

FYSM 1209
Contemporary Moral, Social, and Religious Issues
Fall 2017
T 8:35-9:55/TH 8:35-9:55

Instructor: Josephine Nielsen
Office: 3A38 Patterson Hall
Office Hours: T – 10:30-12:30 or by appointment
Room: TBA
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended to introduce students to philosophy generally, and, more specifically, to introduce them to academic approaches to moral, social, and religious issues that we are faced with everyday. The course begins by giving a general overview of three of the prominent accounts found in normative ethics – utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics. From there, the course goes into more practical questions that are grounded in our everyday experiences.

In the first term, the topics that are covered are: (i) normative ethics, (ii) multiculturalism and its critics, (iii) race, and (iv) poverty. These four topics will be addressed from multiple directions. Students are encouraged to bring their own perspectives to light on these topics *in a respectful and thoughtful manner*.

In the second term, the topics that will be discussed will be (i) capital punishment, (ii) euthanasia and assisted-suicide, (iii) abortion, (iv) organ sales, (v) procreative beneficence, and (vi) animals rights. Other topics may also be added to the syllabus.

As with all other courses, students will be expected to come to class prepared (i.e., having done the readings and prepared to participate in the class discussion). However, since this is a first year seminar course, students will additionally be expected to give group presentations and hand in weekly comment sheets. This is meant to prepare students for upper level courses, both in philosophy, and in general.

CONDITIONS OF ENROLMENT

Precludes additional credit for PHIL 1500 and PHIL 1550.

Prerequisite(s): normally restricted to students entering the first year of a B.A., B.Cog.Sc., or B.G.In.S program.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Burnor, Richard, and Yvonne Raley. (2017) *Ethical Choices: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy with Cases, Second Edition*. Oxford University Press.

Available at the Carleton University Bookstore

Vaughn Lewis, and Jillian Scott McIntosh. (2004) *Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students, Second Edition*. Oxford University Press.

Available at Haven Books

All other readings will be accessible on ARES through CULearn and the library website.

COURSE EVALUATION

1) 10 Comment Sheets (10%)

Students are expected to write and submit a comment sheet each week of class, to be submitted Monday *or* Wednesday. Comment sheets need only be submitted 10 of the 12 weeks of classes in the fall term as only 10 comment sheets are required. Students are *permitted* to pass in all 12 comment sheets if they so choose. In that case, the 10 with the highest grades will be counted towards the final grade. Comment sheets *must* be handed in during class and *will not* be accepted through email, after class, or during office hours.

Comment sheets are very short discussion papers – no longer than one page single-spaced – in which you explain and discuss a question or concern from one of the two readings for that particular week. Other than being expected to provide a thoughtful, informal, and clearly written commentary, the way in which you approach the comment sheets is largely up to each individual.

2) Participation (10%)

Students are expected to attend class regularly and participate in class discussion.

3) Group Presentation (15%) Presentation (10%) Handouts (5%)

In the fall term, students will give one presentation in groups of two. These presentations are meant to give the class an introduction to the paper being discussed that day. In addition to outlining the paper, presenters are expected to highlight some key questions that the encounter when reading the text. This will serve as a jumping off point for the class discussion of the paper.

Presenters are expected to give handouts to the class highlighting major points of the paper. Handouts should also include some questions concerning the paper. There should only be one handout between the two presenters. Presentations should have about 20 minutes of content though, if the questions are asked during presentations, then the presentations may take longer. There should also be time after the presentations for further discussion.

A rubric will be provided concerning how the presentations and handouts will be graded.

4) Midterm (15%)

Date: October 5th

The midterm will test students' comprehension of the course material up to, and including, the class on October 3rd. Students will not be expected to evaluate any of the material being tested on for this term.

5) Essay (20%)

Due: November 14th

Students are expected to write a four to five page, double-spaced, paper on one of three topics that will be given to the class on October 19th. Unlike the midterm, this paper is intended to be evaluative of a topic either already covered in class, or one which will be covered during the term.

A marking rubric will be given to the class on the same day as the essay topics are discussed.

These papers will be handed back quickly with *extensive* comments. This is mean to aid in the writing of the second paper.

6) Take-Home Exam (30%)

Due: December 22nd

The take-home exam will be a revised version of the paper due on November 14th. Students are to take the comments given in the first paper and use them to revise and improve their papers. The expectation is that the paper will be revised in such a manner that it will be five to seven pages long, double-spaced. The paper should *not* be on a different topic than the first paper.

The take-home exam/revised paper is to be submitted on CULearn. The take-home exam/revised paper *must* be submitted by midnight on December 22nd. Anything after this and the paper will be considered not passed in and will not be graded.

The same marking rubric will be used for the second paper as was used for the first.

NOTE: The final grade that students receive in the fall term will count as 50% of their overall grade for the two-term course.

