

# CONTEMPORARY MORAL ISSUES – PHI 2630

## SPRING 2025

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**Professor:** Jon Rick  
Philosophy Department  
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310 Griffin-Floyd Hall  
352-273-3728

**Professor's Office Hours:** M: 1-3pm & W: 1-2pm, or by appointment

**Class Meetings:** M, W, F: Period 5 (11:45-12:35) in MAT 0115

**Course Canvas Website:** <https://elearning.ufl.edu>

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Do non-human animals have moral standing, comparable to that of human beings? Is abortion ever morally permissible? Are affirmative action policies morally justified or morally bankrupt? What is the most ethically justified immigration policy – one of largely open or largely closed borders? Given the persistence of vast global poverty in our world, what moral duties do those of us in wealthy nations have to persons in impoverished states? Should private gun ownership be morally permissible or impermissible? Is climate change a significant issue for individual morality? Are individuals morally responsible for their greenhouse gas emissions, despite the fact that individual actions seem to make little difference to climate change?

These are examples of moral questions about which many of us have strong and often opposing opinions. And, just as we disagree on many of these issues, so do many philosophers, political theorists, and economists. In this course, we examine opposing philosophical arguments and points of view on these urgent moral questions. The governing aim of our course will be to come to grips with and critically reflect on the underlying justifications for the various sides of these different debates. Student work is not assessed on the basis of the substantive positions they defend but rather on whether their work demonstrates the ability to present arguments, anticipate objections, identify evidence, and defend positions in a way that doesn't lean on rhetoric or emotional appeals. Readings always include authors from both sides of an issue so as to force students to consider both in a critical fashion. This course counts towards the Humanities (H) general education requirement and the Writing (W) requirement (4000 words).

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## REQUIRED TEXT AND READINGS:

No purchase of books is necessary for this course. All assigned readings will be available through the class Canvas page. Students are expected to have read the day's assigned reading prior to each class and discussion section meeting. A full list of the required readings for this course can be found in the Course Schedule, below.

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## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES & DISTRIBUTION CREDITS:

### **General Education Requirement and Objectives:**

PHI 2630 is a Humanities (H) subject area course in the UF General Education Program, a General Education Core Course in Humanities, and a UF Writing Requirement 4000 Course. Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastery of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon. Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the relevant factors that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

<https://undergrad.ua.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-program/subject-area-objectives/>

### **Humanities Gen Ed SLOs:**

|            | <b>Content</b>   | <b>Critical Thinking</b>  | <b>Communication</b>   |
|------------|--|---|--|
| Humanities | Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used. | Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives. | Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively. |

### **Writing Requirement and Objective:**

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 overall and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. A few things to note about the WR are the following:

- 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, 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. A detailed rubric that shows how I will evaluate assignments using these criteria can be found at the end of this syllabus.
- In-class writing assignments, class notes, and essay examinations may not be counted toward the 4,000 words.
- You may find it helpful to reach out to the UF Writing Studio for writing help: <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Here is a link to the official UF statement about the WR:

<https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-program/writing-requirement/>

A helpful and recommended writing or style manual is *The Elements of Style*, by Strunk and White. It can be feely linked to here: [www.bartleby.com/141/](http://www.bartleby.com/141/)

### **Course Goals:**

This course is designed to introduce students to the practice of philosophy through the study of central moral questions and arguments, as represented by a selection of contemporary readings in moral philosophy. Students will learn some of the basic principles of good reasoning, including how to understand arguments, represent them clearly and fairly, and evaluate them for cogency. Students will also learn to develop their own arguments and views regarding the moral philosophical questions studied in the course in a compelling fashion. In these ways the course aims to develop students' own reasoning and communication skills in ways that will be useful in any further study of philosophy they undertake and beyond the bounds of philosophy itself.

