

## Contemporary Moral Issues—PHI2630

Instructor: Lyndal Grant	TA: David Ortiz
Email: <a href="mailto:lgrant@ufl.edu">lgrant@ufl.edu</a>	Email: <a href="mailto:davidd1995@ufl.edu">davidd1995@ufl.edu</a>
Lectures: M,W 3.00PM- 3.50PM (Little Hall 0237)	Sections: F 10.40AM- 11.30AM (Rolf's Hall 0205) F 11.45AM- 12.35PM (Matherly Hall 0003) F 1.55PM- 2.45PM (Matherly Hall 0006)
Office hours: TBA Office location: 320 Griffin-Floyd Hall (FLO)	Office hours: M, W 1.00PM- 2.30PM <i>via zoom</i>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course serves as an introduction to philosophical thinking about contemporary moral topics. In addition to briefly exploring frameworks for ethical thinking, we will consider the following questions: Is abortion morally permissible? Is it okay to eat meat produced on factory farms? What is racism? Are affirmative action policies justifiable? Should we allow private citizens to own guns? Should young people be prioritized over the elderly in healthcare decisions? Students should expect several writing assignments of increasing length over the course of the semester.

The main aim of this course is to have you think about these and related questions in a philosophically rigorous way. This means formulating arguments, articulating opposing views, and above all, thinking critically.

**REQUIRED TEXT AND READINGS:** No purchase of books is necessary for this course. All assigned readings will be available through the class Canvas page.

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- Identify, describe and explain the major arguments and views in philosophical work on a variety of issues in applied ethics.
- Discern the structure of arguments, represent them fairly and clearly, and evaluate them
- Formulate original arguments, anticipating objections and responding in a conscientious fashion.
- Read and discuss complex philosophical texts from contemporary works.
- Speak and write clearly about abstract and complex matters.

### **COMMUNICATION POLICY**

**Announcements:** Course announcements will be posted on Canvas. You are responsible for checking Canvas at least once a week to make sure that you do not miss important announcements.

**CONTACTING DR. GRANT:** Feel free to reach out directly by email or come to office hours—I'm here to help!

- Email is the most reliable way to get in touch with me outside of class.
- I make effort to respond to email from students within two (2) business days. Note that emails do sometimes get lost—due to spam filtering, for instance. Please do send me another email or come up to me after class if you do not hear back within two business days. I promise I am not ignoring you intentionally!

### **CLASS CONDUCT & CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Doing philosophy well requires treating others' views seriously and interpreting them charitably. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities.

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. **I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun.** Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

- You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. If you need to miss class for any reason, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can discuss whether the absence will be excused and what sort of documentation will be necessary (if applicable).
- Each unexcused absence beyond the first two will result in a 10% deduction from your participation grade.
- Poor conduct in class will also result in a 10% deduction. Examples of poor conduct include disruptive behavior, falling asleep, sending text messages, checking email, etc.

<p><b>IF YOU SUSPECT YOU ARE SICK, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS (SEE UNIVERSITY GUIDELINES BELOW).</b></p>
---

- If you suspect you may be ill, please do not come to class – even if you are vaccinated against COVID-19. Please keep in mind that many of us have unvaccinated family members (such as small children) that are vulnerable and need to be protected.
- Students who suspect they are ill or who have been excluded from campus due to illness will receive an excused absence (in addition to my gratitude for not putting others at risk!)

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **Writing Requirement**

This course is marked 'WR', and is designated to satisfy 4,000 words of Writing Requirement credit. 4,000 words amounts to approximately 17 pages of writing (12 point font, double-spaced, one-inch margins). Needless to say, there will be more writing in this course than you may be accustomed to.