POLICIES

- Given the sensitive nature of the topics covered in the class, students are expected to be respectful and thoughtful of one another – everyone will have a chance to voice their thoughts without being interrupted or spoken down to. Anyone who does not follow this may be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of that class.
- Electronics (computers, tablets, phones, etc.) will not be permitted in the class unless for academic accommodation reasons. This is meant to ensure that students focus fully on the discussion. As handouts will be given in each class, and as the class is mainly a focus for discussion, only limited notes should need to be taken.
- The instructor will be available for discussion and questions in class, during office hours, and through email (both through josephine.nielsen@carleton.ca and through CULearn). That being said, please limit email questions to administrative questions.
- Extensions will not be granted except for under extenuating circumstances and with the proper documentation (e.g., a doctor's note). Comment sheets will *not* be accepted late under any circumstances and will *only* be accepted in class. The take-home exam/revised paper cannot be passed in late. This is per university policy.
- Late papers will be deducted 3% per day (including weekend days). This means that a paper that originally relied an 82% will be deducted to a 79% if one day late.
- All grades will be given as percentages first and then converted to letter grades.
- The reading outlined in the syllabus *may* be changed throughout the term and should not be taken as definite.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Sept 7 – Introduction Class

Normative Ethics

Sept 12 – *Ethical Choices*, Chapter Eight (Deontological Ethics): Sections I through VII (pp. 150-168)

Sept 14 – *Ethical Choices*, Chapter Six (Consequentialist Ethics: Act Utilitarianism): Sections I through V (pp. 111-123)

Ethical Choices, Chapter Seven (Consequentialist Ethics: Rule Utilitarianism): Sections I through IV (pp. 134-142)

Guest Lecturer: Jon Courtney

Sept 19 – *Ethical Choices*, Chapter Nine (Natural Law Theory): Sections I through V (pp. 178-189)

Sept 21 – *Ethical Choices*, Chapter Ten (Social Contracts and Rights): Sections I through VII (pp. 198-216)

Sept 26 – *Ethical Choices*, Chapter Eleven (Virtue Ethics): Sections I through VI (pp. 223-239)

Sept 28 – *Ethical Choices*, Chapter Twelve (Feminism and Care Ethics): Sections I through VIII (pp. 249-269)

Oct 3 – *Ethical Choices*, Chapter Thirteen (Ethics and Religion): Sections I through VI (pp. 276-290)

Oct 5 – *Midterm Exam*

Normative Ethics in Practice

Oct 10 – Thomas, Judith Jarvis. (1985) “The Trolley Problem.” *The Yale Law Journal* vol. 94 (6). pp. 1395-1415.

Multiculturalism and Its Critics

Oct 12 – Young, Iris Marion. “Five Faces of Oppression.” *Justice and the Politics of Difference*.

Oct 17 – Kymlicka, Will. “The Politics of Multiculturalism.” *Multicultural Citizenship*.

Oct 19 – *Writing Philosophy*, Chapter 2 (How to Read and Evaluate an Argument)

Oct 23 – Oct 27: READING WEEK (no class)

Oct 31 – Waldron, Jeremy. (1992) “Minority Rights and the Cosmopolitan Alternative.” *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* vol. 25 (3&4). pp. 751-793.

Nov 2 – Waldron, Jeremy. (1992) “Minority Rights and the Cosmopolitan Alternative.” *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* vol. 25 (3&4). pp. 751-793.

Nov 7 – Moller Okin, Susan. “Is Multiculturalism Bad For Women?” *Is Multiculturalism Bad For Women?*

Race and Racism

Nov 9 – bell hooks. (1986) “Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women.” *Feminist Review* no. 23. pp.125-138.

Nov 14 – Appiah, Anthony. “Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections. Part 1.

Analysis: Against Race.” *Color Consciousness*.

Nov 16 – Appiah, Anthony. “Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections. Part 1. Analysis: Against Race.” *Color Consciousness*.

Nov 21 – Mills, Charles. (2013) “An Illuminating Blackness.” *The Black Scholar* vol. 43 (4). pp. 32-37.

Nov 23 – Gooding-Williams, Robert. (2004) “Politics, Racial Solidarity, Exodus!” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, New Series* vol. 18 (2). pp. 118-128.

Poverty

Nov 28 – Singer, Peter. (1972) "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1.1: 229-243.

Nov 30 – Unger, Peter. (1996) "Living High and Letting Die: A Puzzle About Behavior Toward People in Great Need." *Living High and Letting Die*. Oxford University Press: 24-61.

Dec 5 – Unger, Peter. (1996) "Living High and Letting Die: A Puzzle About Behavior Toward People in Great Need." *Living High and Letting Die*. Oxford University Press: 24-61.

Dec 7 – Timmerman, Travis. (2015) “Sometimes There is Nothing Wrong With Letting a Child Die.” *Analysis* vol. 75(2). pp: 204-212.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2017-18)

Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
 - student name
 - student number
 - course number and section
 - instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

If you miss a final examination (formally scheduled or take-home) because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral. You must apply within 3 working days after the scheduled date of your formally scheduled exam or within 3 working days after the due date of a take-home exam. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information:

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv2/#2.5>

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC

website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Important Dates:

Sept. 6	Classes start.
Sept. 19	Last day for registration and course changes for Fall term and Fall/Winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 9	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 23-27	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 24	Last day for summative or final examinations in Fall term courses before the official examination period.
Dec. 8	Last day of Fall term classes. Classes follow a Monday schedule. Last day for academic withdrawal from Fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a Fall term course.
Dec. 10-22	Final examinations for Fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 22	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 8	Classes begin.
Jan. 19	Last day for registration and course changes in the Winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from Winter term courses or from the Winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 19	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 19-23	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 27	Last day for summative or final examinations in Winter term or two-term courses before the official examination period.
Mar. 30	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 11	Last day of two-term and Winter term classes. Classes follow a Friday schedule. Last day for academic withdrawal from Fall/Winter and Winter courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for Winter term courses.
Apr. 14-26	Final examinations for Winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 26	All take home examinations are due on this day.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Academic Advising Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/academicadvising 520-7850
Writing Services:	4 th Floor, Library http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/ 520-3822
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735