

Contemporary Moral Problems

The University of Toledo

PHIL 2400-901 Contemporary Moral Problems CRN: 42500
Aug 27 - Dec 14, 2018

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Course Description: PHIL 2400 CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEMS

[3 hours] A study of topics such as abortion, capital punishment, environmental responsibility, animal rights, famine relief, and affirmative action, in light of their sustainability. Attention is paid to moral arguments and the bases of moral decisions. Humanities core course. UT Distance Learning course.

The course is an introduction to some central issues within the realm of contemporary applied ethics. No particular previous coursework in ethics is required. The course is accessible to students coming from various academic backgrounds and its online format is very practical and pleasant. This course is being offered entirely online through the University of Toledo's Blackboard system, accessible through the MyUT Web Portal. Students encountering any technical difficulties should contact the IT Help Desk at 419-530-2400, or the department of Distance Learning at 419-530-8835.

The elements of your UT education — from the first year beginnings to the capstone experience — link together as related stages of learning. UT Core and major courses, opportunities for research, community engagement, and ongoing assessment mark the unique path you are taking and are touchstones along the way.

Students are provided with an opportunity to incorporate diverse knowledge in an experience that is integrative and theme-based, the scope of which will eventually encompass an entire learning career. This is designed to include at least one element that relates to and advances learning about a theme, in this case, Sustainability. We are experimenting with ways to make your education as positive and useful as it can be and to inspire all UT students to become lifelong learners. Through guided reflection and engagement, you will see these varied learning experiences in their connections to your own life and to broader social challenges. This DL course will incorporate the following learning objectives:

1. We will be relating Contemporary Moral Problems to key concepts, questions, and problems in the general field of Sustainability, broadly conceived.
2. We will work on guiding questions, such as: What is Sustainability? What is environmental ethics? How can we develop innovative, sustainable technologies and ways of life, so as to make our world a better place?

3. We will develop and use critical thinking, by introducing problem-solving skills used to address those and other urgent community problems, such as abortion, capital punishment, environmental responsibility, animal rights, famine relief, and affirmative action.
4. As we will discuss moral arguments and the bases of moral decisions, we will be engaging in interdisciplinary and integrative learning, relating practical questions of legislation and political policies to ethical theories and philosophical problems.
5. We will be thus promoting civic engagement through community projects, service learning, and social awareness, as students will be encouraged to reflect on the moral grounds of democratic citizenship and human solidarity.
6. Students will be encouraged to contribute one or more class assignments to the online student portfolio.

Required Text:

Lewis Vaughn, *Doing Ethics*. W.W. Norton & Co. 4th Edition, 2016. Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0393265415; ISBN-10: 0393265412. Other editions available (e.g., ISBN 978-0-393-91928-8 / 978-0-393-93428-1) can also be purchased as a used book.

Further Reading / Reserved Materials (Library):

John Arthur, editor. *Morality and Moral Controversies*. Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004.

Richard N. Burnor and Yvonne Raley. *Applied Ethical Reasoning: A Case Study Approach to Ethics*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

James Rachels and Stuart Rachels. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. 8th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2014.

Grading Policy:

Grades are based on point accumulation throughout the sixteen weeks (from **Aug 27** through **Dec 14, 2018**), divided into **six units**. There are 6 Homeworks/Quizzes worth 10 points each and 1 final, multiple-choice exam worth 10 points. Bonus/Midterm essays are optional. Participation is worth 30 points (by sharing your views, insights, comments, and criticisms with classmates on the Discussion Board on-line). Students can earn up to 100 points in this course.

Final grades for the course are based on the following scale:

93-100 pts. = A	77-79 pts. = C+
90-92 pts. = A-	73-76 pts. = C
87-89 pts. = B+	70-72 pts. = C-
83-86 pts. = B	60-69 pts. = D
80-82 pts. = B-	59 and below = F

Academic Honesty:

Neither plagiarism (i.e., presenting the written work of another as one's own) nor cheating (i.e., providing answers to exam questions or receiving exam answers from

another) will be tolerated. Any academic dishonesty will be disciplined according to the guidelines in the University of Toledo student handbook.

Accessibility:

If you need special accommodations to follow this course, please notify me immediately. Any student needing accommodation based on the impact of a disability and students with documented disabilities should contact the Office of Accessibility (419.530.4981 - <http://www.utoledo.edu/offices/student-disability-services/>) to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Reading Assignments & Class Structure:

Prepare all the readings before the date given. The reading assignments are usually short and hopefully pleasant. Every week you'll have the opportunity to ask questions and do self-assessment by taking the practice quiz or writing a couple of paragraphs to address some of the suggested study questions.

Unit 1: Aug 27 - Sep 16 : Introduction; CHAPTERS 1 & 2

Aug 27 – Sep 2: CHAPTER 1 - Ethics and the Examined Life

Sep 2 - 9 : CHAPTER 2 - Subjectivism, Relativism, and Emotivism

Sep 9 – 16 : HOMEWORK / QUIZ # 1

Unit 2: Sep 16 - 30 : CHAPTER 8 - Abortion

Sep 23 - 30 : HOMEWORK / QUIZ # 2 / Bonus / Midterm # 1

Unit 3: Sep 30 - 14 : CHAPTER 13 & 14 - Sexual Morality and Same-Sex Marriage

Oct 7 - 14 : HOMEWORK / QUIZ # 3

Unit 4 : Oct 14 - 28 : CHAPTER 15 - Environmental Ethics

Oct 21 - 28 : HOMEWORK / QUIZ # 4

Unit 5 : Oct 28 - Nov 11: CHAPTER 16 – Animal Rights

Nov 4 - 11 : HOMEWORK / QUIZ # 5

Unit 6: Nov 11 - Dec 2 : CHAPTER 17 – Political Violence: War, Terrorism, and Torture / CHAPTER 19 - Global Economic Justice

Nov 25 - Dec 2 : HOMEWORK / QUIZ # 6

Dec 2 - 8 : Make-Up / Bonus / Midterm # 2

Dec 8 - 14 : FINAL EXAM (multiple-choice exam, covers all material Units 1-6)