

Department of Philosophy
University of Guelph
Fall 2014

PHIL*2120-01 Syllabus

Lecturer: Dr. Victoria I. Burke
Course Time: MON 19:00-21:50
Course Location: MACK120
Office Hours: 16:00-17:00 PM MW + by appointment
Office Location: Mack 339 (office wing)
Email: vburke@uoguelph.ca

Ethical Theory

Ethical theory is concerned with how human beings determine what is right and wrong to do. It is concerned with the nature of the good, and the idea of value. Aristotle wrote in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (circa 400 B.C.) that “Every craft and every line of inquiry, and likewise every action and decision seems to seek some good ...” For Aristotle, the good at which political science aims is the highest of all goods, *eudaimonia*, or flourishing (or, as it is sometimes translated: happiness). Since the time of ancient Greece, philosophers have concerned themselves with how to determine the good and the right in varying ways, and there are both recent theoretical and applied ethics. Twentieth-century ethical theorists were concerned with the nature of moral obligation, the status of evaluative properties, the status of rules, normative language, different types of duties, ethical relativism, the question of ethical objectivity, and the nature of autonomy. They also sought to analyze naturalism in ethics, ethical realism, the nature of norms, the nature of responsibility and integrity, the nature of hypothetical and categorical imperatives, as well as justifying and motivating reasons, and the difference between the right and the good. Students enrolled in PHIL*2120-01 will look at selections from the history of ethical theory in Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Mill, and Nietzsche, as well as a variety of twentieth-century approaches to diverse theoretical issues. The course will conclude with a look at four prominent issues in applied ethics.

Required Text:

Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues, Fifth Edition. Edited by Stephen M. Cahn and Peter Markie (ISBN 978-0-19-533596-5) (all readings on the syllabus are from this textbook). The page numbers

provided on the syllabus are for both the 4th and 5th Editions. For the purposes of this class, a used copy of the 4th Edition will meet your needs, as it contains all the readings on the syllabus.

Course Requirements: Students will be assessed on the basis of two short essays (6-7 pages each), class participation, and a Final Examination.

Distribution:

Short Paper on History (6-7 pages): 30%

Short Paper on Theory (6-7 pages): 30%

Class Participation: 5%

Final Examination: 35%

Course Objectives: The objectives of PHIL*2120-01 are: 1.) to acquaint students with an array of philosophical ideas about morality and ethics, both in the history of philosophy and recent theoretical and applied ethics; 2.) to encourage students to think critically about such concepts and issues; 3.) to provide students with the opportunity to formulate and write about their own original interpretations of ethical concepts; and 4.) to gain practice at employing their reading comprehension and capacity for self-expression in discussions with other course members on the course topics.

Guidelines for submitting written work: The essays must be submitted on white 8.5 x 11 paper, typed and double-spaced. Students must keep a copy of their work for their own files in case the paper should become lost. If the paper becomes lost (by the student, the office staff, or the Instructor), it is the student's responsibility to be able to replace it. Papers may *not* be submitted electronically via e-mail or by fax. For footnoting or citation style use Chicago Manual of Style, MLA Style, or APA Style. Any of the standard style sheets is fine, as long as you are consistent. Do not send emails to the professor inquiring about citation style. A sample style guide will be posted on the Blackboard site for your convenience. Citation of the lectures and powerpoint: (Burke, May 22, 2013). Common knowledge that is widely known does not need to be cited.

Ecologically friendly writing assignments: In the interest of maintaining an ecologically sound course, cover sheets are not required on the assignments. Put your name and student number at the top of the first page and start the essay one quarter of the way down the page. Do not include a bibliography. External sources are not permitted on the analysis papers, and it is presumed you are using the course texts. Put the page citation for references in brackets within the text after the quotation, or use footnotes at the bottom of the page. Example: (Fraser, Rethinking Recognition, 234). Recently some students have been using slightly off-white recycled paper rather than brilliant white paper. This is encouraged. It is encouraged for students to use recycled paper.

Readings and Lectures: Students should read the assigned material prior to the lecture, and should bring the texts to class as the lectures may involve careful and close examination of the readings. Students will be assessed on the basis of their comprehension and synthesis of both the reading material and lectures.

Class Meetings: This class meets for 3 hours on Mondays. The session will be divided into two approximately 1 hour and 20 minute segments divided by a 15 minute break.

Deadlines: The deadlines for the essays are October 6, 2014 and November 17, 2014. Students should submit the essays in class. Essays are not accepted by email or fax.

Email: Philosophical questions will not be answered on email. Students must avail themselves of class time and office hours, in order to have their questions answered. Only short administrative questions will be answered on email. You can expect a response in 48 hours. If the answer to your question can be found on the Courselink site, you will not receive a response.

