

PHIL 230A: Introduction to Moral Theory (Sect. 002)

Term 1, Fall 2014

Tue/Thurs 3:30-4:45, PHRM 1101

Instructor:

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- * BUCH E375 (Philosophy): Mon. 9-10a
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Description

Most of our time in this course will be spent studying and discussing three influential, Western theories of morality: consequentialism (we'll focus on Mill's Utilitarianism), deontology (we'll focus on Kantianism) and virtue theory (we'll look at Aristotle's view, as well as later theories of virtue ethics). We will also discuss moral relativism and the ethics of care. The main focus of the course will not be on current ethical issues (there is another course in the department focused on that, PHIL 235, Contemporary Moral Issues), though students will be applying the moral theories we study to a current ethical issue of their choice. Rather, we will consider more theoretical questions about ethics, such as:

- * Are there any universally, objectively valid moral rules, principles or values, or are these simply relative to times, places, and cultures? If there are objective moral rules, principles, or values, on what could these be based?
- * What are the benefits and drawbacks to emphasizing the following in theories of morality: consequences of actions, intention, motives, virtues of character?
- * What is the relationship of ethics to human happiness? Might acting morally well lead to greater happiness for oneself and/or for others, and if so, is that a good motivating reason for being moral?
- * What is the value and purpose of creating and studying philosophical theories of ethics? Does doing so help us solve practical ethical questions better than we might without them?

Target audience: This course is appropriate for all undergraduate students, both those who are new to philosophy, and those who are majoring in philosophy but who are relatively new to moral philosophy. There are no prerequisites for this course, and it assumes no special prior knowledge of philosophy.

Learning Objectives (and their relationship to course activities)

Students who successfully complete the course will be able to:

1. Identify the features of a practical issue that make it an ethical/moral one (in-class activities, moral issue journal)
2. Explain the basic characteristics of the following moral theories: deontology, consequentialism, virtue ethics, and (a) differentiate them from each other, (b) identify at least one philosopher associated with each theory, (c) evaluate each, explaining strengths and weaknesses (moral issue journal, notes on readings, paper, exams)
3. Apply each moral theory to a moral issue they might face in their lives (moral issue journal, paper)

4. Analyze and explain their own decision process when making ethical decisions (may differ according to different circumstances, but should be able to analyze and explain in any particular case) (moral issue journal)
5. Explain the value of creating or studying moral theories — why might one want to try to do this? Does it have value? If so, what? (in-class activities, moral issue journal)
6. Outline a complex argument in a philosophical text (in-class activities, reading notes)
7. Assess the strength of arguments in assigned texts, in oral or written work by other students, and in their own writing (notes on texts, paper, peer review of other students' papers, group discussion, exams)
8. Write a philosophical paper that provides a clear argument for a specific thesis (paper, peer review of papers)

Course format

This class meets twice per week for 75 minutes each meeting. There will be some lecture on most days, but there will also be a good deal of in-class activities, done individually, in small groups, or with the whole class.

Required and Recommended Texts

- * Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* -- an edition from Broadview Publishing Co. (ed. Laura Denis) has been ordered by the bookstore; you may use a different edition if you have one (though references to page numbers in the syllabus and in class will of course not be the same)
- * Readings posted on the course web site: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil230>
Some of these will be behind a password-protected page that only registered students can access, due to copyright restrictions. The password will be provided in class (or email Christina if you didn't get it or lost it: c.hendricks@ubc.ca).

Course Websites

Most of the course material is on **the main course website**: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil230> However, we'll use the Connect system (<http://connect.ubc.ca>) for two things that can't easily be done on that site: (1) submitting assignments online/receiving marked assignments back online, and (2) accessing your grades in a grade book. Other than those two things, everything else will be on the main course site.

