

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

Course Title, Time and Location	Course Code Number	Credit Value
Introduction to Ethics Monday and Wednesday 1-4 pm BUCH A 203	PHIL 230A 002	3 credits

Course Instructor	Contact Details	Office Location	Office Hours
Dr. Willow Verkerk	willow.verkerk@ub.ca	BUCH E 158	By appointment, Monday, Tuesday 4-5 pm in person or on Zoom

#### OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

TBA

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course surveys some of the main roots and thinkers of the Western ethical tradition, focusing on virtue ethics, deontology, and consequentialism. Texts include Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, and Mill's *Utilitarianism*. A selection of contemporary readings are also included to illustrate recent developments in ethical theory. Topics include the places of reason, emotion, culture, happiness, and care in ethics, friendship, and whether morality is relative or objective. This is a lecture style course with class discussion. There are no prerequisites.

#### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Students are expected to read the materials before class and come prepared to take part in discussion. The schedule includes all of the readings which can be found in the Library Online Course Reserves (LOCR).

#### ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

Take Home Exam 1 ( 500-600 words) 20% due July 18

Take Home Exam 2 (750 words) 20% due August 1

Final Essay (2000 words) 50% due August 17

Participation 10%: based on participation in class discussion and/or on activity in the Discussions forum on Canvas.

All assignments are submitted on Canvas.

SCHEDULE: MON, WED 1-4 PM

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**Monday July 4 : Introducing the Three Traditions**

**Wednesday July 6: Moral Relativism and Objectivism**

**READ:** Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on Moral Relativism

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-relativism/>

Listen to the following podcasts:

Paul Boghossian on Moral Relativism

<https://philosophybites.com/2011/10/paul-boghossian-on-moral-relativism.html>

AND

Simon Blackburn on Moral Relativism

<https://philosophybites.com/2007/08/simon-blackburn.html>

**Mon, July 11: Utilitarianism and Consequentialism: Bentham and Mill**

Listen to the following podcasts:

BBC In Our Time: Utilitarianism

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b05xhwqf>

AND

Roger Crisp on Utilitarianism:

<http://philosophybites.com/2007/07/roger-crisp-on-.html>

AND

**READ:** Stanford Encyclopedia on the History of Utilitarianism, s. 2 The Classical Approach (2.1 Bentham and 2.2 Mill)

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/utilitarianism-history/>

**Wed, July 13: Mill on Utilitarianism**

**READ:** John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, pp. B-51 (first three chapters)

*Take Home Exam 1 posted July 13*

**Mon, July 18: Utilitarianism and Arguments for Vegetarianism**

**READ:** Peter Singer, "Utilitarianism and Vegetarianism," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (Summer, 1980), pp. 325-337.

*\*Take Home Exam 1 due July 18\**

**Wed, July 20: Kant and Deontological Ethics**

Listen to to following podcast:

BBC In Our Time: Kant's Categorical Imperative

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b0952z13>

**READ:** Kant, First section in *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor, revised edition, Cambridge Press, 2012, hereafter GMM.

**Mon, July 25: Kant and the Metaphysics of Morals**

**READ:** First and second sections of GMM.

**Wed, July 27: Kant and Personhood in Black Radical Thought**

**READ:** s. 4.1 (The Ethical) in Charles W. Mills, "Black Radical Kantianism" *Res Philosophica*, January 2018 (95.1), pp. 13-24.

*Take Home Exam 2 posted July 27*

**Mon, August 1: Aristotle's Ethics**

Listen to the following podcast on Aristotle:

Terrance Irwin

[http://philosophybites.libsyn.com/terence\\_irwin\\_on\\_aristotle\\_s\\_ethics](http://philosophybites.libsyn.com/terence_irwin_on_aristotle_s_ethics)

AND

Julia Annas <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/elucidations/2014/03/26/episode-57-julia-annas-discusses-virtue-ethics/>

Optional further listening:

Peter Adamson <http://historyofphilosophy.net/aristotle-ethics>

**READ:** Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Hackett, 1999 (hereafter NE), Books I and II.

Further reading: Stanford Encyclopedia on Aristotle's Ethics

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-ethics/>

*\* Take Home Exam 2 due August 1\**

**Wed, August 3: : Aristotle on Virtue and Vice**

**READ:** NE Book III, sections 5-7, 9-12 and Book IV, sections 1, 3, 5-9.

*Final Essay Topics and Essay Writing Guidelines posted August 3*

**Mon, August 8: Aristotle on Friendship, Pleasure and Happiness**

**READ:** NE Book VIII, Book IX and Book X sections 1-8.

**Wed, August 10: The Ethics of Care**

**READ:** Kyle Powys Whyte and Chris Cuomo, "Ethics of Caring in Environmental Ethics: Indigenous and Feminist Philosophies," in eds. Gardiner and Thompson, *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*, 2017.

*\*August 17 Final Essay due\**

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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During the course, students will learn concepts central to ethical theory. They will practice talking and thinking critically about the arguments and ideas. The take home exams provide the opportunity to demonstrate understanding of the key concepts studied to date. The final paper is an exercise in critical thinking to explore and deepen understanding of one or more

of the thinkers or traditions studied during the course. By the end of the semester, students will be familiar with consequentialist and deontological ethical theories, as well as virtue ethics, in both historical and contemporary formulations.

#### UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND SUPPORT

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UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on **the UBC Senate website**.

#### Plagiarism:

Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. A link about Academic misconduct is below  
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

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