

## PHIL 2120 02 Ethics

Winter 2011  
Tuesday & Thursday 10:00-11:20  
Mackinnon 116

Instructor: Amy Butchart  
Office: Mackinnon 339  
Email: [abutchar@uoguelph.ca](mailto:abutchar@uoguelph.ca)  
Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 11:30-12:30 (or by appointment)

Teaching Assistant: Daniel Harris  
Office: Mackinnon 361  
Email: [dharr03@uoguelph.ca](mailto:dharr03@uoguelph.ca)

---

### Course Description:

This course will consider key issues in the study of ethics, including the following questions: What is justice? What is the relationship between pleasure, happiness and the Good? What is the relationship between the right and the Good? How does one develop a good moral character, and in what does this character subsist?

We will be examining philosophical answers to such questions from the Ancient Greeks to the modern day, examining different ethical theories for each question, principally utilitarian consequentialism, deontology, virtue ethics and feminist ethics. Having developed our knowledge of these ethical theories we will then apply them to contemporary moral issues as they arise organically throughout the course.

The course will progress quasi-chronologically. We will deal first with the Ancient Greeks, and then move into the early modern period, where we will study Hobbes and Hume and what they contribute to modern ethical theory. Next, we will be thoroughly examining deontology and utilitarian consequentialism, both in their classical and contemporary forms. The class will end with a discussion of existential ethics and feminist ethics.

### Course Format:

This class is a lecture class; however, regular attendance and participation are important (one could argue necessary) for achieving success in this course. While there is no official participation or attendance grade for this course, students will likely not fare well on essays or exams if they fail to include nuanced discussion and argument as will be encouraged in lecture. (Reading the course text will not be sufficient.) More importantly, the study of ethics is an endeavor that is best done through dialogue and discussion.

After lecture and office hours, D2L is the forum for course announcements, as well as the posting of assignments or any course materials. Students are required to visit D2L regularly to keep up with the class. Not accessing D2L is not an excuse for not being informed.

**Course Text:**

Johnson, Oliver A. and Andrews Reath (eds.). *Ethics: Selections from Classical and Contemporary Writers* (10<sup>th</sup> Edition). Thomson-Wadsworth, 2007.  
(Available in the university bookstore.)

**Assignments and Evaluation:**

(i.) Short Critical Response Paper (due week 6)	15%
(ii.) Midterm (due week 8)	25%
(iii.) Final Essay (due week 12)	30%
(iv.) Final Exam	30%

**Short Critical Response Paper:** A short critical response paper is a method of critically analyzing a piece of text. You will be given a short piece of text, or a precise question, and you will need to reconstruct an argument and critically assess its relative strength or weakness. More thorough instructions will be provided in class with the assignment.

**Midterm Exam:** The midterm will be an in-class test. It will be essay format and cumulative of all material covered up to the date of the midterm.  
(The midterm can be deferred only for documented medical reasons, or on extreme compassionate grounds.)

**Final Essay:** Your final essay will be a longer writing assignment, which will require you to apply the ethical theories we will be discussing in the course to one of three “scenarios” with which you will be provided. More thorough instructions will be provided in class with the assignment.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be 2 hours long (please check WebAdvisor for date and location). The exam will be cumulative, however, there will be a heavier emphasis on material covered after the midterm.

**Late Assignments:**

Assignments are due in class. (See specific due dates in the reading schedule below, though all due dates are subject to change.) Late assignments will be penalized 3% per day, including weekends. The first 3% penalty will be deducted the day of class such that an assignment handed in late on the day it is due will be deducted the same late penalty as an assignment handed in the next day. Only documented illness or compassionate considerations will waive these penalties.

## **Tentative Schedule of Classes and Readings:**

### **Week 1: Introduction and Plato**

Jan. 11: Introduction to the course

Jan. 13: Plato, *Republic* Book I, pp. 27-39

### **Week 2: Plato**

Jan. 18: Plato, *Republic* Books II & IV, pp. 39-51

Jan. 20: Plato, *Republic* Books VI & VII, pp. 51-58

### **Week 3: Aristotle**

Jan. 25: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I, 1-5, 7, pp. 60-67

Jan. 27: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book II, 1-5, pp. 72-76

### **Week 4: Aristotle and Epicurus**

Feb. 1: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book II, 6-9 & Book X, 6-8, pp. 76-87

Feb. 3: Epicurus, "Epicurus to Menoeceus," pp. 88-92

### **Week 5: Hobbes**

Feb. 8: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 136-150

Feb. 10: Hobbes, no new reading

### **Week 6: Hume**

Feb. 15: Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, pp. 165-280

*Short critical response paper due (at the beginning of lecture)*

Feb. 17: Hume, no new reading

Midterm review

### **Week 7: Winter Break (No Classes)**

### **Week 8: Midterm and Intro to Deontology**

March 1: *Midterm exam (in class)*

March 3: Intro to deontology, no new reading

### **Week 9: Deontology Part I, Kant**

March 8: Kant, *Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals*, First Section, pp. 182-190

March 10: Kant, *Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Second Section, pp. 190-205

### **Week 10: Deontology Part II, Modern Deontology**

March 15: Ross, *The Right and the Good*, pp. 258-274

March 17: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 300-319

### **Week 11: Utilitarianism Part I, Classical Utilitarianism**

March 22: Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, pp. 207-215

March 24: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, pp. 216-230

### **Week 12: Mill continued and Utilitarianism Part II**

March 29: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, pp. 230-241

March 31: Hare, "A Utilitarian Approach to Ethics & Moral Thinking," pp. 320-339

*Final essay due (at the beginning of lecture)*

### **Week 13: Existential and Feminist Ethics**

April 5: Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 242-251

Sartre, "Existentialism," pp. 285-294

April 7: Baier, "The Need for More than Justice," pp. 443-455

Exam Review

---

## **Relevant Rules and Regulations**

### **E-mail 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 e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

### **Drop Date**

The last date to drop one-semester **Winter '11** courses, without academic penalty, is **Friday March 11<sup>th</sup>**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

### **Copies of out-of-class assignments**

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

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins 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. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:  
<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

### **Recording of Materials**

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

### **Resources**

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:  
<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>