Evaluation – see below for details

Attendance & participation for in-class activities	5%
Notes on readings (2 of these)	5%
Moral issue journal	10%
In-class exam	20%
Paper (approx. 5-8 pages)	30%
Final exam	30%

* *Completion of the starred items above is required to pass this course—failure to complete any of these will result in a failing grade for the course.*

Attendance and Participation for in-class activities From the UBC calendar: “Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes. Any request for academic concession must be clearly expressed (see [Academic Concession](#)).” (<http://www.students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,36,0,0>)

Class meetings will often involve in-class activities where you’ll need to do something, either individually or in your small groups. Attendance will be taken during these activities, and small groups will have a chance at least twice during the term to provide feedback on the degree to which other members are engaging in small group activities. **You can miss two of these activities without penalty;** after two, missing them will count against this 5% of your course mark. The in-class activities will usually not be announced ahead of time, as often they are designed only a few days beforehand, depending on how the class is going and how much time we need for lecture on a particular topic.

Notes on readings: Each person in the group will sign up for **two days** during the term on which they will post notes on the reading for that day, to the group space on the class wiki (specific instructions given in class). The group will then have a record of notes on many of the readings, created by group members. You will also be able to access the reading notes of other groups, if you wish.

Moral issue journal: You’ll be choosing a particular moral issue and writing about how you would go about coming to a decision as to what should be done, what factors influence such a decision. Then, as the term goes on, you’ll be applying the moral theories we’re studying to this issue, and noting if and how your views on it change. At the end of the term, you’ll be asked to reflect on the value of creating and studying moral theories, whether studying them has affected your own views on this moral issue, and whether there might be other benefits (or drawbacks) to moral theorizing. You will write this journal on the course blog, but you will have the option of either doing so anonymously, or making your posts private just to the instructor and the TA if you wish.

In-class exam: There will be an in-class exam on **Thursday, Oct. 9**, covering moral relativism and consequentialism. There will likely be a short answer section and one essay, but more details will be provided in class.

Paper: You will need to write a paper of about 5-7 pages (that number may change; see the actual assignment sheet for the final number), due **Friday, Nov. 21**. The paper will be written in stages: you’ll write two drafts first, and each one will receive comments from at least one peer. See the schedule below for when those drafts are due.

Final exam: There will be a 2.5-hour final exam for this course in December (exam period: Dec. 2-17); the specific day and time is usually available sometime in October. The exam will consist of short answer and essay questions.

Course and University Policies

Class Etiquette

- Please make every effort to arrive on time, and do not leave class early without letting me know first that you must do so (and sit towards the back of the room in that case). Late arrivals and people getting up to leave (even to go to the washroom) are disruptive for everyone (if you **MUST** take a washroom break, do so as quietly as possible and don’t make it a habit to do so during class very often).
- Please don’t come to class if you are going to spend class time doing something else (e.g., surf the web, read material for other classes, etc.). It’s pretty easy to tell just by looking at faces and

mannerisms who is using their computer in a way that allows them to still engage with the course, and who has lost attention and is doing something else. Looking things up online related to the course is great—and please raise your hand and share what you’ve found with the rest of us! But using your computer to do other things is often very distracting for students behind you, and I have had numerous such complaints from students in the past who are annoyed that someone in front of them watches videos, keeps flipping web pages unrelated to the course, and the like.

- Often it’s best to raise your hand if you want to speak, but I’m also happy to have free-form discussions in class where people don’t raise their hands as long as everyone is respectful of others (i.e., avoid cutting others off, interrupting them when they’re in the middle of saying something).
- Basic rules of respectful dialogue will be enforced, such as avoiding direct attacks on persons (you may criticize ideas/arguments, but avoid criticizing the person who gives those). Disrespectful speech such as name-calling, stereotyping, and derogatory remarks about ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation and sexual/gender identity should be avoided, and may constitute harassing speech—see below.
- Harassing speech will not be tolerated. The UBC Equity office defines harassment as follows (<http://equity.ubc.ca/discrimination/#harassment>): “Harassment, a form of discrimination, is a comment, conduct or behaviour that humiliates, intimidates, excludes and isolates an individual or group based on the BC Human Rights Code’s thirteen grounds of prohibited discrimination.” The thirteen grounds of prohibited discrimination are: age, ancestry, colour, family status, marital status, physical and mental disability, place of origin, political belief, race, religion, sex (including gender and pregnancy), sexual orientation, unrelated criminal conviction.
 - Please see <http://equity.ubc.ca/discrimination/#harassment> for examples of harassment, which include “Repeated derogatory comments or jokes based on one of the prohibited grounds,” and “Discussing the culture of other classmates, co-workers, or colleagues in a disrespectful or ridiculing manner.”

