigned Readings
T	Aug 6 th	Euthanasia	Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"
W	Aug 7 th	Euthanasia, cont.	Steinbock, "The Intentional Termination of Life"
TH	Aug 8 th	WA Death with Dignity Act	NO Assigned Readings
F	Aug 9 th	Movie: Please Let Me Die	NO Assigned Readings

Week 8 What is Wrong Regarding the Family?

M	Aug 12 th	Student Presentations	NO Assigned Readings
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T	Aug 13 th	Family	English, "What Do Grown Children Owe Their Parents?"
W	Aug 14 th	Family, cont.	Mills, "The Ties that Bind"
TH	Aug 15 th	Same-Sex Marriage	Jordan, "Is It Wrong to Discriminate on the Basis of Homosexuality?"
F	Aug 16 th	Same-Sex Marriage, cont.	Boonin, "Same-Sex Marriage and the Argument from Public Disagreement"

Week 9 Is It Wrong to Kill in Times of War?

M	Aug 19 th	Student Presentations	NO Assigned Readings
T	Aug 20 th	War and Killing	Fullwinder, "War and Innocence"
W	Aug 21 st	War, cont.	Alexander, "Self-Defense and the Killing of Noncombatants"
TH	Aug 22 nd	Review Paper Due!	NO Assigned Readings
F	Aug 23 rd	EXAM 3	NO Assigned Readings