

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2017-2018  
Philosophy 2700G  
Introduction to Ethics and Value Theory

Term: Winter 2018

Meeting Times: T, 9:30-10:30; Th, 9:30-11:30

Location: AHB 3B04

Instructor: Professor Anthony Skelton

Office Location: Western Interdisciplinary Research Building 7178

Office Hours: T, 3:30-4:30; Th, 3:30-4:30

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to some of the most important philosophical approaches to ethics and value theory. The following questions will guide our discussions: What is non-instrumentally good? What is non-instrumentally evil? Which actions are right or permissible? Which actions are wrong or impermissible? In answering these questions we will draw on both historical and contemporary sources. Our main focus will be on the *rational* considerations or factors that make a difference to something's value (goodness or badness) or morality (rightness or wrongness).

OBJECTIVES

This course has five objectives. The first is to acquaint students with the main historical and contemporary issues in normative ethics. The second is to acquaint students with ethical reasoning and argument. The third is to demonstrate the important manner in which the study of moral philosophical frameworks facilitates and improves the understanding and resolution of complex moral problems. The fourth is to equip students with some of the skills required for conducting philosophical research in normative ethics. The fifth is to help students develop the ability to express complex philosophical ideas and arguments clearly and economically in writing.

## TEXTS

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, edited with an introduction by Roger Crisp (Oxford: University Press, 1998). (Available at the Bookstore.)

Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Arnulf Zweig and edited with an introduction by Thomas E. Hill, Jr. and Arnulf Zweig (Oxford: University Press, 2002). (Available at the Bookstore.)

All other readings found on-line through OWL.

## CLASS SUCCESS

To make this class a success, you must attend lectures 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. It is important that everyone contribute to classroom discussion. We must all, then, try to make the classroom inclusive and inviting.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One (Jan 8): **Organization and Introduction**

Reading: Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, 452-454.

Week Two (Jan 15): **Value Theory**

Reading: Bentham, 'Classical Hedonism'

Week Three (Jan 22): **Value Theory**

Readings: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapters I and II (up to the end of paragraph 10)

Week Four (Jan 29): **Value Theory**

Readings: Nozick, 'The Experience Machine'

Hewitt, 'What Do Our Intuitions About the Experience Machine Really Tell Us About Hedonism?'

Week Five (Feb 5): **Ethical Theory**

Reading: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapters I, IV and II (paragraphs 11-25)

Week Six (Feb 12): **Ethical Theory**

Reading: Williams, 'Consequentialism and Integrity'

**NOTE: First Essay Assignment is due on Friday, February 16, 2018.**

Week Seven (Feb 19): **Reading Week: No Classes**

Week Eight (Feb 26): **Ethical Theory**

Reading: Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface and chapter I

Week Nine (Mar 5): **Ethical Theory**

Reading: Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, chapter II

Week Ten (Mar 12): **Ethical Theory**

Reading: Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, chapter II (continued)

**NOTE: Second Essay Assignment is due on Friday, March 16, 2018.**

Week Eleven (Mar 19): **Ethical Theory**

Reading: Ross, 'What Makes Right Acts Right?'

Week Twelve (Mar 26): **Ethical Theory**

Reading: Scanlon, 'Contractualism and Utilitarianism'

Week Thirteen (April 2): **Ethical Theory**

Readings: Calhoun, 'Justice, Care, Gender Bias'

Lindemann, 'What is Feminist Ethics?'

Week Fourteen (April 9): **Conclusion**

Readings: No new readings

## REQUIREMENTS

Your grade for this course will be based on two essays, one of 1200 words and another of 1600 words, worth 20 percent and 30 percent respectively of the final grade, on weekly in-class quizzes worth 20 percent of the final grade, and on a final exam worth 30 percent of the final grade.

1. Essay

Due date: Friday, February 16, 2018

Length: No more than 1200 words

Value: 20 percent of final grade

2. Essay

Due date: Friday, March 16, 2018

Length: No more than 1600 words

Value: 30 percent of final grade

### 3. Weekly Quizzes

Due Date: Every Tuesday beginning January 16

Length: Two short answers

Value: 20 percent of final grade. Best ten of twelve will be counted.

### 4. Final Examination

Due Date: To be determined by the Office of the Registrar

Length: Three Hours

Value: 30 percent of final grade

## REGULATIONS

### 1. Audit

Students wishing to audit a course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

### 2. 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.

### 3. 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>).

### 4. Extensions

If you miss a weekly quiz, you will **NOT** be permitted to make it up. They are designed to compel people to attend class. With respect to the remainder of 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. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or the department.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

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 2017-18 Academic Calendar. For further information, contact the Philosophy Undergraduate Counselor, Professor Devin Henry, Stevenson Hall 3140, 519-661-2111, ext. 85876, your Faculty's Academic Counselor or the Ombudsperson.

#### 5. 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.

#### 6. 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. Scholastic offences are taken very seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

7. 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.

8. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Feel free to use electronic devices in class but please use them for academic purposes only.

9. Prerequisites

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

10. Department of Philosophy Policies

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.

11. Mental Health

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. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519-661-3030 (during class hours) or 519-433-2023 (after class hours and on weekends and holidays).

The policy on Accommodation for Mental Illness is here:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

12. Support Services

Registrarial Services: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services: <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by USC: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>  
Student Development Centre: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>