

Phil 24 – Introduction to Ethics: Contemporary Moral Issues

UCSC Summer Session 1, 2014

Monday/Wednesday 1:00 – 4:30, Hum & Soc Sci 350

Instructor: Kyle Robertson (kxrobert@ucsc.edu)
Office Hours: Wednesday, 11:00-12:00, Stevenson Café, or by
appointment

Teaching Assistant: Mary Garcia (maelgarc@ucsc.edu)
Office Hours: Monday, 11:00-12:00, Stevenson Café
Tuesday, 12:00-1:00, Lulu Carpenter's (downtown)
or, by appointment.

Course Description: This course is an introduction to ethics and philosophical argument through the examination of contemporary moral debates. We will cover the major philosophical theories of ethics and discuss a number of contemporary moral issues. Each student will choose one of twelve case studies to write on over the entire course. My hope is that each student is able to choose a case study about which they are passionate, and that through the process of the course they will broaden and deepen their understanding of the ethical issues involved in their case study.

Work Expectation: Students will write a series of papers, all related to the same topic, for a grade in this course. These papers will be a response to one of the Ethics Bowl cases posted on eCommons. The cases are drawn from this year's set of cases for the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl (<http://appe.indiana.edu/ethics-bowl/previous-cases/>). Each student will pick one case to write on for the entire course.

Students' grades will be based on their written work. Extra credit points will be awarded for attendance and participation. Students can earn up to a 1/3 of a grade bump for perfect attendance and a 1/3 of a grade bump for active participation. Thus, the maximum grade a student can earn is the grade they receive on their final paper plus up to 2/3 of a grade (a B paper grade could become an A-, for example).

Your grade will not be directly penalized for non-attendance or non-participation. You are, however, responsible for all material covered in the readings and in lectures. If you write a paper that ignores material we have covered in class, your grade will suffer as a result. If you miss class, please talk to a classmate about the material covered.

Paper Grading Rubric: Papers will be graded according to the following three criteria, all weighted equally:

1. *Clarity and Logic:* Was the paper clearly written and soundly argued? Were the ideas and arguments presented in a logical order

- and were they presented in plain, clear English so that we could understand them? Were citations adequate?
2. *Central Moral Dimensions*: Does the paper identify the central moral values and arguments at stake in the case? How well did the paper make use of the texts and resources covered in class that are relevant to their arguments? Does the paper focus its argument on these central issues?
 3. *Different Points of View*: Does the paper articulate counter-arguments against its position? Does it treat the position of those with whom it disagrees with seriousness and respect? Does it provide a thorough response to such counter-positions?

Summer Session Students with Disabilities: If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of the Summer Session. Contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu for more information.

Reading List

- Our main text is *Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues*, by Steven Cahn & Peter Markie (should be available at the Literary Guillotine). All readings are from this text unless otherwise noted.
- A copy of the book in 2nd edition is on reserve. This version does NOT contain all the readings.
- All readings have a note about where you can obtain them, either in the reserve copy of the book or on eCommons. Also, please note that many of these articles can be found online through the library webpage. If you are trying to avoid buying the book, you may be able to find most of them this way.

Week 1:

June 23: Introductions

June 25: Introduction to ethical questioning.

Writing Assignment 1 Due

Feinberg, J., *Psychological Egoism*, 584-591. [eCommons]

Rachels, J., *The Challenge of Cultural Relativism*, 747-754. [eCommons]

Hume, D., *A Treatise of Human Nature (excerpts)*, 276-287. [eCommons]

Week 2: Utilitarianism and Famine Relief

June 30:

Bentham, J., *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (selections)*, 353-361. [reserve]

Williams, B., *A Critique of Utilitarianism*, 657-673. [reserve]

July 2:

Writing Assignment 2 Due

Singer, P., *Famine, Affluence and Morality*, 873-880. [reserve]

Arthur, J., *Famine Relief and the Ideal Moral Code*, 881-892. [reserve]

Week 3: Deontology and Euthanasia

July 7:

Kant, I., *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 313-341. [reserve]

O'Neill, O., *Consistency in Action*, 613-629.

July 9:

Writing Assignment 3 Due

In class movie excerpts from "How to Die in Oregon"

Rachels, J., *Active and Passive Euthanasia*, 863-867. [reserve]

Foot, P., *Killing and Letting Die*, 867-872.

Week 4: Justice and Reparations

July 14:

Rawls, J., *A Theory of Justice (selections)*, 551-573. [reserve]

Nozick, R. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia (selections)*, 149-182. [eCommons]

July 16:

Writing Assignment 4 Due – Draft of Final Paper

Coates, T., *The Case for Reparations* [link on eCommons]

Boxill, B., "Black Reparations", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
[link on eCommons]

Week 5: Virtue Theory and Abortion

July 21:

Anscombe, G.E.M., *Modern Moral Philosophy*, 527-539. [reserve]

Hursthouse, R., *Virtue Theory and Abortion*, 849-862.

Held, V., *Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory*, 775-790.

July 23:

Final Papers Due

Thomson, J.J.T., *A Defense of Abortion*, 817-827. [reserve]

Marquis, D., *An Argument That Abortion Is Wrong*, 838-848.