### **Course Student Learning Objectives:**

Students will demonstrate their competencies in understanding and assessing the philosophical theories studied in the course primarily via a set of assigned papers, in which they will be assessed for their abilities to: (i) understand and apply basic concepts of good reasoning, (ii) accurately and fairly describe and explain philosophical views represented in works assigned for the course, (iii) formulate arguments of their own while anticipating possible lines of objections and responding in a conscientious fashion, and (iv) speak and write clearly and persuasively about abstract and challenging matters of the sort raised by the philosophical material in the course.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS, ASSIGNMENTS, & GRADING POLICY:**

1. **Class Attendance:** You will be expected to attend all class meetings. But, you are permitted to miss 3 class meetings, without penalty, no-questions asked. For each class meeting missed (after the 3 freebies), without a written, University-sanctioned excuse, you will lose 5 points – each student starts with 100 out of a possible 100 points. **Class Attendance is worth 10% of your final grade.**
2. **Participation:** Philosophy is best realized through conversation. My aim is to start and to frame a conversation, to which all of you will, then, contribute. You should come to each class meeting ready to talk. On the Fridays designated as discussion-based, you should be prepared

with either a question or a comment about at least one of the week's assigned readings. Additionally, you will be asked regularly to complete various discussion-based and written responses in-class on our Discussion Fridays, which will count towards your participation grade. Absences on our Discussion Friday Sessions will result in a 10-point deduction you're your participation grade. But, you can make this up by participating on other days. Visiting office hours counts towards your participation grade. Participation assessment will be made on the basis of frequency and substance of verbal and written contributions made both in class and during office hours. **Participation is worth 20% of your final grade.**

3. **Essay Assignments:** 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. In order to receive the WR credit for this course, your average grade must be 72% on these three essays, combined. Assessment of the Essay Assignments will be made in accordance with the rubric detailed at the end of this syllabus.
  - (i) **Essay #1:** This essay will be a minimum of 1250 words and a maximum of 1500 words. Due Date: 5:00pm on Sunday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. This essay will be submitted electronically, via an Assignment link on Canvas. **Worth 25% of the final grade.**
  - (ii) **Essay #2:** This essay will be a minimum of 1750 words and a maximum of 2000 words. Due Date: 5:00pm on Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. This essay will be submitted electronically, via an Assignment link on Canvas. **Worth 35% of the final grade.**
4. **Experiential Learning Assignments:** Students will be required to engage with an experiential learning assignment. These assignments will involve non-traditional (essay or quiz) assessment coupled with a short, written reflection assignment. A detailed set of instructions and rubric explaining the requirements and expectations for these assignments will be made available two weeks in advance of their due date. This first experiential learning assignment will be due by 5:00pm on Sunday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>. This second experiential learning assignment will be due by 5:00pm on Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. **The Experiential Learning Assignments are together worth 10% of the final grade (5% each).** Assessment of the Experiential Learning Assignment will be made in accordance with the rubric detailed at the end of this syllabus.

### GENERAL GRADING POLICY

All of the information listed above regarding the course's grading policy, in conjunction with the grading rubric appended below, are consistent with University of Florida grading policies, which can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

### ADDITIONAL COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. **Essay Source Materials:** Any source materials appealed to in your essay assignments that do not come from assigned course texts, *must* be cleared with the Professor at least 1 week prior to the due date of the assignment. If you do not clear additional sources with the Professor 1 week prior to turning in your paper, you will be penalized (10% for each source not-cleared,

*only if* the source is cited). None of the assignments for this class will require resources beyond the required readings.

2. **Text and Note Taking:** In each lecture, we will be taking an in-depth look at the assigned readings for that session. You are expected to have a copy of the text(s) with you, and you will benefit from being able to mark the passages that are focused on in lecture. You are also expected to have a copy of the text(s) as well as paper and something to write with for each discussion section.
3. **Course Slides:** There may be slides for some class meetings, and, if so, these will be posted on the course's Canvas site after each lecture meeting. **Please Note:** while these slides will provide you with helpful material when drafting your papers, they will not cover everything that is discussed in either lecture or discussion session meetings. In order to have the fullest understanding of the material, you will need to be present for each lecture meeting as well as discussion section.

