

Welcome to PHIL 22, Intro to Ethical Theory!

What's this course about?

This course will be an exploration of various approaches to ethical reasoning and decision-making. Students will consider their own moral frameworks along with a number of traditional and canonical ones, with an aim toward extending their ability to reason about ethical issues and apply these strategies in the real world. This course may also serve as an introduction to, and an ethical interrogation of, the discipline and practice of philosophy itself. Lots more info below!

Meeting info

This is an 8-week course that will meet **in-person** on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00-11:30am in [Physical Sciences Building](#) room 136 (our first meeting date is **June 28** and our last meeting date is **August 18**).

What important administrative info should I keep in mind?

Summer 8-week key dates

Add/Swap- until June 29

Drop- by July 10 (tuition reversed)

Request "W" Grade- by July 30 (no tuition reversal)

Change Grade Option- (e.g. to

P/NP) by August 1

Instructor info

Name: Emily Robertson (please call me "Emily"!)

Email: emkrober@ucsc.edu

Office hours: after class or on [zoom](#) by appointment



What are office hours?

Nothing scary! They're low-stakes opportunities to chat with instructors or TAs about course material, assignments, and other questions or concerns. Office hours are a great way to get extra help and guidance, and/or extra time to philosophize. You definitely don't have to stay for an hour! From quick questions to long conversations, office hours can be what you want them to be.

If I want to visit after class?

Just hang around once we've finished! I plan to stay in the classroom for up to an hour after each meeting, but I'll leave if I don't know that anybody wants to chat; please try to get my attention as soon as class is over.

If I want to make an appointment?

Send me an email or canvas message and we can get a zoom meeting planned! My schedule is flexible.

What expectations should I have?

In terms of:	Materials	Class time	Communication
	You'll engage with a variety of materials, including readings, podcasts, videos, and films. All course materials will be available for free online and accessible from our canvas page	Much of our class time will be spent doing discussions and activities. There will also be some lectures and daily student Material Review Presentations	Most class communications will take place through canvas , though you are welcome to contact me through email or canvas. I aim to respond to all student communications within 48 hours

A note on communication: Summer courses move quickly, and I may need to communicate with you on short-notice. **Please check your email and/or canvas page regularly**—at least the day before every class meeting (Tuesdays and Thursdays), if not more often! Here is a [link](#) for video instructions on how to edit your canvas notification settings to be of most use to you.



What's the point of this course? What will I take away from it?

Course learning goals

By the end of the term, students should be able to:

1. **Reflect** on and **articulate** their own ethical frameworks, beliefs, and reasoning
2. **Identify, explain,** and **compare** “canonical” ethical theories in multiple modalities (i.e. in discussion, oration, writing, and problem-solving)
3. **Apply** various ethical frameworks in their own lives and moral decision-making
4. **Discuss** and **analyze** ethical theories and tricky moral issues with other people; **appreciate** and **work to understand** points of disagreement
5. **Interrogate** the value of learning and the practices of engaging with “ethical theory”, and philosophy more broadly
6. **Navigate** a philosophy class with more confidence than before this term began

What do I have to do in this course? What will I be graded on?

Percentage of final grade	Task(s)	Due date	Learning goals addressed
10%	Attendance and Participation	Ideally, every day this term	All of them! But in particular: 1, 4, 6

Percentage of final grade	Task(s)	Due date	Learning goals addressed
5%	Office Hours Visit	Anytime—at least once—during the term	6
5%	Material Review Presentation	In class, once during the term (sign up for a date here)	1, 2
5%	Review Journal/bibliography	Week 8 Friday (8/18)	2, 5, 6
5%	Syllabus Annotation	Week 1 Friday (6/30)	6
70% (10% each)	Weekly Assignments	Week 2 Wednesday (7/5)- Personal Ethics Reflection I Week 3 Wednesday (7/12)- Controversy! Week 4 Wednesday (7/19)- Navigating Moral Dilemmas Week 5 Wednesday (7/26)- TEQ Deck Week 6 Wednesday (8/2)- <i>Omelas</i> Comparative Project Week 7 Wednesday (8/9)- Virtue Ethics Jigsaw Week 8 Wednesday (8/16)- Personal Ethics Reflection II	1, 5 1, 4 3, 4 2, 3 1, 2, 4 2, 4 1, 5

What's your grading policy?

I'm going to try out what's called "spec grading" in which **each assignment is going to be graded complete/incomplete/missing based off a set of specifications ("specs") provided.**

This way you will be rewarded for work and effort, rather than scored subjectively. If an assignment is "complete", you'll get a 100% on it; if an assignment is "incomplete", you'll get a 50% on it; if an assignment is "missing", you'll get a 0%.

Weekly assignments submitted within a 2-day grace period can still receive a "complete", but unless you reach out to me and we decide on a course of action together, assignments submitted over 2 days late will receive an "incomplete".