Policies on late or missed assignments

Note: I only give extensions or makeups for things that are unavoidable and unexpected, such as illness, accident, family emergencies. Having a lot of work to do in other courses as well as this one is not unexpected, since you should know in advance the due dates for all your coursework. Most everyone in the class is very busy with other courses as well, so if I give extensions for one person for that reason, I should, in fairness, just extend the deadline for all...which quickly leads to deadlines meaning very little.

*** Written assignments**

- *Reading notes (20 marks maximum):* You’ll need to do two of these, worth 10 marks each. If your notes are posted past the due date (discussed in the instructions for the notes), without an “excused” reason, you will lose 1 mark per weekday (1 mark for the weekend as a whole) past the due date as a penalty, for each late set of notes.
- *Moral issue journal (40 marks maximum):* You will need to write at least 4 entries, each worth 10 marks. If your entries are late without an excused reason, you will lose 1 mark per weekday (1 mark for the weekend as a whole) past the due date as a penalty, for each late entry.
- *Paper (100 marks maximum):* For each weekday your paper is late you will lose 5 marks out of 100 possible (and 5 total for a weekend), if you don’t have an excused reason for it being late. Late essays must be accompanied by a “late essay form,” available on the course web site (under “Assignments”).

- *Paper drafts and peer feedback:* The schedule below gives due dates for each draft of the essay (you will do two drafts and a final version). Each of the two drafts will be peer reviewed.
 - Failure to turn in the drafts at all means 10 marks off your final paper mark (10%), for each draft not turned in.
 - Turning in the drafts late means 5 marks off your final paper mark, for each draft that is late. Except that if you turn in the draft two or fewer weekdays before the next draft is due (for the first draft), or the final paper due date (for the second draft), then this counts as not turning it in at all and you'll get 10 marks off the final paper mark for each draft turned in that late.
 - If you turn in the draft but do not engage in peer review of peers' essays as assigned, you will lose 5 marks from your final paper mark, for each peer review session not completed. This involves both filling out a peer review worksheet and attending class on the day we discuss the drafts in groups, face to face.

* In-class activities (20 marks maximum)

- 10 of the 20 marks will be for attendance and participation in the in-class activities for which attendance is taken (not usually announced in advance of the day on which they happen). You can miss two of the in-class activities for which attendance is taken, without penalty. After that, missing class or not participating in the activities will count against this 10 marks.
- The other 10 of the 20 marks is for engaging in peer review of others' essays in your small group. If you do not both fill out the peer feedback worksheet for the essays you are to review, or come to class on the day we discuss peer comments face-to-face, without valid excuses, you lose 5 marks, for each of the peer review sessions you miss.

* In-class exam: There will be no make ups for the in-class exam except in cases of unavoidable, unexpected situations such as illness, accident, family emergency, work exigency, or other such situations. Talk to Christina as soon as possible if you feel you won't be able to make the in-class exam and have an excusable reason.

* Final exam: According to the UBC Calendar, if you miss a final exam during the official examination periods, you must follow the procedures to request "Academic Concession" (see <http://www.students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0>). There is no other way to make up for missing a final exam, and final exams are only rescheduled if you have two exams on the same day at the same time, or if you have three or more final exams in one 24 hour period. See policies on final exams, here: <http://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/exams/exam-policies>

Equity and special arrangements

I will work to ensure that all students have a fair and equitable opportunity for participation and success in the course. In particular:

