

Phil 230, Introduction to Moral Theory
Term 2 2023-24
M, W, F noon-1pm

Instructor	TA
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Required Learning Materials

The Fundamentals of Ethics, 6th edition, Russ Shafer-Landau (required, at the bookstore)
A few required articles (listed in the schedule below) will also be available through LOCR.

Course Description and Aims

This is a survey course in moral theory. We will consider what things are valuable and worth desiring, which actions are right and which ones wrong, what it is to live a good life, and related questions about what to do, what to value, and who to be. The dominant ethical theories offer very diverse answers to these questions, ranging from the claim that you should do whatever your culture's norms tell you to do, to the claim that there are universal moral norms that you would be irrational to violate.

The aim in this course is not only to familiarize you with some of the most profound questions one can ask, and the most thoughtful attempts to answer those questions, but also to hone your thinking and writing skills. I want you to think clearly, avoid confusion, pick apart bad arguments, and build good arguments.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will

- have a broad appreciation of the questions and concerns surrounding ethics, including what make life good and worth living, and how we should treat one another.
- be able to explain philosophical texts and positions accurately, to identify and apply philosophical research methods consistently, to articulate and defend precise philosophical positions, and to anticipate and rebut objections to those positions.
- Acquire the content, synthesize it, summarize it, analyze it, criticize it, and communicate it.

Learning Expectations

Students are expected to do the readings in advance, attend class, stay focused and undistracted during the lecture portions of the class, and to actively participate in classroom discussions. Students are also required to submit all assignments on time.

Assessments of Learning

Your final mark will be determined by

- 1) Four multiple choice quizzes (15%)
- 2) Midterm exam (35%)
- 3) Final exam (50%)

- 1) Four multiple choice quizzes. You will be given four multiple-choice quizzes throughout the semester to ensure that you are keeping up with the lectures and the reading. The quizzes will be administered via Canvas on the specific dates indicated in the schedule below, and may be taken at home. The quizzes are open-book. However, they are timed, so you will not have time to look up much material while you are taking the quiz. So it is best to study beforehand by ensuring that you understand the material from the lecture and readings.
- 2) Midterm exam. This will be a closed-note, in-class exam, requiring short-essay style answers. I will distribute practice questions ahead of time.
- 3) Final exam. This will be a closed-note, in-class exam, requiring short-essay style answers. I will distribute practice questions ahead of time.

I will not accept late work except with a valid excuse from Arts Advising. Any request to re-grade work must be submitted in writing, detailing reasons for awarding a higher grade and indicating the new grade being requested.

Relationship between percentages and letter grades:

90-100% A+	85-89% A	80-84% A-
76-79% B+	72-75% B	68-71% B-
64-67% C+	60-63% C	55-59% C-
50-54% D	0-49% F	

A Range: Exceptional Performance. Mastery of the subject matter; strong evidence of original thinking; good organization in written work; impressive capacity to analyze; insightful critical evaluations.

B Range: Competent Performance. Evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues.

C Range: 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.

D Range: Problematic Performance. Some incomplete understanding of the subject matter; limited evidence of critical and analytical skills; lack of original thinking.

F Range: Inadequate Performance. Little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter; little or no evidence of critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.

Electronic Devices in the Class

I allow the use of computers and electronic devices but only to take notes and access class-related material. Above all, do not use your electronic devices in ways that might disturb other

students. If you, as a student, are disturbed by another's use of electronic devices, please let me know. Violation of this policy can lead me to revise it.

University Policies

Academic Concession

[UBC's academic concession policy](#) "articulates the University's commitment to support students in their academic pursuits through the application of academic concessions in the event that students experience unanticipated events or circumstances that interfere with their ability to accomplish academic work." An academic concession may be granted for a student when an unexpected situation or circumstance prevents them from completing graded work or exams.

Students may request an academic concession for the following three reasons:

- Unanticipated changes in personal responsibilities that create a conflict
- Medical circumstances
- Compassionate grounds

If students have a disability or ongoing medical condition that affects their studies for more than one term, they may request an [academic accommodation](#).

Requests should be made as early as reasonably possible. Normally, the academic advising office will manage student's request.

Academic Integrity

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found under [Discipline for Academic Misconduct](#) in the Academic Calendar.

Resources to Support Student Success

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: <https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>

Learning Resources

Some learning resources are available on the Canvas website, such as links to helpful information about writing philosophy papers. I also want to bring your attention to the Philosophy Essay Clinic: <https://philosophy.ubc.ca/undergraduate/philosophy-essay-clinic/>

Copyright

All materials of this course (any handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the Course Instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline. Note: recording of the course is not permitted.

