

The University of Western Ontario  
Department of Philosophy  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2022-23  
Philosophy 2700F  
Introduction to Ethics and Value Theory

Term: Autumn 2022

Time: T, 12:30-1:30; Th, 12:30-2:30

Class Location: SSC 2032

Instructor: Anthony Skelton

Office Location: WIRB 7178

Office Hours: T, 2:00-3:00 & Th, 3:00-4:00

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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 good? What is bad? 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 focus will be on arguments in favour of (or against) certain answers to our main questions.

## Objectives

This course has five main objectives.

- To acquaint students with the main historical and contemporary issues in normative ethics.
- To acquaint students with ethical reasoning and argument and with how philosophers rely on them to support answers to the main questions guiding our discussions.
- To demonstrate the important manner in which the study of normative ethical frameworks facilitates and improves the understanding and resolution of complex practical moral problems.

- To equip students with some of the skills required for conducting philosophical research in normative ethics, including the ability to clarify, structure, and evaluate an argument.
- To help students develop the ability to express complex philosophical ideas and arguments clearly and economically in writing.

## Texts

1. John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, edited with an introduction by Roger Crisp (Oxford: University Press, 1998). (Available at the Bookstore.)
2. 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.

## OWL

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. All course material will be posted to OWL.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

## 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 (Sept 8): **Organization and Introduction**

Reading:

- No reading

Week Two (Sept 12): **Value Theory**

Reading:

- Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, 452-454
- Bentham, 'Classical Hedonism'

Week Three (Sept 19): **Value Theory**

Reading:

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

Week Four (Sept 26): **Value Theory**

Reading:

- Nozick, 'The Experience Machine'
- Bradford, 'The Value of Achievements'

Week Five (Oct 3): **Ethical Theory**

Reading:

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

Week Six (Oct 10): **Ethical Theory**

Reading:

- Williams, 'Consequentialism and Integrity'

**NOTE: First Essay Assignment is due on Friday, 14 October 2022.**

Week Seven (Oct 17): **Ethical Theory**

Reading:

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

Week Eight (Oct 24): **Ethical Theory**

Reading:

- Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, chapter II

Week Nine (Oct 31): **Reading Week: No Classes**

Week Ten (Nov 7): **Ethical Theory**

Reading:

- Ross, 'What Makes Right Acts Right?'

**NOTE: Second Essay Assignment is due on Friday, 11 November 2022.**

Week Eleven (Nov 14): **Ethical Theory**

Reading:

- Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, 229-241

Week Twelve (Nov 21): **Ethical Theory**

Reading:

- Calhoun, 'Justice, Care, Gender Bias'

Week Thirteen (Nov 28): **Ethical Theory**

Reading:

- Srinivasan, 'The Right to Sex'
- Dempsey and Herring, 'Why Sexual Penetration Requires Justification'

Week Fourteen (Dec 5): **Conclusion**

Reading:

- Little, 'Abortion, Intimacy, and the Duty to Gestate'

## Method of Evaluation

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, 14 October 2022

Length: No more than 1200 words

Value: 20 percent of final grade

2. Essay

Due date: Friday, 11 November 2022

Length: No more than 1600 words

Value: 30 percent of final grade

3. Weekly Quizzes

Due Date: Every Thursday beginning 15 September 2022

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. Department of Philosophy Policies

The Department of Philosophy policies that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available here. 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.

3. 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.

#### 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. Accommodation

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, students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or 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 [here](#).

#### 6. Evaluation of Academic Performance

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive an assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. For 3000- or 4000-level courses in which such a graded assessment is impracticable, the instructor(s) must obtain an exemption from this policy from the Dean and this exemption must be noted on the corresponding course syllabus. In rare instances and at the Dean's discretion, other courses could receive a similar exemption, which also must be noted in the course syllabus.

#### 7. Course Assignment

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

#### 8. Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, here.

9. Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may 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 for such checking will be included as source 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.

10. E-mail policy

I am **not** able to respond to philosophical concerns or questions over email. These are to be dealt with in my office hours only. Use email only if you have some brief business or administrative item that you would like to communicate to me. When you write an email please make sure to include your name and student number in the email message.

11. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

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

12. 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.

13. Support Services

Gender-based and sexual violence  
Registrarial Services  
Services provided by the USC  
Student Development Centre  
Student Support Services

Students in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western 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.