At the end of the quarter, final grades will be determined by these scores:

95-100%: A+ 90-95%: A 85-90%: B+ 80-85%: B 75-80%: C+ 70-75%: C
 65-70%: D+ 60-65%: D 0-60%: F

What are the course's assignment instructions and specs?

I will provide instructions for the weekly assignments and syllabus annotation in class (and post them on [canvas](#) too) but here I'll provide instructions for the other course requirements (also available on canvas)!

Task(s)	Description	Ask(s)	Specs
Attendance and participation	I really value engagement in the classroom. I expect a willingness to engage, though participation can take a number of different forms: note-taking, talking in class, asking questions, writing responses, active listening	Please come to every class meeting this term. If you're unable to attend on a given day, please reach out to me ahead of time so we can decide together how to move forward	Complete: No more than one unexcused absence, and regular participation Incomplete: Up to three unexcused absences and regular participation, OR no more than one unexcused absence, and minimal participation Missing: More than one unexcused absences, and minimal participation in class
Office Hours Visit	Office hours are most fruitful when students bring to them a substantive, open-ended question—in order to gain clarification about material or instructions, learn further, present ideas, or brainstorm	Please visit me at office hours at least once this term, with a substantive question or prompt prepared. You may visit me after class or we can set up a one-on-one meeting together!	Complete: At least one visit, with a substantive question or prompt Incomplete: At least one visit, but never with a substantive question or prompt (e.g. only asking about a grade or a deadline) Missing: No office hours visit
Material Review Presentation	Material Reviews can be a great way to refresh your and your classmates' memories on the assigned material (be it a reading, a podcast, a film, etc.), provide insights, and jump-start discussions. I'm hoping for each presentation	Please sign up for a review presentation date here , and on your chosen day present a) a brief summary of one of the day's assigned materials , in particular the main "points" you learned from it; b) an insight —a connection, an evaluation, an objection, etc.—of your own about	Complete: A 2- to 5-minute presentation sometime during the term which presents (a), (b), and (c) Incomplete: A presentation sometime during the term which presents only two of (a), (b), and (c) Missing: No presentation, or one which presents only one of (a), (b), and (c)

Task(s)	Description	Ask(s)	Specs
	to be less than 5 minutes!	the material; and c) a discussion question for the class based off the material	
Review Journal/ Bibliography	Review Journals provide an opportunity to create an “annotated bibliography”, which can be useful in remembering or referencing material from the course and can also provide talking points for in-class discussions and Material Review Presentations	Please make a brief entry for each piece of material assigned for the course, which includes citation information, a short summary, and a reflection —some insights or questions it raised for you—then organize and compile all the entries together to submit by (or bring to) the last day of class	<p>Complete: A review journal, organized in a way that makes sense to you, submitted with no more than one entry missing</p> <p>Incomplete: A review journal, organized in a way that makes sense to you, with up to five entries missing</p> <p>Missing: A review journal submitted with more than five entries missing, or not submitted at all</p>

What if I need help?

Accessibility:

I aim to make our learning community as accessible as possible, by providing accessible materials and creating opportunities for different kinds of engagement in our classroom. **If you come across materials that are not accessible to you, or experience a barrier to your participation in a class or meeting, please bring this to my attention** and I will gladly work with you to ensure accessibility!

For students already affiliated with the DRC, make sure that you’ve requested Academic Access Letters where you intend to use accommodations.

I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact the DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

Safety, Title IX, and CARE:

If you have experienced any form of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, know that you are not alone. The Title IX Office, the Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education (CARE) office, and Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) are all resources that you can rely on for support.

Please be aware **that if you tell me about a situation involving Title IX misconduct, I am required to share this information with the Title IX Coordinator.** That said, you will control how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. The goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and that you have access to the resources you need.

Confidential resources are available through [CARE](#). Confidentiality means CARE advocates will not share any information with Title IX, the police, parents, or anyone else without explicit permission. You can contact CARE at (831) 502-2273 or care@ucsc.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services:

Many students at UC Santa Cruz face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. **The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times**, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients’ cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation. You can reach [Counseling & Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) from their website or call them at (831) 459-2628.

Basic Needs:

There are many campus resources available to help ensure students get their basic needs met. I recommend checking out the [UCSC Basic Needs](#) page to see what is offered!

Slug Support can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction. To get started with [Slug Support](#), please contact the Dean of Students Office at 831-459-4446 or you may send us an email at deanofstudents@ucsc.edu.

What’s the day-to-day schedule?

