

PHIL 1550 A Introduction to Ethics and Social Issues

Fall 2023

Class schedule: Tue/Thurs 1:05-2:35pm

Room: Southam Hall THB ("Theatre B")

Instructor: Dr. Marie-Pier Lemay
Department of Philosophy Paterson Hall
Office: 3A54 Paterson Hall
Office Hours: Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday 3-4pm
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Teaching Assistants information: TBA

I. Course description

Calendar Course Description

An introduction to understanding, assessing, and formulating ethical arguments concerning controversial issues. Particular issues studied may include, world hunger, capital punishment, terrorism, euthanasia, abortion, pornography and hate speech, animal rights, the environment, and topics in theories of race, gender and disability.

Course Description

This course examines contemporary debates in ethics and social philosophy. It is divided in two main parts: a) introduction to ethics and moral theory, and b) ethical issues and debates. In the first section of your course, you will be introduced to the main terms, concepts, and theories we use in ethics. For instance, you will learn how to make an argument in ethics and how to distinguish between consequentialist and deontological arguments. While the first portion of this course is mostly theoretical, having this broad introduction to ethics will help you to understand the issues at play in the case studies we will analyze together in the second portion.

II. Learning Outcomes

At the end of this class, you will (1) identify and describe key concepts and theories in ethics, (2) engage with debates and disagreements in the field, (3) learn to articulate your thoughts on these key debates, (4) critically apply the theories seen in the class in order to understand contemporary social and ethical issues.

III. Texts

Required Textbook: *Applied Ethics Primer*, Letitia Meynell & Clarisse Paron (2023) ISBN: 9781554816149 / 1554816149

This book is legally available for free via Pressbooks: [Applied Ethics Primer](https://caul-cbua.pressbooks.pub/aep/). (<https://caul-cbua.pressbooks.pub/aep/>)

If you prefer to have a printed copy (published by Broadview Press), copies of this book will be available at [Haven books](https://goo.gl/maps/pWc6WhhT21U2) (<https://goo.gl/maps/pWc6WhhT21U2>) at 43 Seneca Street, for around \$15. There is no difference in terms of content between the printed copy and the free online version.

The rest of the required readings will be electronically available on the course website.

IV. Course calendar

Week and Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments due
1: Course introductions	Thu., Sep. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the syllabus! 	Not Applicable (NA)
2: Introduction to Ethics	Tue., Sep. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, Introduction. pp. 11-14. https://caul-cbua.pressbooks.pub/aep/ (AEP) 	NA
2: Introduction to Ethics	Thu., Sep. 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, Introduction. pp. 15-30 + Appendix B: Critical Thinking Worksheet. https://caul-cbua.pressbooks.pub/aep/ <i>Recommended: Appendix A: Tips for Reading Actively</i> (AEP) 	Self-reflective essay due (1%)
3: Consequentialism and Deontology	Tue., Sep. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, pp. 31-54 (AEP) 	NA
3: Consequentialism and Deontology	Thu., Sep. 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short extract from Kant, <i>Groundworks</i>. (W) 	NA
4: Virtue and Context	Tue., Sep. 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, pp. 55-78 (AEP) 	NA
4: Writing a philosophical essay	Thu., Sep. 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reading. 	NA
5: Rights and Ethics	Tue., Oct. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, pp. 85-92 (AEP) 	NA
5: Rights and Ethics	Thu., Oct. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class exam 	Exam (15%)
6: Structural Injustice and Exploitation	Tue., Oct. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young, I. M. (2003). <i>From Guilt to Solidarity</i>. (W) 	NA

Week and Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments due
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young, I. M. (2011). <i>Responsibility for Justice</i>, pp. 43–64. (W) 	
6: Structural Injustice and Exploitation	Thu., Oct. 12	Case study (two articles to read before class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abuses ‘still rife’: 10 years on from Bangladesh’s Rana Plaza (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/24/10-years-on-bangladesh-rana-plaza-disaster-safety-garment-workers-rights-pay) What’s Changed Since More Than 1,110 People Died in Bangladesh’s Factory Collapse? https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/05/rana-plaza-four-years-later/525252/ 	NA
7: Global Poverty and Philanthropy	Tue., Oct. 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Singer, P. (1972). Famine, Affluence, and Morality. <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i>, 1(3), 229–243. (W) 	NA
7: Global Poverty and Philanthropy	Thu., Oct. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study (to read before class): MrBeast and philanthropy (https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/magazine/mrbeast-youtube.html) 	Short essay due (15%)
Fall Break	Tue., Oct. 24	No class	NA
Fall Break	Thu., Oct. 26	No class	NA
8: Animal Ethics	Tue., Oct. 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norcross, A. (2004). Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases. <i>Philosophical Perspectives</i>, 18, 229–245. (W) 	NA
8: Animal Ethics	Thu., Nov. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study (to read before class): Why you should eat meat (https://aeon.co/essays/if-you-care-about-animals-it-is-your-moral-duty-to-eat-them) 	NA
9: Disability	Tue., Nov. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reynolds, J. (2022). Theories of Disability. <i>The Disability Bioethics Reader</i>. (W) Reynolds, J. (2018). Three Things Clinicians Should Know About Disability. (W) (https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/three-things-clinicians-should-know-about-disability/2018-12) 	NA