### SUMMARY OF GRADED REQUIREMENTS

|     |                                   |
|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 10% | Attendance                        |
| 20% | Participation                     |
| 25% | Essay Assignment #1               |
| 35% | Essay Assignment #2               |
| 10% | Experiential Learning Assignments |

| Grading Scale |                    |               |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Letter        | 4 pt. scale        | 100 pt. scale |
| A             | 4.0 (3.835-4.0)    | 94-100        |
| A-            | 3.67 (3.495-3.834) | 90-93         |
| B+            | 3.33 (3.165-3.494) | 87-89         |
| B             | 3.0 (2.835-3.164)  | 84-86         |
| B-            | 2.67 (2.495-2.834) | 80-83         |
| C+            | 2.33 (2.165-2.494) | 77-79         |
| C             | 2.0 (1.835-2.164)  | 74-76         |
| C-            | 1.67 (1.495-1.834) | 70-73         |
| D+            | 1.33 (1.165-1.494) | 67-69         |
| D             | 1.0 (0.835-1.164)  | 64-66         |
| D-            | 0.67 (0.495-0.834) | 60-63         |
| E             | 0.0 (0.0-0.494)    | 0-59          |

### ESSAY SUBMISSION AND LATE SUBMISSION POLICY

In general, requirements for section attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work are consistent with university policies specified at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

More specifically, the following policies will be adhered to:

1. All in-class assignments will need to be completed during the class meeting in which they are assigned. If you have extenuating circumstances (consistent with the University guidelines detailed in the link above and are able to present a written excuse), accommodations may be made (but there are no guarantees here). You will need to contact the Professor within 48

hours of the class meeting that you will miss in order to determine whether accommodations can be made.

2. All essays assignments will be submitted online via an Assignment/Turnitin.com link on the course's Canvas 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.
3. 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.

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### 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://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 PHI 2630 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.**

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### CLASS CONDUCT POLICIES

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. 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.

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 smart phones 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>.

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### 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/](http://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.

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## **HONOR CODE & PLAGIARISM POLICY**

Most instances of academic dishonesty can be avoided by thoroughly citing the resources you have used to help you understand the topic on which you're writing. **If you have read something that helped you understand the material, cite it!** Failure to cite sources is the most common (and easily avoidable) academic offence. Use of Artificial Intelligence resources (e.g. ChatGPT) will result in a zero grade on a given assignment and may result in failure of the course. Detailed citation instructions will be provided with your essay assignments.

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 (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-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.

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.

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## **IMPORTANT CAMPUS & ACADEMIC RESOURCES**

### **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/](http://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.

### **Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care**

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)** Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

**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

**E-learning Technical Support,** 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to

[Learningsupport@ufl.edu](mailto:Learningsupport@ufl.edu). <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

**Library Support** <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>

**Writing Studio** 2215 Turlington Hall, 846-1138. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

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### EMAIL POLICY

(1) If you need some practical information about the course you should **look at most recently updated syllabus or on the website.**

(2) If you want to discuss a substantive philosophical question you should bring it up in class or come to office hours. The professor will not be able to respond to in-depth, substantive questions about the readings or assignments over email. However, I am *more* than happy to discuss substantive questions of these sorts in office hours. So, please join my regularly scheduled office hours or schedule a separate zoom appointment. I will be happy to address short, logistical, non-substantive questions over email.

If, after reading (1) & (2) you still think you should email either the professor, you are welcome to do so at the 'ufl' addresses listed at the top of this syllabus. Please use your 'ufl' address.

**Emails received after 5pm may not be responded to until after 9am the following day.**

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### COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS

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.aa.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.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.



## HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE!

1. **Be sure to read the assigned material before lecture.** This will help to ensure that our lecture time is quality time.
2. **After lecture, re-read the material for the session:** pay special attention to the questions that you had before. Hopefully the material will make much more sense to you now!
3. **Bring specific questions with you to discussion section meetings.** If there remain aspects of the readings or lecture you didn't fully grasp, your discussion section will provide you with an excellent opportunity to probe these issues further.
4. **See us in office hours:** Philosophy is tough! It's natural to have lurking (and new) questions after both lecture and section. That's what office hours are for! Don't be shy!
5. **Manage your time well.** Many students make the mistake of waiting until a few days before papers are due to start writing. This is not a helpful way to manage your time and efforts. Getting started early on your papers by formulating outlines and drafts will *really, really* help to improve your final product. Similar considerations apply to the final exam. The **same number of hours** devoted to the material BEFORE class can lead to a much more efficient use of your time, better understanding, and higher grades.
6. **Familiarize yourself with Philosophical Terms & Methods:** Here are links to Jim Pryor's guides to philosophical terms and methods, reading philosophy, and writing a philosophical paper. These are *very* helpful, short additional resources. I *strongly* recommend checking them out:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/index.html>

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

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## LECTURE, DISCUSSION SECTION, & READING SCHEDULE:

- *This Schedule is Tentative & Subject to Revision – please read all class announcements*

### UNIT 1: THE ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF NON-HUMAN ANIMALS

#### Monday, Jan. 13 – Course Overview

- *No Assigned Readings*

**Wednesday, Jan. 15 – Human & Non-Human Animals: Species & Moral Hierarchies**

1. René Descartes – *Letters to William Cavendish and Henry More*
2. Immanuel Kant – “Our Duties to Animals” (first paragraph only)

**Friday, Jan. 17 – Defending the Moral Standing of Non-Human Animals**

- Peter Singer – “All Animals Are Equal”

**Monday, Jan. 20 – No Class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

- *No New Readings*

**Wednesday, Jan. 22 – Defending the Moral Standing of Non-Human Animals**

1. Peter Singer – “All Animals Are Equal”
2. Peter Singer – “Reflections on *Elizabeth Costello*”

**Friday, Jan. 24 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics**

- *No New Readings*

**Monday, Jan. 27 – Challenging the Moral Standing of Non-Human Animals**

1. Carl Cohen – “The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research”

**Wednesday, Jan. 29 – Marginal Cases & Moral Conflations**

1. Alastair Norcross – “Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases” (*skip section 3*)

**Friday, Jan. 31 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics**

- *No New Readings*

**UNIT 2: THE ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF ABORTION**

**Monday, Feb. 3 – A Theologically-Inspired Case Against Abortion**

1. John Noonan – “An Almost Absolute Value in History”

**Wednesday, Feb. 5 – A Secular Case Against Abortion – Focusing on the Fetus**

1. Don Marquis – “Why Abortion Is Immoral”

**Friday, Feb. 7 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics**

- *No New Readings*

**Monday, Feb. 10 – Defending Abortion & Women’s Rights**

1. **Judith Jarvis Thomson** – “A Defense of Abortion”

**Wednesday, Feb. 12 – Defending Abortion & Women’s Rights**

1. **Judith Jarvis Thomson** – “A Defense of Abortion” (cont.)

**Friday, Feb. 14 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics**

- *No New Readings*

**UNIT 3: THE ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

**Monday, Feb. 17 – Challenging Affirmative Action: Leveling & Compensation**

1. **Louis P. Pojman** – “Why Affirmative Action is Immoral”

**Wednesday, Feb. 19 – Defending Affirmative Action: Equalizing Opportunity**

1. **Daniel Hausman** – “Affirmative Action: Bad Arguments and Some Good Ones”

**Friday, Feb. 21 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics**

- *No New Readings*

**Essay 1 Due by 5:00pm on Sunday 2/23 via Canvas/Turnitin.com**

**Monday, Feb. 24 – Challenging Affirmative Action: The Costs of Preferential Treatment**

1. **Shelby Steele** – “Affirmative Action: The Price of Preference”

