

**Course Title**

PHI2630: Contemporary Moral Issues

**Writing Requirement and General Education**

Gordon Rule Requirement (4,000 words) and Humanities credit for General Education

**Instructor Information**

Dr. Christopher Becker

**Contact Information**

Email: [c.becker@ufl.edu](mailto:c.becker@ufl.edu)

Telephone Number: 610-984-7181

**Office Location**

303 Griffin-Floyd Hall

**Office Hours**

Monday and Friday Noon-1:30PM, or by appointment

**Lecture Meeting Times**

MTWRF (Monday thru Friday) 2:00 PM- 3:15 PM (Period 5).

**Lecture Location**

Matherly 0115

**Course Dates**

May 15<sup>th</sup> to June 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Observed Holidays**

May 29<sup>h</sup> off (Memorial Day), June 19<sup>th</sup> off (Juneteenth)

**Grades Due**

June 26<sup>th</sup>

**Course Objectives**

I am hoping that this course is going to improve your skills and understanding of philosophy. Successful completion of this course will improve the following skills: reading comprehension, reasoning, communication, and writing. These skills will be improved via doing our assigned readings, engaging in classroom discussions, and writing four essays. Successful completion of these tasks will also improve your understanding of philosophy, in general, and ethics, in particular.

By the end of this course, you should have a better grasp of what philosophy is, the strengths and weaknesses of utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics, as well as an increased understanding of some modern ethical debates. In particular, we will be examining the morality of eating meat, abortion, gun ownership, and a topic decided by our class. By looking at different arguments surrounding these debates, your understanding of contemporary moral issues will be improved.

### **Required Materials**

No Required Textbook. I will post all our readings on to Canvas.

### **Course Procedure**

Our course will meet, in person, Monday through Friday, between 2:00 PM and 3:15 PM, at Matherly Hall 0115. If you are feeling sick, please just let me know (you do not need a doctor's note), and I will gladly excuse your absence and I will attempt to update you on what you missed in class. It is better to play it safe rather than risk getting our classmates sick.

### **Grade Requirements:**

#### Four Essays

Since this course features a Gordon rule requirement of 4,000 words, successful completion of this course requires you to write 4,000 words. Towards this end, our main assignments will be four essays of a thousand words each. Each essay will be worth 100 points. Prior to the essays, I will explain the grading for the essays and provide instruction on how I would like the essays structured. Also, unless otherwise specified, all of our essays will be submitted directly and only on Canvas.

#### Big Three Ethical Theories and Philosophical Reasoning Quiz

On Tuesday May 23<sup>rd</sup>, by Midnight, we will have a quiz due on Canvas. This is a minor assignment intended to get you thinking about philosophical reasoning, logic, and the big three ethical theories. In class, I will discuss this assignment and what sorts of questions you can expect to see on it.

#### Attendance

Starting the second day of class, Tuesday May 16<sup>th</sup>, I will start taking attendance. Each day you come to class; you will receive one point for attendance up to 25 points. While we are not going to have a separate grade for participation, I highly encourage you to participate in class for a few reasons. For starters, asking questions is necessary in philosophy, as you may not understand an author's position. Secondly, discussing philosophy is often the best way of knowing the strengths and weaknesses of your own position. Thirdly, believe it or not, discussing philosophy can sometimes just be fun in of itself!

Grading Breakdown1<sup>st</sup> Essay 100 points2<sup>nd</sup> Essay 100 points3<sup>rd</sup> Essay 100 points4<sup>th</sup> Essay 100 points

Quiz 25

Attendance 25 points

Total Points 450 points

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

Note that a grade of C- for the course is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, General Education, or College Basic Distribution requirements. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

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

**Additional Information**

If, at any point of the semester, you have questions about your grade(s) or the final grade, then simply let me know during office hours or via email.

Below are our readings for course. All of our readings will be accessible on Canvas. It would be best to do the readings before we discuss them in class.

Also, announcements will occur during the course through Canvas. These are important and may alter the syllabus or due dates for assignments. I will also post our slides and any other relevant information for our course on Canvas.

## **Academic Honesty**

Please note that all UF students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. In particular, you should be aware of the regulations governing the scope of the Honor Code and possible violations; you can find that here: <http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter4/4041.pdf>:

Plagiarism is a very serious violation of academic honesty. It includes, but is not limited to, copying another text as your own, copying the work of a fellow student, handing in a paper prepared by another as your own, and using sources for writing your paper not cited within the paper. Plagiarism is not restricted to matters of copyright infringement and therefore it does cover materials found on web pages. The penalties for plagiarism can range from an automatic failing grade in the course to suspension or expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about how to prepare your paper, please let me know.

## **Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

## **Disability Accommodations**

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resources Center for information about available resources.