Office Hours: My office hours are 16:00-17:00 PM MW + by appointment (Office Location: Mack 339 (office wing)). These are free and open hours when you can simply drop in to discuss material, and to ask

questions of any sort. Students do not need to advise me in advance that they are coming to visit during office hours. The poster on the office door does not designate my office hours. It designates the hours I am occupying the office. Do not knock on the office door at any time other than my designated office hours, unless you have an appointment.

A Note on the Quantity of Reading: There is a lot of reading for this course, more than can be reasonably expected. Rather than reading everything thoroughly before class, I recommend that you skim the readings before class, enough to get a general idea of the main points. The class sessions will summarize the readings, as well as illuminate points in the reading for special focus. On that basis, you can go back and read thoroughly the sections that most interest you and that you choose to make the focus of your essays. The material for Week 5-8 is especially difficult, conceivably graduate school material. The intention behind the inclusion of this content is to expose students to the highlights in recent theoretical ethics. The content for these weeks provides a closer look at Aristotle, Mill, and Kant, and strengthens student vocabulary with respect to theoretical ethics. The coverage in this course of this material is not intended to be a thorough treatment of these articles.

A Note on the Powerpoint Presentations: The powerpoint presentations provide summaries of the readings and lectures, but do not contain all the material covered in lecture. More content is provided in lecture than can be provided on the powerpoint, including student questions and comments in lecture. Exposure to student questions and comments are an important part of the learning process. Knowing the content of the live lectures could make the difference between a paper judged to be an A versus an A- because the lectures provide the opportunity for more exploration of the topics than is possible on the powerpoint, which merely provide sketches of the course content. The powerpoint is posted in advance of the lecture, with the intention that students can print them out, bring them to lecture, and take notes in lecture by annotating them.

Class Participation Grading: Participation marks will be awarded on the basis of the level of student engagement with the class sessions. Points will not necessarily be awarded on the basis of attendance alone, and no records of attendance will be kept. In a group of this size, I will become familiar with students who participate by name. Generally, students who make regular class contributions have a good chance of getting full marks. Students who display a capacity to engage with others (students, lectures) dialogically (and display a capacity to listen) will generally be given greater credit than students whose social orientation is one-sided or aggressive. Other factors include: level of insight into readings, level of currency with present states of affairs, reading comprehension, consideration of others and productive engagement. If you are concerned about your mark, you can ask me at 2/3 point in the term what your expected participation grade will be, and I will give you an estimate at that point.

Late Papers: Late papers may be handed in to me directly or to my department mailbox. Essays are not to be submitted to front office staff at the philosophy department. Write the date and time you drop the paper off on the paper. If the date and time you indicate is inconsistent with what I know about the time I pick the paper up, and the dates and times I check the mailbox, the late penalty will be assessed on the basis of the time I pick the paper up. Put the paper directly into the mailbox without disturbing the office staff. Upload the paper to the Courselink site Dropbox for late papers to give it a time and date stamp, but you must still turn in a hardcopy for marking purposes.

Courselink Site: This course will have a Courselink site where all handouts will be posted. Please check the Courselink site regularly for announcements. The Powerpoint Presentations will also be posted on the Courselink site. Your grades on the essays will also be posted on the courselink site.

Course Schedule

Unit I: History

WEEK 1

September 8: Course Introduction; Plato

Reading: Plato, *Euthyphro*, pp. 5-16 (both 4th & 5th Editions)

WEEK 2

September 15: Aristotle

Readings: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk I; Bk II, 1-7; Bk III, 1-7; Bk V, 1,2, 7, 10; Bk VI, 1-3, 8, 12; Bk VII, 1-3; Bk VIII, 1-3, 9; Bk X, 4-9 (note that not all the paragraphs in the textbook are required reading, only those listed here)

*Instructions for Short Paper on History posted by this date

WEEK 3

September 22: Kant

Readings: *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 280-318, 4th Edition; 313-352, 5th Edition

WEEK 4

September 29: Mill & Nietzsche

Readings: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, pp. 330-345 4th Edition; pp. 362-396 5th Edition; Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, "Preface" #3, 6; "First Treatise" #2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13; "Second Treatise" #2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22; "Third Treatise" #1, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24 (note that not all the paragraphs in the textbook are required reading, only those listed here)

Unit II: Recent Theory

WEEK 5

October 6: Moore, Ayer, Ross, & Anscombe

Readings: G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 423-429 4th Edition; pp. 459-465 5th Edition; Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, pp. 449-55 4th Edition; pp. 485-491 5th Edition; W.D. Ross, *The Right and the Good*, pp. 439-449 4th Edition; pp. 475-484 5th Edition; G.E.M. Anscombe, *Modern Moral Philosophy*, pp. 491-504 4th Edition; pp. 527-539 5th Edition

