

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2015-2016**

Philosophy 3720G: Normative Ethics

<p><b>Winter 2016</b>  <b>M, 11:30-12:30; W, 11:30-1:30</b>  <b>Location: Talbot College 203</b>  <b>Instructor: Professor Anthony Skelton</b></p>	<p><b>Office Location: Stevenson Hall 2131</b>  <b>Office Hours: M, 1:30-2:30; Th, 3:30-4:30</b>  <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:anthonyjskelton@gmail.com">anthonyjskelton@gmail.com</a></b>  <b>Phone: 519-661-2111, ext. 87953</b></p>
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is devoted to examining a number of problems in contemporary normative ethics. We will focus in particular on the debate between utilitarianism and its deontological detractors, aggregation, issues in population ethics, and select theories of value.

### **OBJECTIVES**

This course has four main objectives. The first is to acquaint students with some of the most prominent issues in contemporary moral philosophy. The second is to provide students with a deeper appreciation of the differences between rival conceptions of ethics. The third is to equip students with some of the skills required for conducting philosophical research in ethics. The fourth is to help students develop the ability to express philosophical concepts and arguments clearly and economically in writing.

### **TEXT**

All readings are available online through our OWL site.

### **COURSE PRESUPPOSITIONS**

This course will presuppose some familiarity with the basic concepts and main problems of contemporary moral philosophy. For those wishing to be reminded of these, a good source is R. Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics*, second edition.

To make this class a success, you must attend class on a regular basis, do the readings in advance of attending the lectures, and make a good faith effort to contribute to in-class discussion.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week One (Jan 4):                    **Introduction and Utilitarianism**

Reading:            Sidgwick, "The Meaning of Utilitarianism"

Week Two (Jan 11):           **Utilitarianism Evaluated**

Readings:     Prichard,     “What is the Basis of Moral Obligation?”  
                  Carritt,         “Crude Moral Theories”

Week Three (Jan 18):       **Deontology**

Reading:       Ross, “What Makes Right Acts Right?”

Week Four (Jan 25):       **Aggregation**

Reading:       Taurek, “Should the Numbers Count?”

**NOTE:        First Essay Assignment is due on Friday, January 29, 2016.**

Week Five (Feb 1):         **Aggregation**

Reading:       Scanlon, “Aggregation”

Week Six (Feb 8):         **Aggregation**

Reading:       Hirose, “Aggregation and Numbers”  
                  Timmermann, “The Individualist Lottery: How people count, but not their numbers”

Week Seven (Feb 15):     **Reading Week: No Classes**

Week Eight (Feb 22):     **Population Ethics**

Reading:       Parfit, “Overpopulation and the Quality of Life”

**NOTE:        Second Essay Assignment is due on Friday, February 26, 2016.**

Week Nine (Feb 29):     **Population Ethics**

Reading:       Shiffrin, “Wrongful Life, Procreative Responsibility, and the Significance of Harm”

Week Ten (Mar 7):         **Value Theory**

Reading:       Parfit, “What Makes Someone’s Life Go Best?”

Week Eleven (Mar 14):   **Value Theory**

Reading:       Kraut, “Prolegomenon to Flourishing”

Week Twelve (Mar 21): **Value Theory**

Reading: Sumner, "Welfare and Happiness"

Week Thirteen (Mar 28): **Value Theory**

Reading: Badhwar, "Well-being"

**NOTE: Third Essay Assignment is due on Thursday, March 24, 2016.**

Week Fourteen (April 4): **Value Theory**

Reading: Bradford, "The Value of Achievements"

### **REQUIREMENTS**

Your grade for this course will be based on three 1200-word essays and five in-class quizzes. Each paper is worth 30 percent of the final grade and the quizzes are worth 10 percent of the final grade.

#### 1. Essay

Due date: Friday, January 29, 2016  
 Length: No more than 1200 words  
 Value: 30% of final grade

#### 2. Essay

Due date: Friday, February 26, 2016  
 Length: No more than 1200 words  
 Value: 30% of final grade

#### 3. Essay

Due date: Thursday, March 24, 2016  
 Length: No more than 1200 words  
 Value: 30% of final grade

#### 4. In-class Quizzes

When: Jan. 13, Feb. 3, Mar. 2, Mar. 23, and Apr. 6.  
 Value: 10% of final grade (best four of five will be counted)  
 Format: Quizzes are based on the readings and the lectures. Each quiz will have two questions. You will be asked, for example, to define a key term, to describe a philosophical position or outlook, to briefly outline an argument, to briefly detail

an objection to an argument, etc.

## **REGULATIONS**

### 1. Submission of essays

Please submit your assignments electronically. Do not submit a paper copy.

In order to submit your assignment, visit the OWL site for this course. On the left-hand navigation menu you will find the assignment tool. Click on this tool and you will find the assignment guidelines and basic instructions for submitting your assignment. To submit your assignment upload it and click on the submit button at the bottom of the page.

A corrected version of your paper will be returned to you through the OWL site.

### 2. Turnitin.com

All required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as course documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### 3. Extensions

If you miss a quiz, you will **NOT** be permitted to make it up. However, with respect to the remainder of the course work, exceptions to the above work submission dates may be granted only as a result of petition to the Academic Counselor of the student's faculty. **Instructors have no authority to waive this requirement, and any unofficial arrangements they make with students will not be respected by the administration.**

All course work (with the exception of final examinations) must be submitted by the last day of classes.

Academic policies on examinations, appeals, absences due to illness, etc. may be found in the 2015-16 Academic Calendar. For further information, contact the Philosophy Undergraduate Counselor, Professor Andrew Botterell, Stevenson Hall 3140, 519-661-2111, ext. 85758, your Faculty's Academic Counselor or the Ombudsperson.

### 4. Late essays and penalties

An essay will be considered late if it is handed in after the due date without a prearranged extension (or after the extended date, in the case of an extension). Late essays will be penalized at the rate of **three** percentage points per day late. Essays more than ten days late will not be accepted.

## 5. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. Plagiarism is unacknowledged copying or paraphrasing of the words or ideas of another person. In general, anyone who learns something from a source (other than course lectures or general background knowledge any student of the course could reasonably be expected to have) and then presents that knowledge as their own discovery is considered to have plagiarized, even if the words used to express the ideas are not exactly the same.

Examples of plagiarism include: misrepresenting co-authored or group work as individually done, cutting and pasting copied or paraphrased work by others in with your own work, paraphrasing or otherwise altering the order of words or phrases and/or substituting words or phrases of similar meaning without acknowledgement that you are doing so, aiding and abetting such offences, among others.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a MAJOR academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

## 6. E-mail policy

I am **not** able to respond to philosophical concerns or questions over e-mail. I will deal with such concerns or questions during my office hours **only**. If you have a problem turning in an assignment on time or you need to make an appointment with me or you have some private issue you would like to communicate to me, feel free to use e-mail. Otherwise, please attend my office hours or make an appointment to see me.

## 7. Prerequisites

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as a basis of appeal. If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time, and you will receive no fee adjustment. These decisions cannot be appealed.

8. The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

9. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain

help.