The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Here are some links to the official UF statements about the WR:

<http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/writing-requirement.aspx>

<http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/wr-course-guidelines.aspx>

<http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/writing-requirement-syllabus-policy.aspx>

<http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/sample-writing-assessment-rubric.aspx>

The writing course grade assigned by the instructor has two components: the writing component and a course grade. Therefore, to receive writing credit a student must satisfactorily complete the writing component (by averaging 72% on the cumulative essay assignments) and receive a minimum grade of C (2.0) for the course. In other words, getting a C for the course is *necessary* but *not sufficient* for getting the WR credit.

It is possible to not meet the writing requirement and still earn a minimum grade of C in a class, so students should review their degree audit after receiving their grade to verify receipt of credit for the writing component.

A few key things to note about the WR (quoting the “course guidelines” page, linked above):

- Written assignments that count toward the University of Florida Writing Requirement should contain extended analysis and develop original, sophisticated ideas, not merely present hastily written or cursory thoughts. UF Writing Requirement assignments should include such elements as well-crafted paragraphs, a thesis or hypothesis, a persuasive organizational structure (e.g., introduction, body, conclusion; introduction, methods, results, discussion), well-supported claims, and appropriate and effective stylistic elements.
- Writing will be evaluated based on the content, organization and coherence, effectiveness, style, grammar, and punctuation. I will provide a detailed rubric that shows how I will evaluate assignments using these criteria. See the course website for detailed assignment instructions and for the WR rubric.
- Feedback on all assignments will be provided by the last day of class, or, if provided electronically, by the end of finals.
- In-class writing assignments, quizzes, class notes, in-class essay examinations may not be counted toward the 4,000 words.

### **Participation (25%)**

Philosophy is a group activity that depends on conversation and discussion. There is no way to do this entirely on your own. In order for this class to function well everyone needs to do the reading *before the relevant lecture*. Lectures will presuppose that you have done the reading. However, there is no expectation that you will have *understood* the reading prior to lecture. That’s what class and our discussions are for, and even then, we will probably still have questions.

Activities that will contribute to your participation grade include:

- annotating the weekly readings in Perusall (assignments will be announced on Canvas);
- regularly attending lecture;
- participating in small-group and full-class discussions during lecture.

Perusall annotations will not be accepted late.

You will receive a letter grade for participation representing the overall quality of your participation in the above activities over the course of the semester.

Lecture attendance is required.

- You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty.
- Each unexcused absence beyond the first three will result in a 10% deduction from your participation grade (and therefore 2% of your final grade in the course). For example, if your participation grade based on the above standards was an 86 ('B') and you had four unexcused absences, your final participation grade in the course would be a 76 ('C').
- If you need to miss lecture for any reason, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can discuss whether the absence will be excused and what sort of documentation will be necessary (if applicable). If you do not contact me about an absence within one week following the absence, it will not be excused except under extraordinary circumstances.
- Poor conduct in class will also result in a 10% deduction. Examples of poor conduct include disruptive behavior, falling asleep, failing to participate in small group activities, sending text messages, checking email, etc.

Note that the "Roll Call Attendance" grade that Canvas automatically generates does not represent your Participation grade in the class.

### **Essay Assignments (total 75%):**

You will be required to write three essays for this course. Detailed essay instructions and prompts will be distributed two weeks prior to the due date of the essay assignment.

**Essay #1:** This essay will be a minimum of 900 words and a maximum of 1200 words. Due Date: 5:00pm on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September (subject to change, with notice). This essay will be submitted electronically, via an Assignment link on Canvas.

***Worth 20% of your final grade.***

**Essay #2:** This essay will be a minimum of 1300 words and a maximum of 1500 words. Due Date: 5:00pm on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November (subject to change, with notice). This essay will be submitted electronically, via an Assignment link on Canvas.

***Worth 25% of your final grade.***

**Essay #3:** This essay will be a minimum of 1800 words and a maximum of 2000 words. Due Date: 5:00pm on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December (subject to change, with notice). This essay will be submitted electronically, via an Assignment link on Canvas.

