



PHIL*1050 Ethics, Knowledge, and Reality

Winter 2019

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - January 04, 2019

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

This course introduces students to philosophy through the exploration of basic perennial philosophical problems and questions, such as whether there is free will, a God, objective right and wrong, genuine knowledge of the world, and other topics. The readings for the course will consist primarily of 20th century philosophical writing.

1.2 Course Description

This course introduces students to some of the questions that arise within moral philosophy, and secondarily to some of the basic questions of epistemology, metaphysics and the philosophy of religion. The selected materials and class activities are designed to introduce students to the discipline of philosophy: the types of questions asked, the habits of mind, and the necessary skills of close reading, thoughtful dialogue, and the careful treatment of the material through writing papers.

The majority of the term will be devoted to Ethics. In the first few sessions, students will be introduced to moral reasoning as well as meta-ethical questions about the status of moral claims, skepticism about morality and the subjectivity of values. We then turn our attention to the major theoretical approaches, including consequentialism, Kantian ethics, social contract theory, natural law, *prima facie* duties, virtue ethics and the ethics of care. Students will learn some of the basic ideas that attend each of these approaches and be encouraged to compare and evaluate them as we move through the material. We will then apply these theoretical approaches by examining selected moral issues (e.g. abortion, animal rights, euthanasia, the environment, economic inequality, etc.), to be determined by the class. During the last few weeks, we turn our attention to other basic issues in philosophy, "The Nature of Reality," "The Search for Truth" and "Proofs for the Existence of God." The required reading

draws primarily from introductory textbooks but will also include some short primary texts, including readings by Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Kant, J.S. Mill, W.D. Ross and Hilde Lindemann.

1.3 Timetable

Lectures are held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30 - 1:20 pm in the J.D. MacLachan building, room 102 (McLN 102). Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

1.4 Final Exam

Exam time and location is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructional Support Team

Instructor: Hannah Schell
Email: hschell@uoguelph.ca
Office: MCKN 355

2.2 Teaching Assistant(s)

Teaching Assistant: Quinn McGlade-Ferentzy
Email: qmcglade@uoguelph.ca
 Quinn is teaching the following sections:

T05 F 9:30 - 10:20 GRHM 2302

T06 F 10:30 - 11:20 MCKN 119

Teaching Assistant: Kyle Novak
Email: knovak@uoguelph.ca
Office Hours:

Kyle is teaching the following sections:

T03 TH 3:30 - 4:20 GRHM 2302

T04 TH 4:30 - 5:20 GRHM 2302

Teaching Assistant: Ilknur Ozalli
Email: iozalli@uoguelph.ca

Office Hours:

Ilknur is teaching the following sections:

T01 TH 1:30 - 2:20 MKN 119A

T02 TH 2:30 - 3:20 MCKN 119

T07 FR 11:30 - 12:20 MCKN 315

T08 FR 12:30 - 1:20 MCKN 119A

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resource(s)

Living Ethics: An Introduction with Readings (Textbook)

Author: Russ Shafer-Landau. Oxford University Press, 2019. ISBN: 9780190272197

Selected readings to be distributed electronically. (Article)

See CourseLink; all will be available through Ares.

4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Comprehend and articulate the major theoretical approaches in ethics, including utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, virtue ethics, etc. and apply those theories to a particular subject that raises ethical concerns.
2. Comprehend and articulate some of the basic questions in epistemology and metaphysics.
3. Comprehend and articulate some of the traditional proofs for the existence of God.

4. Engage in thoughtful discussion with others, listening attentively, offering clear and well-reasoned arguments and posing relevant questions.
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

Part I Getting Started (Weeks 1 & 2): What is morality? Basic principles of moral reasoning; skepticism about morality.

Part II Theoretical Approaches to Ethics (Weeks 3-7)

Part III Some Moral Problems (Weeks 8 & 9)

Part IV Knowledge and Reality (Weeks 10-12): The Nature of Reality, The Search for Truth, Proofs for the Existence of God

5.1 Lecture

Week 1

Topic(s): Introduction to Course; Getting Started: What is Morality? What does Moral Reasoning look like?

Required reading for Wednesday: Chapter 1 from *Living Ethics*.

Please skim Chapter 2 over the weekend.

Week 2

Topic(s): M: Skepticism about Morality

Required reading: Ch 3 including primary texts: *Midgley, Trying Out One's New Sword* and *Mackie, The Subjectivity of Values*.

