

PHI 2630: Contemporary Moral Issues

Summer A 2021

M,T,W,R,F: 2:00-3:15 EST

Instructor: David D. Ortiz, M.A.

Office Hours: M/W/F: 1:00-2:00 EST via Zoom, or by appointment

E-mail Address: davidd1995@ufl.edu

Course Description: Is abortion ever morally permissible? Should the private ownership of firearms be allowed? Should the government provide free healthcare for all of its citizens? Is a nation-state justified in restricting or closing its borders? What is the moral standing of non-human animals? These are all examples of questions in applied ethics. More importantly, they are all examples of questions that are relevant to us today, given the picture of our contemporary social and political landscape. In this course, we will approach several questions like these in an organized and systematic fashion. We will look at arguments from opposing viewpoints on the same issue, and assess the merits of each argument. We will engage with these issues as rational agents. As such, we will look to form our beliefs on the basis of reason, appealing to rational reasons for justification, as opposed to emotional reasons or preconceived notions.

Required Text and Reading:

- *Disputed Moral Issues: A Reader* (4th ed.), Mark Timmons (ed.), Oxford University Press: 2017.
- Additional readings will be made available via Canvas as a PDF file, in the ‘files’ section.
- All posted readings are mandatory, unless otherwise noted. Please have all readings completed before the scheduled date.

Course Learning Objectives:

- Become familiar with certain key arguments in contemporary applied ethics.
- Learn how to read a piece of philosophical writing, in a way that one is able to track the main line of argumentation, as well as any secondary lines of argumentation.
- Learn how to formulate original arguments, anticipate objections, and preemptively reply to said objections.
- Speak and write in a persuasive, concise, and precise fashion.

Late Policy: Late assignments will not be accepted, and will receive an automatic 0. If the student is aware of any conflict with the date an assignment is due, it is the student’s responsibility to alert the instructor one week prior to the assignment’s due date. If the student is absent on the date that an assignment is due, and the absence is excused, then the student will have 24 hours to submit the

assignment without penalty. If the absence is unexcused, then the assignment will receive an automatic 0.

Requirements Satisfied by Successful Completion of this Course: Students in this course can earn 4000 words towards the UF Writing Requirement (WR). The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. PHI2010 provides 3 credits towards the Philosophy major or minor, and is a General Education – Humanities (H) course as well.

Nota Bene: In order for you to fare well in this course, there are several things that you need to do. First, you must come to class. If you are not in class, you will miss out on material, even if you get the notes from a friend. Moreover, coming to class is more than just sitting in your seat. You must be actively engaged, thinking on the issues that we discuss in class. Second, you must do your readings ahead of time. I will lecture on Mondays - Wednesdays on the readings, but I will not spoon feed the readings. I will lecture with an understanding that you have done the readings. Note, this does not mean that I expect for you to understand all of the reading on your own. It is your job to read. It is my job to help you understand what you have read. Third, you must take notes. You will not remember everything that is said in lecture. Moreover, take your notes with pen and paper. In part, because electronic devices are not permitted, and because studies have shown that students learn better when they hand-write their notes. Lastly, see me in office hours if you have questions. Do not wait until the day before an assignment is due to come and see me. Be proactive in your education.

Assignments: There will be four assignments. All assignments will be submitted via Canvas. I do not read drafts of assignments, but you are encouraged to come and discuss your ideas with me in office hours.

- Assignment 1 Introductory Paragraph (Due 5/17) – 10%
 - 250-400 words
- Assignment 2 Exposition (Due 5/27) – 20%
 - 1000-1200 words
- Assignment 3 Argumentative Paper 1 (Due 6/10) – 30%
 - 1500-2000 words
- Assignment 4 Argumentative Paper 2 (Due 6/18) – 40%
 - 1500-2000 words

Grade Scale Grade Value: The following grade scale will be used to assign final letter grades for the course. See UF grading policies for assigning grade points at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

100-93=A A=4.0
 92-90=A- A-=3.67
 89-86=B+ B+=3.33
 85-82=B B=3.00
 81-79=B- B-=2.67
 78-76=C+ C+=2.33
 75-72=C C=2.00
 71-69=C- C-=1.67
 68-66=D+ D+=1.33
 65-62=D D=1.00
 61-60=D- D-=0.67
 59-0=E E=0.00

Schedule of Readings:

- **Week 1 – Normative Ethics Background Consequentialism 5/10-14**
 - Monday – Course Introductions and Syllabus Review
 - Tuesday – Mill “Utilitarianism” (Canvas)
 - Wednesday – Feldman “What is Act Utilitarianism” (Canvas)
 - Thursday – Writing an Introductory Paragraph and Making an Outline
 - Friday – Discussion
- **Week 2 – Normative Ethics Background Deontology 5/17-21**
 - Monday – Kant “Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (Canvas) **Assignment 1 Due**
 - Tuesday – Feldman “Kant I” (Canvas)
 - Wednesday – Feldman “Kant II” (Canvas)
 - Thursday – Writing Point Sentences and a Body Paragraph
 - Friday – Discussion
- **Week 3 – Abortion 5/24-28**
 - Monday – Don Marquis “Why Abortion is Immoral” (DMI)

- Tuesday – Mary Anne Warren – “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion” (DMI)
Patrick Lee and Robert P. George – “The Wrong of Abortion” (DMI)
- Wednesday – L.W. Summer – “A Moderate View” (DMI)
- Thursday – Sentence Flow and Writing a Body Paragraph Cont’d **Assignment 2 Due**
- Friday – Discussion
- **Week 4 – Abortion 5/31-6/4**
 - Monday – No Class Memorial Day
 - Tuesday – Judith Jarvis Thompson “A Defense of Abortion” (DMI)
 - Wednesday – Rosalind Hursthouse “Virtue Theory and Abortion” (DMI)
 - Thursday – Writing an Original Argument
 - Friday – Discussion
- **Week 5 – Non-Human Animals 6/7-11**
 - Monday – Descartes “Letters to William Cavendish and Henry More”/Kant “Our Duties to Animals
 - Tuesday – Peter Singer “All Animals are Equal” (DMI)
 - Wednesday – Carl Cohen “The Case Against Animal Rights”
 - Thursday – Writing an Objection and Reply **Assignment 3 Due**
 - Friday – Discussion
- **Week 6 – Non-Human Animals 6/14-18**
 - Monday – Alistair Norcross “Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases (DMI)
 - Tuesday – Jeff McMahon “The Meat Eaters” (Canvas)
 - Wednesday – Elizabeth Telfer “Animals Do It Too!: The Franklin Defense of Meat-Eating (Canvas)
 - Thursday – Writing an Objection and Reply and Editing a Paper
 - Friday – Discussion **Assignment 4 Due**

Academic Honesty: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of

honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class. Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

Attendance and Classroom Policies: Students are expected to attend class and to have done all assigned reading in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect students' ability to perform well in this course. The use of laptop computers, smart phones, or other electronic devices during class is not permitted. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Canvas E-learning Environment: This course is supplemented by online content in the e-Learning environment known as "Canvas." To login to the e-Learning site for this course, go to <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>, click the e-Learning in Canvas button, and on the next page enter your Gatorlink username and password. You can then access the course e-Learning environment by selecting PHH 3100 from the Courses pull-down menu at the top of the page. If you encounter any difficulties logging in or accessing any of the course content, contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-4537. Do not contact the course instructor regarding computer issues.

Online Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities : Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575

University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.