

## **PHIL1550A: Introduction to Ethics and Social Issues**

Carleton University, winter 2012

Instructor: Dr. Matt McLennan

Office hours: Wednesdays 9:30 – 11:00am, 329B Paterson Hall

Contact: mrmclenn@connect.carleton.ca

Teaching assistants: TBA

Class times and location: Wednesdays and Fridays, 11:30am – 1:00pm, 301 Azrieli Theatre

**Course description:** This course is designed to introduce students to ethics and social issues by examining basic concepts of moral philosophy and applying them to concrete cases. You will become familiar with major moral frameworks, as well as some of the most common argumentative devices and errors in moral reasoning. You will be required to use this knowledge to engage in selected debates of contemporary, practical relevance.

**Required Text:** Hugh Lafollette (ed.): *Ethics in Practice: an Anthology* (Blackwell, third edition). Available at the university bookstore.

**Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated based on one mid-term test, one essay, and a final exam.

- Midterm test: Feb. 1 (20% of course grade)
- Essay: Due in class March 7 (40% of course grade). Detailed instructions are appended below.
- Final exam: Date and location TBA (40% of course grade)

**Class Schedule:** The following is a loose schedule of lecture topics and readings. Small changes may occur as needed, and will be announced with reasonable advance notice. Readings are listed below by the number they appear in the textbook.

Week 1 (Jan. 4/7): INTRODUCTION: Frameworks for moral deliberation  
READINGS: 1, 2, 3 (plus Lafollette p.1-15)

Week 2 (Jan. 11/13): WHO COUNTS IN ETHICS? Part 1: Abortion and the idea of personhood  
READINGS: 9, 10, 11

Week 3 (Jan. 18/20): WHO COUNTS IN ETHICS? Part 2: Animal rights, human responsibilities?  
READINGS: 14, 15, 16, 17

Week 4 (Jan. 25/27): WHO COUNTS IN ETHICS? Part 3: How does the environment factor in?  
READINGS: 60, 61, 62

Week 5 (Feb. 1/3): HARM AND PERSONAL FREEDOM Part 1: The ethics of recreational drug use, smoking, and other risks to self

READINGS: 28, 30, 31

MIDTERM TEST FEB. 1

Week 6 (Feb. 8/10): HARM AND PERSONAL FREEDOM Part 2: Do we have a right to hardcore pornography?

READINGS: 34, 35, 36

Week 7 (Feb. 15/17): STRUCTURES OF OPPRESSION Part 1: Social dimensions of rape and sexual assault

READINGS: 41, 42, 43

Week 8 (Feb.22/24): WINTER BREAK – NO CLASSES

Week 9 (Feb. 29 / March 2): STRUCTURES OF OPPRESSION Part 2: Is affirmative action the solution?

READINGS: 44, 45, 46

Week 10 (March 7/9): GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES Part 1: War and terrorism

READINGS: 64, 65, 66, 67

ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE MARCH 7

Week 11 (March 14/16): GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES Part 2: World Hunger

READINGS: 56, 57, 58, 59

Week 12 (March 21/23): GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES Part 3: Economic justice

READINGS: 52, 53, 55

Week 13 (March 28/30): BRAVE NEW WORLDS Part 1: Commercial surrogacy

READINGS: 20, 21

Week 14 (April 4): BRAVE NEW WORLDS Part 2: Human cloning

READINGS: 22, 23

**Essay Assignment** (40% of course grade, due in class March 7)

Answer ONE of the following questions. Your answer should demonstrate a strong knowledge of class discussions and relevant readings from the textbook. Above all, you must ARGUE your opinion. The point of a philosophy paper is not simply to give your opinion on a topic, but to convince the reader using reasoned argument. Essay expectations will be further discussed in class.

- 1) Do we have a right to hardcore pornography?
- 2) Should recreational drugs such as cocaine be decriminalized?
- 3) Is affirmative action a good solution to systemic inequality?

Word limit: 2000-2500 words (approx. 8-10 pages), not including notes and bibliography.

Marks will be deducted at the rate of 5% per calendar day written work is late without valid reason. Valid reasons for late submission of written work include illness, severe stress, and family emergencies. Documentation (e.g. doctors' or counsellors' notes) is required.

## **Department of Philosophy and Carleton University policies**

### **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 in the lower right corner of the cover sheet:
  - student name
  - student number
  - course number and section
  - instructor's name
- The Philosophy Department does not accept assignments by FAX. You may send them by courier, if necessary.
- 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 Term Work:**

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more 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. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://www4.carleton.ca/calendars/ugrad/current/regulations/acadregsuniv14.html#14.3>)

### **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 me 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/accommodation/>

**Religious obligation:** write to me 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/accommodation/>

**Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations** in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that I receive your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by the deadlines published on the PMC website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

### **Important Dates:**

Sept. 8	Classes start (after Orientation events).
Sept. 21	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall term and two-term courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 7	University Day – no classes.
Oct. 10	Thanksgiving Day – university closed.
Nov. 21	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000 level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 5	Last day of classes, Fall term. Last day for handing in term assignments, subject to any earlier course deadline.
Dec. 5	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 8-21	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses.
Jan. 4	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 17	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 20	Family Day – university closed
Feb. 20-24	Winter Break, classes suspended.
Mar. 22	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000 level before the Final Examination period.
Apr. 5	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. Last day for handing in term assignments, subject to any earlier course deadline.
Apr. 5	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 6	Good Friday – university closed.
Apr. 11-24	Final Examinations.

### **Addresses:**

Department of Philosophy:	3A46 Paterson Hall <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy">www.carleton.ca/philosophy</a> 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/registrar">www.carleton.ca/registrar</a> 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory 520-7850 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/sasc">www.carleton.ca/sasc</a>
Paul Menton Centre:	500 University Centre 520-6608 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/pmc">www.carleton.ca/pmc</a>
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Library <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/wts">www.carleton.ca/wts</a> 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	<a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca/">http://www.library.carleton.ca/</a> 520-2735