Reading Schedule

Please do the assigned readings before class and come prepared to discuss them. **The schedule is subject to change.**

Week	Weekday	Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
1	Monday	8-Jan-24	Intro to Course	
	Wednesday	10-Jan-24	The Good Life	S-L, Ch. 1
	Friday	12-Jan-24	Class canceled	
2	Monday	15-Jan-24	The Good Life	Parfit, "What Makes Someone's Life Go Best", in <u>Reasons and Persons</u> (1984), Appendix I, pp. 493-501
	Wednesday	17-Jan-24	Hedonism	S-L, Ch. 2; Mill, "Hedonism", In Russ Shafer-Landau (ed.), <u>The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems</u> . Oxford University Press. pp. 17-26 (2014)
	Friday	19-Jan-24	Hedonism	Nozick, "The Experience Machine", in <u>The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations</u> (Simon & Schuster 1989) pp. 99-117.
3	Monday	22-Jan-24	Desire Satisfaction Theory	S-L, Ch. 3
	Wednesday	24-Jan-24	Desire Satisfaction	Heathwood, "Fairing Well and Getting

		Jan-24	Theory	What You Want", In Russ Shafer-Landau (ed.), The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems. Oxford University Press. pp. 31-42 (2014)
	Friday	26-Jan-24	Objective List Theory	S-L, Ch. 4
Multiple Choice Canvas Quiz				
4	Monday	29-Jan-24	Objective List Theory	Wolf, "Happiness and Meaning: Two Aspects of the Good Life", Social Philosophy and Policy. 1997; 14(1): 207-225. doi:10.1017/S0265052500001734
	Wednesday	31-Jan-24	Relativism and Objectivity	S-L, Ch. 19
	Friday	2-Feb-24	Class canceled	
5	Monday	5-Feb-24	Relativism and Objectivity	Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism", In Steven M. Cahn (ed.), Exploring ethics: an introductory anthology. Oxford University Press (2009)
	Wednesday	7-Feb-24	Relativism and Objectivity	S-L, Ch. 21
	Friday	9-Feb-24	Morality and Religion	S-L, Ch. 5
6	Monday	12-Feb-24	Psychological Egoism	S-L, Ch. 7
	Wednesday	14-Feb-24	Ethical Egoism	S-L, Ch. 8
	Friday	16-Feb-24	Review Session	
Multiple Choice Canvas Quiz				
7	Monday	19-Feb-24	Reading break, no class	
	Wednesday	21-	Reading break, no class	

		Feb-24		
	Friday	23-Feb-24	Reading break, no class	
8	Monday	26-Feb-24	In Class midterm exam	
	Wednesday	28-Feb-24	Consequentialism	S-L, Ch. 9
	Friday	1-Mar-24	Consequentialism	S-L, Ch. 10
9	Monday	4-Mar-24	Consequentialism	Williams, "Consequentialism and Integrity", in <i>Consequentialism and Its Critics</i> (1988): 20-50.
	Wednesday	6-Mar-24	Consequentialism	Hooker, "Rule-Consequentialism", in <u>The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory</u> (ed. Huigh LaFollette, Ingman Persson (2013): 238-260.
	Friday	8-Mar-24	Consequentialism	Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality", in <u>Applied Ethics</u> . Routledge, 2017. 132-142.
Multiple Choice Canvas Quiz				
10	Monday	11-Mar-24	Natural Law Theory	S-L, Ch. 6
	Wednesday	13-Mar-24	Deontology/Pluralism	S-L, Ch. 15
	Friday	15-Mar-24	Deontology/Pluralism	Thomson, "The Trolley Problem", https://openyls.law.yale.edu/bitstream/handle/20.500.13051/16338/56_94YaleLJ1395_1984_1985_.pdf?sequence=2
11	Monday	18-Mar-24	Deontology/Pluralism	Quinn, "Actions, Intentions, and Consequences: The Doctrine of Double Effect", <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> (1989): 334-351.
	Wednesday	20-Mar-24	Deontology/Pluralism	
	Friday	22-	Kantian Ethical	S-L, Ch. 11

		Mar-24	Theory	
12	Monday	25-Mar-24	Kantian Theory	Ethical S-L, Ch. 12
	Wednesday	27-Mar-24	Kantian Theory	Ethical Kant, "The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative", In Russ Shafer-Landau (ed.), <i>The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems</i> . Oxford University Press. pp. 102-114 (2014)
Multiple Choice Canvas Quiz				
	Friday	29-Mar-24	Holiday, No class	
13	Monday	1-Apr-24	Holiday, No class	
	Wednesday	3-Apr-24	The Social Contract Tradition	S-L, Ch. 13
	Friday	5-Apr-24	The Social Contract Tradition	Gauthier, "Morality and Advantage", <i>The Philosophical Review</i> , vol. 76, no. 4, 1967, pp. 460–75. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/2183283 .
14	Monday	8-Apr-24	The Social Contract Tradition	S-L, Ch. 14
	Wednesday	10-Apr-24	Virtue Ethics	S-L, Ch. 17
	Friday	12-Apr-24	Virtue Ethics	Aristotle, selection from <u>Nichomachean Ethics</u> , In Russ Shafer-Landau (ed.), <u>The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems</u> . Oxford University Press. pp. 138-49 (2014)
		TBD	Final Exam	