W: Hedonism and the Good Life

Required reading: Ch 4 including primary texts: *John Stuart Mill, Hedonism* and *Robert Nozick, The*

Experience Machine.

Week 3

Topic(s): M: Consequentialism

Required reading: Chapter 5 including primary text: John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (61-75)

W: Kantianism

Required reading: Ch 6 including primary text: Immanuel Kant, The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative (76-85)

Week 4

Topic(s): M: Review and comparison of Consequentialism and Kantianism.

No new reading. Review lecture notes and chapters 5 and 6.

W: Social Contract Theory

Required reading: Ch 7 including primary text, Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Week 5

Topic(s): M: Natural Law

Required reading: Ch 8 including primary text: Thomas Aquinas, Natural Law

W: Ethical Pluralism and *Prima Facie* duties.

Required reading: Ch 9 including primary text: *Ross, What Makes Right Actions*

Week 6

Topic(s): M: MIDTERM EXAM

W: Virtue Ethics

Required reading: Ch 10 including primary text, Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Topic(s): **READING WEEK/BREAK**

No lecture or seminar meetings this week.

Week 7

Topic(s): M: Feminist Ethics and the Ethics of Care

Required reading: Ch 11 including primary text, Lindemann, *What is Feminist Ethics?*

W: MORAL PROBLEMS

Reading TBA; topics and readings selected based on student input.

Week 8

Topic(s): M & W: MORAL PROBLEMS

Reading TBA; topics and readings selected based on student input.

Week 9

Topic(s): M & W: MORAL PROBLEMS

Reading TBA; topics and readings selected based on student input.

Week 10

Topic(s): The Nature of Reality

M: Reality and appearances, early (western) metaphysics

Required reading: Ch 4 from Solomon/Higgins, *The Big Questions* (available on Courselink and through Ares).

W: Mind and metaphysics

Required reading: Ch 4 from Solomon/Higgins, *The Big Questions* (available on Courselink and through Ares).

Week 11

Topic(s): The Search for Truth

M: Empirical truth, necessary truth; rationalism and empiricism

Required reading: From Ch 5 of Solomon/Higgins, *The Big Questions* (available on Courselink and through Ares)

W: Skepticism and modern theories of truth

Required reading: From Ch 5 of Solomon/Higgins, *The Big Questions* (available on Courselink and through Ares)

Week 12**Topic(s):**

Proofs for the Existence of God

M: The Ontological Argument, the Cosmological Argument & the Teleological Argument

Required reading: Ch 2 from Kellenberger's *Introduction to Philosophy of Religion* (available on CourseLink and through Ares)

W: God's Existence and the Question of Relevance: Does religious faith require proof?

Required reading: Ch 3 from Kellenberger's *Introduction to Philosophy of Religion* (available on CourseLink and through Ares)

5.2 Seminar**Weekly discussion sections****Topic(s):**

Seminars will take place every week beginning in Week 1. Consult WebAdvisor for the time and place of your seminar. These opportunities for discussion are a central feature of this class and you are expected to attend the weekly sessions, having completed the reading and ready to actively contribute to the discussion.

6 Assessments

Students will be evaluated based on their performance on the following assignments and tasks.

6.1 Marking Schemes & Distributions

Details regarding all assignments will be distributed through CourseLink.

6.2 Assessment Details

SEMINAR PARTICIPATION (20%)

Date: Ongoing, in seminar

You are expected to participate in the weekly seminars, having completed the required reading for the week and ready to contribute to the discussion. Your participation will be regularly assessed by your Teaching Assistant and assigned a grade out of 10 points at midterm and another 10 points at the end of the term. Unexcused absence from the seminar will negatively effect your participation grade. Merely being present but not participating can also negatively affect your participation grade.

MIDTERM EXAM (20%)

Date: Mon, Feb 11

The midterm exam will cover material from Weeks 1-6 of the course. A review sheet will clarify particular terms and concepts covered in the exam. The format will include a mixture of types of questions including True/False, multiple-choice, short answer, etc.

FINAL EXAM (20%)

Date: To be announced, determined by the registrar's office.

The final exam will emphasize the material from Weeks 7-12 of the course however it is also accumulative in the sense that you will need to show a facility with the terms and concepts from the earlier part of the course. A review sheet will clarify particular terms and concepts covered in the exam. The format will include a mixture of types of questions including True/False, multiple-choice, short answer, etc.