[www.dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc)

## **First Week - Introduction to Course, Philosophical Reasoning, and Consequentialism (5/15-5/19)**

### Monday 5/15

- Syllabus

### Tuesday 5/16

- Philosophical and Moral Reasoning
- Required Readings
  - McCarty, “A Brief Introduction to Logic.”
  - Boonin and Oddie on Non-Inductive Arguments

### Wednesday 5/17

- Philosophical and Moral Reasoning
- Required Readings
  - McCarty, “A Brief Introduction to Logic.”
  - Boonin and Oddie on Non-Inductive Arguments

### Thursday 5/18

- Consequentialism
  - Supplemental Readings:
    - [Consequentialism \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)
    - [Consequentialism and Utilitarianism | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(utm.edu\)](#)

### Friday 5/19

- Consequentialism
  - Supplemental Readings
    - [Deontological Ethics \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)
    - [Kant, Immanuel: Metaphysics | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(utm.edu\)](#)
      - Sections 8 and 9
    - [William David Ross \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)

## **Second Week Unit 1: Wrap up Consequentialism and Animal Welfare (5/22-5/26)**

### Monday 5/22

- Consequentialism

- Supplemental Readings
  - Stohr, “Contemporary Virtue Ethics.”
  - [Aristotle’s Ethics \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)
- Review for Quiz

#### Tuesday 5/23

- Animal Welfare
- Required Reading
  - Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal.”
- **Quiz due by midnight**

#### Wednesday 5/24

- Animal Welfare
- Required Reading
  - Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal.”

#### Thursday 5/25

- Animal Welfare
- Required Reading
  - Carl Cohen, “The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research.”

#### Friday 5/26

- Animal Welfare
- Required Reading
  - Carl Cohen, “The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research.”
- Review for first essay exam on Animal Welfare

### **Third Week: The Ethics of Abortion (5/29-6/2)**

#### Monday 5/29

- **(No Class) Off for Memorial Day**
- **First Essay on Animal Welfare Due by Midnight**

#### Tuesday 5/30

- The Ethics of Abortion
- Required Reading
  - Judith Thompson, “A Defense of Abortion.”

Wednesday 5/31

- The Ethics of Abortion
- Required Reading
- Required Reading
  - Judith Thompson, “A Defense of Abortion.”

Thursday 6/1

- The Ethics of Abortion
- Required Reading
  - Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral.”

Friday 6/2

- The Ethics of Abortion
- Required Reading
  - Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral.”
- Review for Paper on The Ethics of Abortion

**Fourth Week: The Ethics of Gun Control (6/5-6/9)**Monday 6/5

- Vote on Fourth Unit Topic

Tuesday 6/6

- The Ethics of Gun Control
- Required Reading
  - Michael Huemer, “Gun Rights and Non-Compliance.”
- **Second Paper on the Ethics of Abortion Due**

Wednesday 6/7

- The Ethics of Gun Control
- Required Reading
  - Michael Huemer, “Gun Rights and Non-Compliance.”

Thursday 6/8

- The Ethics of Gun Control
- Required Readings
  - Jeff McMahan, “A Challenge to Gun Rights.”
  - Jeff McMahan, “Gun ‘Control’ is Not Enough.”

Friday 6/9

- The Ethics of Gun Control
- Required Readings
  - Jeff McMahan, “A Challenge to Gun Rights.”
  - Jeff McMahan, “Gun ‘Control’ is Not Enough.”

**Fifth Week: Class Chosen Topic TBD (6/12-6/16)**Monday 6/12

- Review Third essay on the Ethics of Gun Control

Tuesday 6/13

- TBD
  - Required Readings
    - TBD
- **Third Essay on the Ethics of Gun Control Due by Midnight**

Wednesday 6/14

- TBD
  - Required Readings
    - TBD

Thursday 6/15

- TBD
  - Required Readings
    - TBD

Friday 6/16

- TBD



**Sixth Week: TBD (6/19-6/23)**Monday 6/19

- **No Class (Off for Juneteenth)**

Tuesday 6/20

- TBD
- Required Reading
  - TBD

Wednesday 6/21

- TBD
- Required Reading

Thursday 6/22

- Catch up
- Review Final Essay

Friday 6/23 Last Day of Classes

- Review for Final Essay Exam
- Course Wrap Up
- **Final Essay Exam on \_\_\_\_ due by Midnight**

<b>Important Due Dates for Assignments</b>	
<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Logic/Consequentialism Quiz	Tuesday May 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Essay Exam #1 on Animal Welfare	Monday May 29 <sup>th</sup>
Essay Exam #2 on The Ethics of Abortion	Tuesday June 6 <sup>th</sup>
Essay Exam #3 on The Ethics of Gun Control	Tuesday June 13 <sup>th</sup>
Essay Exam #4 on (Topic TBD)	Friday June 23 <sup>rd</sup>

## List of Readings

### Unit 0- Philosophical Reasoning and the Big Three Ethical Theories

- Philosophical Reasoning/Logic
  - McCarty, “A Brief Introduction to Logic.”
  - Boonin and Oddie on Non-Inductive Arguments
- Big Three Ethical Theories (All of these are purely optional)
  - Consequentialism
    - [Consequentialism \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)
    - [Consequentialism and Utilitarianism | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(utm.edu\)](#)
  - Deontology
    - [Deontological Ethics \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)
    - [Kant, Immanuel: Metaphysics | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(utm.edu\)](#)
      - Sections 8 and 9
    - [William David Ross \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)
  - Virtue Ethics
    - Stohr, “Contemporary Virtue Ethics.”
    - [Aristotle’s Ethics \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)

### Unit 1- Animal Welfare

- Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal.”
- Carl Cohen, “The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research.”

### Unit 2- The Ethics of Abortion

- Judith Thompson, “A Defense of Abortion.”
- Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral.”

### Unit 3- The Ethics of Gun Control

- Michael Huemer, “Gun Rights and Non-Compliance.”
- Jeff McMahan, “A Challenge to Gun Rights.”
- Jeff McMahan, “Gun ‘Control’ is Not Enough.”

### Unit 4- TBD

- TBD
- TBD