***Worth 30% of your final grade.***

### **GRADE SCALE**

This course will use the following grade scale:

Grade Scale	Grade Value
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

Grades that fall exactly on the upper threshold are awarded the higher grade. Further information on UF's grading policy can be found at [catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx).

**ESSAY SUBMISSION AND LATE SUBMISSION POLICY:** In general, requirements for section attendance, assignments, and other work are consistent with university policies specified at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

More specifically, the following policies will be adhered to:

1. All assignments will be submitted online via an Assignment/Turnitin.com link on the course's Canvass page. Essays must be submitted as either .doc or .docx files. Failure to submit in these formats will result in penalties and will require resubmission in the proper format.
2. Late submission of papers will be penalized 3% for each day that the assignment is late. For instance, if a paper is due on Friday at 5:00pm, it will be counted as 1 day late if submitted between 5:01pm Friday and 5:00pm Saturday (submissions between 5:01pm Saturday and 5:00pm Sunday will count as 2 days late, and so on). Late submissions will be made via Canvas/Turnitin.

**COURSE WEBSITE:** 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://elearning.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 PHH2630 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.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **COVID-19**

In response to COVID-19, the following practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Visit this link for details on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment: <https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/vaccinations/vaccine-availability/>.
- You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing.
- If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email [covid@shcc.ufl.edu](mailto:covid@shcc.ufl.edu)) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the [UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website](#) for more information.
  - Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.
  - If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.
- Continue to regularly visit [coronavirus.UFHealth.org](https://coronavirus.UFHealth.org) and [coronavirus.ufl.edu](https://coronavirus.ufl.edu) for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

Please review the following guidelines on academic honesty:

1. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php>
2. <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html#honesty>

You should expect the minimum penalty for academic dishonesty to be a grade of E for the class (not just the assignment). All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. Repeat offenders may be penalized by suspension or expulsion from the university.

All sources and assistance used in preparing your papers and presentations must be precisely and explicitly acknowledged. The web creates special risks here. Cutting and pasting even a few words from a web page or paraphrasing material without a reference constitutes plagiarism. If you are not sure how to refer to something you find on the internet, you can always give the URL.

**HONOR CODE:** 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 specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions; for more information see this page: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>. You are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with me or your TA.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center: <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

**COURSE EVALUATIONS:** You will be asked twice to evaluate the course: once midway through the semester (this is the “midterm” evaluation) and once at the end of the semester (this is the “end-of-semester” evaluation). The midterm evaluation is designed to help me address any problems with the course while there is still time for you to benefit from your suggestions; thus, the evaluations will not be shared publicly. The evaluation at the end of the semester will be used for additional purposes and the data will be shared on the University website. For the official evaluation, you 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 is here: <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. You will be notified when the official evaluation period opens, and you can complete evaluations through the email you receive from GatorEvals, in your Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to you here: <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

#### **ACADEMIC RESOURCES:**

- E-Learning Technical Support: <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>. Contact them via phone at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services, <https://career.ufl.edu/>
- Library Support: See <https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>.
- Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>
- Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>
- Student Complaints On-Campus: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/studenthonor-%20code-student-conduct-code/>
- On-Line Students Complaints: <https://distance.ufl.edu/gettinghelp/student-complaint-process/>

#### **HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES:**

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit <https://umatter.ufl.edu/> to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis and non-crisis services or visit <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>.

- University Police Department: Go to <https://police.ufl.edu/> or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road.



## CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE

*This schedule is subject to revision- please read all class announcements in Canvas.*

### WEEK 1

Wednesday Jan 5<sup>th</sup>

*No reading; introduction to the course; syllabus overview.*

### *Utilitarianism*

### WEEK 2

Monday Jan 10<sup>th</sup>

- Shafer-Landau, “Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions”

Wednesday Jan 12<sup>th</sup>

- Nozick, Robert, “The Experience Machine.” In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*.