Week and Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments due
9: Disability	Thu., Nov. 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study (to read before class): Dietz, E. (2022). Abortion, Disability Rights, and Reproductive Justice. <i>The Disability Bioethics Reader</i>. (W) 	Short essay due (15%)
10: Gender Norms, Adaptive Preferences, and Submission	Tue., Nov. 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowles, C., & Melo Lopes, F. (2023). How to dress like a feminist: A relational ethics of non-complicity. <i>Inquiry</i>, 0(0), 1–38. https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2023.2233014 (W) 	NA
10: Gender Norms, Adaptive Preferences, and Submission	Thu., Nov. 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study (to read before class): Garcia, M. (2021). It's Time to Talk about Women's Submission. In <i>APA Blog</i>. https://blog.apaonline.org/2021/04/28/submission-is-womens-destiny-but-we-can-change-that/ In class video : Ethics Matters (https://ethicsmatterstvseries.com/05-shaping-our-bodies/) 	NA
11: Immigration	Tue., Nov. 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parekh, S. (2020). Reasons for and against Accepting Refugees: A Philosophical Overview. In <i>No Refuge: Ethics and the Global Refugee Crisis</i>. (W) 	NA
11: Immigration	Thu., Nov. 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study (to read before class):: Why asylum seekers are choosing Canada in record numbers. (2023, March 20). BBC News. (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-64825197) In-class video: Documentary, <i>19 Days</i>. Asha Siad et Roda Siad. 2016, 26 min 	NA
12: Environmental Injustice	Tue., Nov. 28	To be determined	NA
12: Environmental Injustice	Thu., Nov. 30	To be determined	Self-reflective essay (15%)
13: Last week	Tue., Dec. 5	Wrap up	NA
13: Last week	Thu., Dec. 7	Revisions	NA
Final Exam	TBD	Final exam during the exam period	NA

V. Evaluation:

Students will be assessed on five components: (1) one self-reflective essay, (2) two short essays, (3) participation, (4) midterm exam, and (5) a final exam.

- **Self-reflective essay (15% of final grade):** By the end of week 2 (Sept. 14th), I require you to submit a self-reflective essay on an ethical dilemma you encountered in your life (or that someone close to you encountered). I will give you **one point** for completing this essay (pass/fail, I will not write comments on your first description of this ethical dilemma) on week 2. You can earn up to 14% more by submitting between **November 21 and November 30** a three-page essay critically reflecting on this ethical dilemma, using theories, texts, and ethical conundrums we will discuss in class. Length to be announced.
- **Two short essays (30% of final grade, 1st for 15%, and 2nd for 15% of final grade):** 3 page double-spaced each maximum. Topics distributed in class, and on Brightspace, two weeks before the due date.
- **Participation grade (10% of final grade):** Your presence in class is essential to your individual success and the collective success of our class. I will not formally take attendance every class. However, throughout the term, I will randomly distribute 12 in-class short assignments worth 1% each with a pass/fail grade. You are allowed to miss two of these short assignments without providing a reason. Unless you have a documented illness or emergency, I will not accept any late assignment.
- **Midterm exam (15% of final grade):** This exam will test your understanding of the foundational concepts of ethics and will include multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer questions. To get prepared for this exam, you will need to read (and understand) the materials assigned from the *Applied Ethics Primer*. This exam will happen in class.
- **Final exam (30% of final grade):** The exam is cumulative and will consist of short answers and a long essay in which you will analyze a case study, similar to the two short essays you have written. This will take place during the exam period.

VI. Course Policies (Including late work)

Unless other arrangements are made, in advance and in writing, with the course instructor, **essays sent after the due date** will be penalized by 5% for the first day they are late and then 2% for every subsequent day (including weekends), unless accompanied by documented evidence of a family emergency or illness.

All assignments should be submitted to me through the Brightspace dropbox. Please submit a file in Word or Rich Text Format (no .pdf files please).

If you **email** me, use your Carleton email address, and write the course code (PHIL1550) in the subject line. If you haven't received a response within 48 hours (excluding weekends), feel free to send me a quick follow up email.

VII. Statement on Plagiarism

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (CHATGPT, ETC.)

We would discuss this more in class together, but I would encourage you to refrain yourself for using these tools for your work submitted for this class. I want to be able to hear your distinctive voice when I read your essay and these tools will not reproduce your voice.

Using AI tools to generate content for assignments, and presenting it as one's own original work, as well as copying or paraphrasing the content produced by AI tools without proper citations or the instructor's consent, are both considered to be in violation of academic integrity.

PLAGIARISM

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.*” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2023-24)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

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. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- ***Pregnancy or 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 [EDC](#) website.
- ***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 test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

- ***Survivors of Sexual Violence:*** As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- ***Accommodation for Student Activities:*** Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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.

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. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
- Oct. 9 Statutory holiday. University closed.
- Oct. 23-27 Fall Break – no classes.
- Nov. 24 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, 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. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
- Feb. 19 Statutory holiday. University closed.
- Feb. 19-23 Winter Break – no classes.
- Mar. 15 Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses.

- Mar. 27 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
- Mar. 29 Statutory holiday. University closed.
- Apr. 10 Last day of two-term and winter term classes. *Classes follow a Friday schedule.* 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. 11-12 No classes or examinations take place.
- Apr. 13-25 Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
- Apr. 25 All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735