Day and Topic(s)	To do before class	What we’ll do during class
Week 1 Wednesday 6/28 Welcome	<p>Read Some Useful Info About This Class</p> <p>Watch Michael Schur on “How Ethics Can Help You Make Better Decisions” (12 minutes)</p>	<p>Syllabus and class norms</p> <p>Topical discussion: what is “ethics”?</p>
Week 1 Friday 6/30 Discussions	<p>Submit Syllabus Annotation</p> <p>Listen to Myisha Cherry and Matt Teichman on “The Skill of Conversation” (43 minutes)</p>	<p>Introduce Personal Ethics Reflection I assignment</p>
Week 2 Wednesday 7/5 Moral Facts	<p>Submit Personal Ethics Reflection I</p> <p>Read Justin P. McBrayer’s “Why Our Children Don’t Think There Are Moral Facts” (3 pages)</p> <p>Watch Jennie Livingston’s Paris Is Burning (1 hour 17 minutes)</p>	<p>Topical discussion: cultural appropriation</p>

Day and Topic(s)	To do before class	What we'll do during class
Week 2 Friday 7/7 Cultural Relativism	Listen to Robert Gressis and Spencer Case on " What's the Deal with Relativism? " (1 hour) Read James Rachels' " The Challenge of Cultural Relativism " (6 dense pages)	Controversy! activity and assignment introduction
Week 3 Wednesday 7/12 Social Contract Theory	Submit Controversy! Watch Abigail Thorn on " The Hidden Rules of Modern Society " (40 minutes) Read excerpt from John Rawls' <i>A Theory of Justice</i> (6 pages)	Topical discussion: human nature
Week 3 Friday 7/14 Egoism	Read Joel Feinberg's " Psychological Egoism " (12 pages) Watch Boots Riley's <i>Sorry to Bother You</i> (2 hours 30 minutes)	Introduce Navigating Moral Dilemmas assignment
Week 4 Wednesday 7/19 Utilitarianism	Submit Navigating Moral Dilemmas Listen to Alasdair Norcross on " Do The Ends Justify The Means? " (1 hour 20 minutes)	Topical discussion: the hedonic treadmill
Week 4 Friday 7/21 Buddhist Ethics	Watch Ron Fricke's <i>Samsara</i> (1 hour 40 minutes) Read Jay L. Garfield's " Buddhist Ethics " (14 pages)	TEQ Deck activity and assignment introduction
Week 5 Wednesday 7/26 [Kantian] Deontology	Submit TEQ Deck Watch Michael Glawogger's <i>Whores' Glory</i> (2 hours) Read Camryn Anderson's " Is Choice Feminism Failing Our Girls? " (5 pages)	Topical discussion: sex work
Week 5 Friday 7/28 Canon Comparison	Read Ursula K. Le Guin's " The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas " (4 pages) Read Hans Jonas' " The Altered Nature of Human Action " (23 pages) Optional: review the "canonical theories" of normative egoism, utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, and social contract theory (will upload to canvas)	Omelas activity and assignment introduction Topical discussion: (im)mortality

Day and Topic(s)	To do before class	What we'll do during class
Week 6 Wednesday 8/2 Environmental Ethics	<p>Submit Omelas Comparative Project</p> <p>Read Arne Naess' "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary" (4 pages)</p> <p>Read Ramachandra Guha's "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique" (7 pages)</p>	Topical discussion: the moral status of non-humans
Week 6 Friday 8/4 Virtue Ethics	<p>Listen to Julia Annas, Matt Teichman et al. on Virtue Ethics (39 minutes)</p> <p>Browse resources on virtue ethics (will upload to canvas)</p>	Virtue Ethics Jigsaw activity and assignment introduction
Week 7 Wednesday 8/9 Acting Ethically	<p>Submit Virtue Ethics Jigsaw</p> <p>Read Nomy Arpaly's "Moral Worth" (23 pages)</p> <p>Listen to Victor Kumar and Myisha Cherry on "Moral Progress" (34 minutes)</p>	Topical discussion: people who study ethics
Week 7 Friday 8/11 Determinism	<p>Read Ted Chiang's "What's Expected of Us" (4 pages) (will upload to canvas)</p> <p>Watch Michel Gondry's Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (1 hour 45 minutes)</p>	Personal Ethics Reflection II assignment introduction
Week 8 Wednesday 8/16 Moral Responsibility	<p>Submit Personal Ethics Reflection II</p> <p>Read Harry Frankfurt's "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person" (16 pages) OR read Gary Watson's "Free Agency" (16 pages)</p>	Topical discussion: moral responsibility for beliefs and attitudes
Week 8 Friday 8/18 The Good Life	<p>Read or listen to Susan Wolf's "Moral Saints" (20 pages or 1 hour 15 minutes) OR read Eric Schwitzgebel's "Aiming for Moral Mediocrity" (17 pages)</p> <p>Watch Bo Burnham's <i>Make Happy</i> (1 hour) (will upload to canvas)</p>	Topical discussion: are we happy?