- The University accommodates students with disabilities or ongoing medical or psychological conditions who have registered with Access and Diversity: <http://students.ubc.ca/about/access>
- According to UBC's policy on Religious Holidays (<http://www.universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2010/08/policy65.pdf>): "...UBC permits students who are scheduled to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religions to notify their instructors in advance of the holy day of their wish to observe it by absenting themselves from class or examination. Instructors provide opportunity for such students to make up work or examinations missed without penalty." The policy specifies that students must give two weeks' advance notice if they will miss class or an examination due to observing holy days.
- Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

Academic Dishonesty: I take academic dishonesty very seriously, because ensuring that your grades reflect your own work is crucial to your own learning experience, to fairness to the rest of the students, and to those who expect your transcript to reflect your own efforts. Accordingly, I am vigilant about preventing, detecting, and deterring academic misconduct whenever possible, and to punishing cases of it to the fullest extent allowed by university policy. Please review the UBC Calendar Academic regulations for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty (See the UBC Calendar, under “Academic Regulations,” and “Student Conduct and Discipline”): <http://www.students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0>). There are also links on the course website about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

Reviewing marked assignments: Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments and should also retain all their marked assignments in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,49,0,0>). Students have the right to view their marked final examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so by January 31 following Term 1 courses in the Winter session. They must contact the course instructor, “who will make every reasonable effort to arrange for the student to view the marked final examination within 30 days of the request.” See viewing marked work in the Academic Calendar, here: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,41,93,0> Final exams are the property of the university, and must be retained for one year, after which they will (usually) be destroyed.

Grading Standards

Standards for grading this course will be in accordance with those given in the Academic Calendar and the grading guidelines published by the Faculty of Arts. The following list is from:

<http://www.arts.ubc.ca/faculty-amp-staff/resources/courses-and-grading/grading-guidelines.html>

80% to 100% (A- to A+) *Exceptional* performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

68% to 79% (B- to B+) *Competent* performance: evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.

50% to 67% (D to C+) *Adequate* performance: understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour.

00% to 49% (F) *Inadequate* performance: little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.

Scaling of Grades: From the Calendar: “Faculties, departments and schools reserve the right to scale grades in order to maintain equity among sections and conformity to University, faculty, department, or school norms. Students should therefore note that an unofficial grade given by an instructor might be changed by the faculty, department or school. Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record.” (<http://www.students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,42,96,0>). From Faculty of Arts grading guidelines site linked above: “Marks in this course may be scaled (see Calendar, under Grading Practices). If scaling is required, it will be carried out after each assignment, so that students will know where they stand going into the final examination. If scaling is done on the final examination, students will be informed if they ask to review their examination according to the usual policy.”

Schedule of Readings and Assignments – subject to change; all changes announced on course website

The following is an outline of what we'll read and do. The reading schedule is flexible, and you should check the reading schedule on the course website regularly, as that is where the most up to date info can be found <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil230/readingassignment-schedule> We may get behind, for example, and I may have to shift some things around.

Those readings marked “website” can be found through links on the course website pages with the reading/assignment schedule, on a password protected page. The password will be given out in class; or, if you’ve lost it, email Christina: c.hendricks@ubc.ca

Readings assigned for each day should be done before class on that day. Please bring the texts with you to class, as we will often be referring to them (and some class activities will require you to analyze parts of the text during class).