### WEEK 3

Monday Jan 17<sup>th</sup>

*No class*

### *Poverty and Moral Responsibility*

Wednesday Jan 19<sup>th</sup>

- Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”

### WEEK 4

Monday Jan 24<sup>th</sup>

- Narveson, “Feeding the Hungry”

Wednesday Jan 26<sup>th</sup>

- Timmerman, Travis. “Sometimes there is nothing wrong with letting a child drown”

### *The Harm Principle*

### WEEK 5

Monday Jan 31<sup>st</sup>

- Mill, John Stuart. “Introductory” Chapter 1 in *On Liberty*.

### *Free Speech*

Wednesday Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>

- Mill, John Stuart. “Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion” Chapter 2 in *On Liberty*.

### *Rights as Side-Constraints*

### WEEK 6

Monday Feb 7<sup>th</sup>

- Harris, John. “The Survival Lottery” *Philosophy* 50, no. 191 (1975): 81–7.

Wednesday Feb 9<sup>th</sup>

- Nozick, Robert. “Moral Goals and Moral Constraints” In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*

### *Against Redistribution*

#### **WEEK 7**

**Monday Feb 14<sup>th</sup>**

- Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. pp. 149–64, 167–74, and 235–8.

**Wednesday Feb 16<sup>th</sup>**

- Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. pp. 150–3, and 174–82.

### *Justice in Acquisition*

#### **WEEK 8**

**Monday Feb 21<sup>st</sup>**

- Cohen, G. A. “Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality.” pp. 112–5, 67–80, and 94–105.

### *Justice in Transfer*

**Wednesday Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>**

- Nozick, Robert. “Voluntary Exchange” In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*.

#### **WEEK 9**

**Monday Feb 28<sup>th</sup>**

- Cohen, G. A. “Are Disadvantaged Workers Who Take Hazardous Jobs Forced to Take Hazardous Jobs?” Sections 2–5 in *History, Labour, and Freedom: Themes from Marx*.

**Wednesday Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>**

*Spring Break*

### *Animal Ethics*

#### **WEEK 10**

**Monday Mar 14<sup>th</sup>**

- Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal”

**Wednesday Mar 16<sup>th</sup>**

- Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases”

#### **WEEK 11**

**Monday Mar 21<sup>st</sup>**

- Pollan, Michael. 2003. “An Animal’s Place.” *The New York Times*

### *Abortion Ethics*

**Wednesday Mar 23<sup>rd</sup>**

- Thomson, Judith Jarvis. “A Defense of Abortion”

#### **WEEK 12**

**Monday Mar 28<sup>th</sup>**

- Marquis, Don. “Why Abortion is Immoral”

**Wednesday Mar 30<sup>th</sup>**

- Schouten, Gina. "Fetuses, Orphans, and a Famous Violinist"
- Harman, Elizabeth. "What Amy Coney Barrett Doesn't Understand About Abortion." *The New York Daily News*.

*Justice as Fairness*

**WEEK 13**

**Monday Mar 4<sup>th</sup>**

- Rawls, John. Selections from Sections 1–4, 11–3, 17, 24, 26, and 29. In *A Theory of Justice*.

**Wednesday Mar 6<sup>th</sup>**

- Rawls, John. Selections from Sections 43–44, and 47–48. In *A Theory of Justice*.

*Equal Opportunity*

**WEEK 14**

**Monday Mar 11<sup>th</sup>**

- Barry, Brian. "Why Equal Opportunity?" Chapter 4 in *Why Social Justice Matters*.

*Justice and Basic Income*

**Wednesday Mar 13<sup>th</sup>**

- Rawls, John. "Brief Comments on Leisure Time." Section 53 in *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*.

**WEEK 15**

**Monday Mar 18<sup>th</sup>**

- Van Parijs, Philippe. "A Basic Income for All." *Boston Review*, October/November 2000.

**Wednesday Mar 20<sup>th</sup>**

- Shelby, Tommie. "Justice, Deviance, and the Dark Ghetto." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 35, no. 2 (2007): 126–60.