*Paper on History due (5-6 pages)

*Instructions for Short Paper on Theory posted by this date

WEEK 6

October 13: Thanksgiving day holiday (university closed and no class)

WEEK 7:

October 20: Williams, Foot & O'Neill

Readings: O'Neill, "Consistency in Action," pp. 562-579 4th Edition; pp. 613-629 5th Edition; Foot, "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives," pp. 556-562 4th Edition; pp. 606-612 5th Edition; Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism," pp. 606-622 4th Edition; pp. 657-673 5th Edition

WEEK 8

October 27: Mackie, McDowell & Korsgaard

Readings: Mackie, "Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong," 504-515 4th Edition; pp. 540-550 5th Edition; McDowell, "Values and Secondary Qualities," pp. 671-683 4th Edition; pp. 722-733 5th Edition; Korsgaard, "Skepticism About Practical Reason," pp. 683-696 4th Edition; pp. 734-747 5th Edition

WEEK 9

November 3: Nussbaum, Rachels & Gibbard

Readings: Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach," pp. 704-724 4th Edition; pp. 755-774 5th Edition; Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism," pp. pp. 696-704 4th Edition; pp. 747-754 5th Edition; Gibbard, "Moral Judgment and the Acceptance of Norms," pp. pp. 659-71 4th Edition' pp. 710-722 5th Edition

WEEK 10

November 10: Rawls, Feinberg & Gauthier

Readings: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 515-37 4th Edition; pp. 551-573 5th Edition; Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism," pp. 548-756 4th Edition; pp. 584-591 5th Edition; Gauthier, *Why Contractarianism?* pp. 537-548 4th Edition; pp. 573-583 5th Edition

WEEK 11:

November 17: Nagel & Held

Readings Held, *Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory*, pp. 724-739 4th Edition; pp. 775-790 5th Edition; Nagel, *Moral Luck*, pp. 752-761 4th Edition; pp. 803-811 5th Edition

*Paper on Recent Theory due

Unit III: Applied Ethics

WEEK 13:

November 24: Abortion and Euthanasia

Readings: Don Marquis, "An Argument That Abortion Is Wrong," pp. 786-797 4th Edition; pp. 838-848 5th Edition; Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," pp. 776-86 4th Edition; pp. 828-838 5th Edition; Thompson, "A Defense of Abortion," pp. 765-776 4th Edition; pp. 817-827 5th Edition; Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia," pp.811-815 4th Edition; pp. 863-867 5th Edition; Foot, "Killing and Letting Die," pp. 815-821 4th Edition; pp. 867-872 5th Edition

*Friday, November 28: Make-up Day for Thanksgiving Rescheduled (as per university schedule): Torture & Poverty & Review for Final Exam

Readings: Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," pp. 821-829 4th Edition; pp. 873-880; Arthur, "Famine Relief and the Ideal Moral Code," pp. 829-841 4th Edition; pp. 881-892 5th Edition; Shue, "Torture," pp. 869-880 4th Edition; pp. 921-931 5th Edition; Hill, "Ticking Bombs, Torture, and the Analogy with Self-Defense," 880-89 4th Edition; pp. 932-940 5th Edition

*Last Day of Class

Final Examination is scheduled during the registrar's scheduled exam period. The final exam for PHIL*2120-01 is scheduled for **Thursday, December 4, 2014 8:30-10:30 AM** (Location TBA)

UNDERGRADUATE CALENDAR: "Students are advised that the Final Examination schedules are available for Fall Semester by mid-August, for Winter Semester by mid-December, and for Summer Semester by mid-April. Students are required to consult the final examination timetable in order to avoid conflicts in examination times when adding courses. Written approval must be obtained from the dean or director and the instructor-in-charge of the course to register in courses that have conflicting examination times."

The Final Exam for PHIL*2120-01 will not be re-scheduled or given at an alternative time; students may not ask the professor or the TA to invigilate the exam for them at an alternative time and date

Email communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their uoguelph.ca email account regularly: email is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and email contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar's [information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration](#).

Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is Friday, October 31, 2014. See the Undergraduate Calendar's [regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses](#).

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable backup copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible. For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email csd@uoguelph.ca or go to [their website](#).

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on

academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is [detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar](#).

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars>

Learning resources for first-year students at the Library

The Library and Learning Commons offer free services to help you succeed at the University of Guelph. At the Library, you can:

- > get feedback on your writing
- > get assistance finding journal articles and books
- > fine-tune your time management skills
- > develop new study strategies
- > attend Supported Learning Groups (SLGs)
- > learn about citation and reference styles
- > and more

Visit the **Library website** to learn more about our workshops, online guides, individual appointments, and other services: www.lib.uoguelph.ca