**Wednesday, Feb. 26 – Defending Affirmative Action: Realizing Integration**

1. **Elizabeth Anderson** – “Racial Integration Remains an Imperative”

**Friday, Feb. 28 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics**

- *No New Readings*

## UNIT 4: THE ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL POVERTY

### Monday, Mar. 3 – Population Growth & the Tragedy of the Commons

1. **Garrett Hardin** – “Lifeboat Ethics”

### Wednesday, Mar. 5 – Resisting the Lifeboat Model

1. **William W. Murdoch & Allan Oates** – “A Critique of Lifeboat Ethics”

### Friday, Mar. 7 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics

- *Discussion of the Week’s readings*

### Monday, Mar. 10 – The Moral Obligations of the Affluent

1. **Peter Singer** – “The Life You Can Save”

### Wednesday, Mar. 12 – Challenging the Moral Obligations of the Affluent

1. **John Arthur** – “World Hunger and Moral Obligation”

### Friday, Mar. 14 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics

- *No New Readings*

### Monday, Mar. 17 – Friday, Mar. 21 – No Class: Spring Break

**Experiential Learning Assignment 1 Due by 5pm on Sunday 3/23 via Canvas/Turnitin.com**

## UNIT 5: CLIMATE ETHICS & COLLECTIVE HARM

### Monday, Mar. 24 – Collective Climate Harm without Individual Responsibility

1. **Walter Sinnott-Armstrong** – “It’s Not My Fault: *Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations*” (pp. 332-337, 343-44)

### Wednesday, Mar. 26 – Collective Climate Harm & Causal Contribution

1. **John Nolt** – “How Harmful Are the Average American’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions”

### Friday, Mar. 28 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics

- *No New Readings*

**Monday, Mar. 31 – Collective Climate Harm with Individual Responsibility**

1. Avram Hiller – “Climate Change and Individual Responsibility”

**Wednesday, Apr. 2 – Collective Climate Harm with & without Individual Responsibility**

1. Avram Hiller – “Climate Change and Individual Responsibility” (cont.)
2. Morten Fibieger Byskov – “Climate Change: Focusing on How Individuals Can Help is Very Convenient for Corporations”

**Friday, Apr. 4 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics**

- *No New Readings*

**UNIT 6: THE ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF GUN OWNERSHIP**

**Monday, Apr. 7 – Defending a Prohibition on Gun Ownership**

1. Jeff McMahan – “Why ‘Gun Control’ Is Not Enough”

**Wednesday, Apr. 9 – Challenging the Prohibition of Gun Ownership**

1. Michael Huemer – “Gun Rights and Noncompliance”

**Friday, Apr. 11 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics**

- *No New Readings*

**Monday, Apr. 14 – Fundamental and Derivative Rights**

1. Jeff McMahan – “A Challenge to Gun Rights”

**Wednesday, Apr. 16 – Handguns & Self-Defense**

- Nicholas Dixon – “Handguns, Philosophers, and the Right to Self-Defense”