PAPER 1 (10%)

Date: Week 4

The first paper will be a short essay (3-4 pages in length; 750-1000 words) in which you will consider and compare the approaches of Kantianism and Utilitarianism. More specific guidelines and suggestions for how to approach the assignment will be distributed at least two weeks before the deadline. **The essay is due by 11 pm on Friday, February 1st**, submitted through Courselink. *It is worth 10% of your final grade.*

PAPER 2 (10%)

Date: Week 9

The second paper will be a short essay (3-4 pages in length; 750-1000 words) in which you will explore a specific moral problem that we have discussed in class, applying some of the theoretical approaches that we have considered in the course. More specific guidelines and suggestions for how to approach the assignment will be distributed at least two weeks before the deadline. **The essay is due by 11 pm on Friday, March 15th** submitted through Courselink. *It is worth 10% of your final grade.*

PAPER 3 (10%)

Date: Week 12

The third paper will be a short essay (3-4 pages in length; 750-1000 words) in which you will choose among the topics from the last part of the course (the nature of reality, the search for truth, proofs for the existence of God) and write an essay that carefully engages the material. More specific guidelines and suggestions for how to approach the assignment will be distributed at least two weeks before the deadline. **The essay is due by 11 pm on Friday, April 5th**, submitted through Courselink. *It is worth 10% of your final grade.*

Course Reflections (10%)

Date: Weeks 1 and Finals

You will write two short reflections, at the beginning of the term and at the end of the term. These will be graded on a check, check plus, check minus basis and are an opportunity for you to reflect upon your interests in the course material and articulate your goals for the semester through this course. These will be read and evaluated by Professor Schell. More details to be distributed on the first day of class. Each is worth 5 points or 5% of your final grade.

7 Course Statements

7.1 Use of CourseLink

For this course, we will use CourseLink for all information, updates, some of the required readings (beyond the textbook), minor announcements, submitting assignments, etc. It is your responsibility to check CourseLink regularly. If you have a question, please check there first or review the course outline. Important announcements will be made in lecture and/or via email. It is your responsibility to know what is going on in the course.

7.2 How to submit written work

All papers must be submitted through the dropbox function of CourseLink. No paper copy is required. *Please do not submit any work via email, at any time, for any reason.* Your paper will not be considered submitted until it appears in CourseLink.

All electronic submissions must be in one of the following file formats in order to be processed through CourseLink and Turnitin: Microsoft Office (docx, doc - this is the preferred file format); Portable Document Format (pdf); or Rich Text Format (rtf).

Please note that gdoc, pages or ott, odt file formats do not work; do not submit work using those file types because they will not be readable. Corrupted or empty files will not be accepted - they will be considered the equivalent of not having submitted a paper at all.

7.3 Regarding late penalties and extensions

Pay careful attention to the time and date of the deadlines for papers and note that the dropbox in CourseLink puts a date stamp on your paper when it is submitted. It will indicate if the paper is late. Papers will still be accepted up to 24 hours after the stated deadline but will incur a 5% penalty. Any paper submitted after that will receive a zero on the assignment.

Extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and are generally made only for medical or other emergencies. I may request official documentation for any extension. You should contact me as soon as you are aware of circumstances which could compromise your ability to submit work on time.

7.4 Use of Turnitin (plagiarism detection)

The university has adopted Turnitin to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the university. Submitted assignments may be checked against the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Please refer to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site for more information.

7.5 Technology Policies

Laptops are allowed in lecture solely for the purposes of note-taking. If they begin to cause problems or I suspect you are using them for other purposes, I reserve the right to take measures to address those problems.

Smartphones are not allowed during the lecture; please turn them off or put them on silence and put them away when you arrive in class.

You may not record lectures.

Policy for seminars: Your Teaching Assistant has the authority to adopt whatever policy s/he deems necessary to ensure a productive learning environment in the seminar. Unless specified otherwise, you should assume that the seminar is following the same policy as the lectures (stated above).

7.6 Office Hours

The Teaching Assistants and I will hold weekly office hours (see CourseLink for the designated times and places). You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to talk to us in more depth about the course material and to use them if you have any questions about the course.

8 University Statements

8.1 Email Communication

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

8.2 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. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

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

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

8.3 Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the fortieth class day; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of the add period in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

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

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

8.4 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.

8.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

More information can be found on the SAS website

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

8.6 Academic Integrity

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 encourages academic integrity. 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.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

8.7 Recording of Materials

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

8.8 Resources

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

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>