<u>Week/Date</u>	<u>Readings to be done before this class meeting</u>	<u>Assignments due</u>
	Introduction; Moral Relativism	
TH 9/4	Introduction to moral theory; instructions for reading notes and moral issue journal handed out	
T 9/9	Moral relativism: Internet Encyclopedia of Ethics: http://www.iep.utm.edu/moral-re/ • Read the intro, plus sections 2a-2b, 2f-2g, 3a-3b, 3d, 4a-4d, 4g (skip 2c-2e, 3c, 4e-4f) • <u>optional</u> resources posted on course website	
TH 9/11	• Moral relativism & pluralism: continue discussion of IEP article above • Read Wolf, Susan. “Two Levels of Pluralism.” <i>Ethics</i> , Vol. 102, No. 4 (July 1992). pp. 785-798. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2381554 (course website)	
T 9/16	• Moral relativism & pluralism: continue discussion of Wolf’s article, above • <u>optional readings</u> for those interested in more information about moral relativism are posted on website	
	Consequentialism & Utilitarianism	
TH 9/18	Consequentialism & utilitarianism— general intro • Read Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy on consequentialism: section 1 only http://www.iep.utm.edu/conseque/	First moral issue journal entries due F 9/19
T 9/23	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> • Chapter 1 and part of Chapter 2: pp. 1-8 on the version of this text posted on course website • <u>optional readings and other sources</u> posted on course website	
TH 9/25	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> • end of Chapter 2, pp. 9-12	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, pp. 16-20 • Chapter 3 is <u>optional</u> <p>More optional readings on course website</p>	
T 9/30	<p>Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 5, pp. 20-25 	
TH 10/2	<p>Later consequentialism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timmons, Mark. "Contemporary Utilitarianism." <i>Moral Theory: An Introduction</i>. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002. pp. 131-150 (course website) • Nozick, Robert. "The Experience Machine." <i>Anarchy, State and Utopia</i>. New York: Basic Books, 1974. pp. 42-45. (course website) 	Moral issue jrnal on Mill due F 10/3
T 10/7	<p>Rule Utilitarianism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brandt, Richard. "Some Merits of One form of Rule Utilitarianism" (in Brandt, <i>Morality, Utilitarianism, and Rights</i>. Cambridge UP, 1992) (course website) 	
TH 10/9	Exam on moral relativism & consequentialism	In-class exam
	Kantianism	
T 10/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> pp. 55-66, 144-151 (entirety of the "First section" of the book, plus excerpts from "On the Common Saying: This May be True in Theory..." and <i>Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone</i>) • recommended & optional readings on course web site 	
TH 10/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kant, <i>Groundwork</i>, pp. 73 to last full paragraph on p. 85 ("Second Section" of the text, paragraph sections 413-426) • optional readings on course web site 	Draft 1 of term paper due TH 10/16
T 10/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kant, <i>Groundwork</i>, bottom of p. 85 to last full paragraph on p. 89 ("Second Section" of the text, paragraph section 427-430) • optional readings on course web site 	<i>Peer feedback on paper drafts in class</i>
TH 10/23	<p>Kant, <i>Groundwork</i>, bottom of p. 89 to top of p. 93 ("Second Section" of the text, paragraph sections 431-434)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • optional readings on course web site 	
T 10/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie..." (course website) • Korsgaard, "The Right to Lie..." (course website) 	
	Virtue Theory	
TH 10/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to Virtue Ethics: Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy on VE, sections 2a-2d, 3a only http://www.iep.utm.edu/virtue/#H2 • Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>, Book I, sections 1-4, 7-8, 10, 13. Trans. WD Ross, found in many places, incl here: https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/nicomachean/book1.html • optional resources listed on course website 	Moral issue jrnal on Kant due F 10/31
T 11/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> 	

T 11/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book II, sections 1-4, 6-7, 9 • Book III, sections 5-7, 9-12 • optional readings on course web site 	
TH 11/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book VI, sections 1, 5, 9, 12-13 • Book VII, sections 7-9 • optional readings on course web site 	Draft 2 of term paper due TH 11/6
T 11/11	Remembrance Day: no classes	
TH 11/13	<p>Later virtue theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hursthouse, Rosalind. "Virtue Theory and Abortion." <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> 20.3 (Summer 1991): 223-246. (course web site) 	<i>Peer feedback on draft 2 of paper</i>
T 11/18	<p>Later virtue theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nussbaum, Martha. "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach." <i>Midwest Studies in Philosophy</i> 13.1 (1988). 32-53. (course website) 	
	Ethics of Care	
TH 11/20	Held, Virginia. "The Ethics of Care." <i>The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory</i> . Ed. David Copp. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. (course website)	Final paper due F 11/21
T 11/25	Noddings, Nel. "Caring." <i>Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy</i> . Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002. (course website)	
TH 11/27	Last day for this class	Last moral issue

FINAL EXAM PERIOD: Dec. 2-17, 2014