

PHIL 1550 B Introduction to Ethics and Social Issues

Winter 2025

Blended course: asynchronous class with synchronous elements and a final exam in person.

Class schedule: Mon/Wed 11:35-12:55pm

Room: See on Carleton Central

Instructor: Dr. Marie-Pier Lemay
Department of Philosophy Paterson Hall
Office: 3A45 Paterson Hall
Office Hours: TBA
Email: mariepierlemay@cunet.carleton.ca

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. describe key concepts and theories in ethics,

2. analyze contemporary ethical debates with underlying arguments
3. create a strong rationale to argue for or against ethical issues
4. apply issues emerging from ethical debates and arguments to real-life scenarios
5. use ethical tools, arguments, and classical theories to make informed decisions

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 are available at the campus bookstore.

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

IV. Course calendar

Materials for each week will be posted on Brightspace by Monday, 11:35 am every week.

Week and Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments due
1: Course introductions	Mon., Jan. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, Introduction. pp. 11-14. https://caul-cbua.pressbooks.pub/aep/ (AEP) pp. 1-2 (if PDF) 	Not Applicable (NA)
1: Introduction to Ethics	Wed., Jan. 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, Introduction. pp. 15-30 + Appendix (if paperback book). pp. 3-13 (if PDF). Optional: Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer <i>Appendix A: Tips for Reading Actively</i> (AEP) & <i>B: Critical Thinking Worksheet</i>. https://caul-cbua.pressbooks.pub/aep/ 	Quiz 1 (5%)
2: Consequentialism	Mon., Jan. 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, pp. 33-43 (if paperback book). pp. 16-23 (if PDF). 	NA
2: Deontology	Wed., Jan. 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, pp. 45-54 (if paperback book) pp. 24-30 (if PDF). 	Self-reflective essay due (1%) & Quiz 2 (5%)

Week and Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments due
3: Virtue	Mon., Jan. 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, pp. 55-61 (if paperback book) pp. 31-35 (if PDF). 	NA
3: Relations	Wed., Jan. 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, pp. 63-73 (if paperback book) pp. 36-43 (if PDF). 	Quiz 3 (5%)
4: Rights and Ethics	Mon., Jan. 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, pp. & 85-92 (if paperback book) pp. 50-53 (if PDF). 	NA
4: Self-Regarding Attitudes	Wed., Jan. 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maynell and Paron, Applied Ethics Primer, pp. & 95-100 (if paperback book) pp. 56-59 (if PDF). 	Quiz 4 (5%)
5 How to write a philosophy essay	Mon., Feb. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le Guin, U. (1973) "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas." <i>The Wind's Twelve Quarters</i>. 	NA
5: AI Ethics	Wed., Feb. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.prindleinstitute.org/2023/03/chatgpt-and-emotional-outsourcing/ 	NA
6: AI Ethics	Mon., Feb. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD 	NA
6: First philosophy essay	Wed., Feb. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First essay available from 9 am to 9 pm on Wednesday, Feb. 12. 	Quiz 5 (5%) & First Essay (10%)
Fall Break	Mon., Feb. 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Class 	
Fall Break	Wed., Feb. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class 	NA
7: Structural Injustice and Exploitation	Mon., Feb. 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young, I. M. (2003). <i>From Guilt to Solidarity</i>. (W) • Young, I. M. (2011). <i>Responsibility for Justice</i>, pp. 43–52. (W) 	NA
7: Structural Injustice and Exploitation	Wed., Feb. 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: Inside the Shein Machine (https://www.cbc.ca/documentaries/the-passionate-eye/how-ultra-fast-fashion-brand-shein-exploits-workers-and-gets-you-to-buy-more-according-to-new-documentary-1.6979791) 	Quiz 6 (5%)
8: Global Poverty and Philanthropy	Mon., Mar. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singer, P. (1972). Famine, Affluence, and Morality. <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i>, 1(3), 229–243. (W) 	NA
8: Global Poverty and Philanthropy	Wed., Mar. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: MrBeast and philanthropy (https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/magazine/mrbeast-youtube.html) 	Quiz 7 (5%)
9: Medical Assistance in Dying	Mon., Mar. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miles, J.K. (2023). <i>Practical Bioethics: Ethics for Patients and</i> 	NA

Week and Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments due
		<i>Providers</i> . Broadview Press, pp. 205-220.	
9: Medical Assistance in Dying	Wed., Mar. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study: Vox. (2023). A fact-checked debate about euthanasia in Canada. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJAKlSh_rjk&ab_channel=Vox) 	Quiz 8 (5%)
10: Disability & Class revision	Mon., Mar. 17	<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) 	
10: Second essay	Wed., Mar. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second essay available from 9 am to 9 pm. 	Second essay (15%)
11: Animal Ethics	Mon., Mar. 24	<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
11: Animal Ethics	Wed., Mar. 26	<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) 	Quiz 9 (5%)
12: Gender Norms, Adaptive Preferences, and Submission	Mon., Mar. 31	<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
12: Gender Norms, Adaptive Preferences, and Submission	Wed., Apr. 2	<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/05shaping-our-bodies/) 	Quiz 10 (5%)

Week and Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments due
13: Class Revision	Mon., Apr. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Second part of self-reflective assignment due on April 8. (9%)
Final Exam		Final Exam during the exam period	Final Exam (45%)

V. Evaluation:

Students will be assessed on five components: (1) one self-reflective essay, (2) one test, (3) two in-class essays, (4) one final exam, and (5) a survey (for a bonus point).

- Self-reflective assignment (10% of final grade):** By the end of week 2 (September 13rd), I require you to write about an ethical dilemma you encountered in your life (or that someone close to you encountered). I will give you **one point** for completing this description (pass/fail, I will not write comments on your first description of this ethical dilemma) on week 2. You can earn up to **9% more** by completing a short essay on this material in the last week of this class connecting your ethical dilemma to the course content. You will be asked to use Google Docs for this assignment; instructions will be available on Brightspace.
- Short quizzes (20% of final grade):** Every week, you will be required to complete an online quiz composed of multiple-choice and true/false questions on Brightspace. A total of 10 quizzes will be available. I will drop the two lowest scores, and only 8 quizzes will be included for your final grade (each quiz will be worth up to 2.5% of your final grade).
- First Essay (10% of final grade):** In this exam, you will write an outline of an essay about the course content. You will be able to choose between three topics. You will be asked to use Google Docs for this assignment; instructions will be available on Brightspace.
- Second Essay (15% of final grade):** In this exam, you will write an introduction and an outline to an essay about the course content. You will be able to choose between three topics. You will be asked to use Google Docs for this assignment; instructions will be available on Brightspace.
- Final Exam (45% of final grade):** In this cumulative exam, you will answer multiple-choice and short-development questions about the course materials before writing an essay about the course content. This final exam will happen in person and on paper.

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 or a filled [self-declaration form](#).

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 (PHIL1550A) 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.

If you have a general question about the course or any assignment, I strongly encourage you to post this question in the **"Ask your instructor" discussion forum** on Brightspace.

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.

Note that I can ask you to submit drafts or answer questions on the writing process if I have suspicions that you did not write what you submitted for this course.

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 2024-25)

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. 4	Classes start.
Sept. 17	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. 14	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 21-25	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 22	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. 6	Last day of fall term classes. <i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i> 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. 9-21	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. 21	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 6	Classes begin.
Jan. 17	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. 17	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 17-21	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 15	Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses.
Mar. 25	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.
Apr. 8	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. 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. 9-10	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 11-26	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 18	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 26	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