**Friday, Apr. 18 – Discussion of the Week’s Topics**

- *No New Readings*

**Experiential Learning Assignment 2 Due by 5pm on Sunday 4/20 via Canvas/Turnitin.com**

**Monday, Apr. 21 – Writing Workshops**

- *No New Readings*

**Wednesday, Apr. 23 – Writing Workshops**

- *No New Readings*

**Essay 2 Due by 5:00pm on Friday 4/25 via Canvas/Turnitin.com**

GENERAL GRADING RUBRIC FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

| A  | B   | C  | D  | E   |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the paper does an excellent job of responding to the topic question and reflects a more than competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class.</li> <li>• The introduction does an excellent job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</li> <li>• The main ideas of the paper are clear and convincing</li> <li>• All the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material.</li> <li>• The paper's claims are all well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.</li> <li>• The argument advances in a manner that is easy to follow.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the paper responds well to the topic question and reflects a competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class.</li> <li>• The introduction does a good enough job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</li> <li>• The main ideas of the paper are for the most part clear and convincing.</li> <li>• Almost all the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material.</li> <li>• The paper's claims are generally well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.</li> <li>• The argument advances in a manner that is for the most part easy to follow.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the paper provides a merely sufficient response to the topic question and reflects a less than competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class.</li> <li>• The introduction does not adequately identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</li> <li>• The main ideas of the paper are only partially clear and convincing.</li> <li>• The content of the paper generally supports its main ideas, though there is some irrelevant material.</li> <li>• Only some of the paper's claims are well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.</li> <li>• The argument is difficult to follow in places.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the paper only partially responds to the topic and reflects an incompetent command of the relevant texts and materials discussed in class.</li> <li>• The introduction does not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</li> <li>• The main ideas of the paper are only marginally clear and convincing.</li> <li>• The content of the paper tends not to support its main ideas, and there is a good deal of irrelevant material.</li> <li>• None of the interpretations on which the paper's claims are based are cogent.</li> <li>• The argument is difficult to follow or incomplete.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the paper does not respond to the topic and fails to draw upon relevant texts and materials discussed in class.</li> <li>• The introduction does not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</li> <li>• It is unclear what the paper's main ideas are supposed to be.</li> <li>• How the content of the paper is supposed to support its main ideas is unclear, and there is far too much irrelevant material.</li> <li>• None of the paper's claims are based on interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.</li> <li>• The argument is very difficult to follow.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Grammar:</b> The document <i>Basic Grammar for Writing Assignments</i> posted under the "Resources" tab discusses some common grammatical errors you must avoid. Grammatical errors will incur deductions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improper formation of plurals and possessives ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Failure of agreement between subject and verb ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Grammar §1) ( - 4 points)</li> <li>• Run-on sentence (<i>Basic Grammar</i> §2) ( - 4 points)</li> <li>• Grammar §3) ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Unclear Pronoun Reference (<i>Basic Grammar</i> §4) ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Grammar §5) ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Confusion of <i>it's</i> and <i>its</i> ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Sentence fragment (<i>Basic</i></li> <li>• Faulty Modification (<i>Basic</i></li> <li>• Faulty Parallelism (<i>Basic</i></li> </ul> |   |  |  |   |

More Detailed Grading Rubric Guidelines:

- 1) Follow Instructions: Fully answer all of the questions and directives posed in the prompt. Make sure not to skip over any of the questions/directives. Also, stick to the word count.
- 2) Citation and Accuracy of Attribution: When you attribute a claim, argument, or conclusion to an author make sure to offer evidence for this attribution either by a simple page citation or by a page citation accompanied by a quotation. Stick close to the text so that you don't misattribute views to authors (views that an author does not actually hold).
- 3) Clarity & Adequate Definition of Terms: Clarity is of primary importance in these papers. You are to take the reader through your reconstruction of these arguments in your own terms. Of course, some philosophical jargon will enter into play (e.g. 'internal reason' or 'instrumental principle'). When you introduce technical jargon, make sure to clarify what the terms mean in the context of the argument you are reconstructing. We need to know that you understand these thinkers' arguments, so articulate their ideas clearly and, as best you can, in plain and clear language.
- 4) Comprehensive and Economical Reconstruction: When reconstructing arguments (be they primary arguments, objections, or replies) make sure that you not only reconstruct all of necessary steps (comprehensive) but also avoid any extraneous steps (economical) that are unnecessary for delivering the argument's conclusion. While it is critical that you do not leave out any of the argument's essential steps, it is equally important (especially in a short essay like this) that you do not digress into unnecessary or tangential discussions.
- 5) Charitableness: Be charitable to the arguments you are reconstructing. Even if you don't agree with them, try to show them in their strongest possible form (so as to avoid erecting 'straw persons').
- 6) Justify your Arguments and Interventions: When you are asked to offer your critical views on the strengths or weaknesses of an author's arguments or claims, make sure to provide reasoned justifications for your evaluations. Don't just state your opinion. Back it up, as well.