

Contemporary Moral Issues Syllabus

Jack Madock

Summer A 2025

1 Course Information

1. Instructor: Jack Madock
2. Contact: johnmadock@ufl.edu
3. M-F Period 5 (14:00-15:15)
4. Matherly 0114
5. Office Hours T/TR 12:30-14:00 GFH 318

2 Description and Learning Objectives

This course will introduce students to moral philosophy through selected contemporary issues such as abortion, voting, wealth redistribution, the treatment of animals, migration, freedom of speech, weapon ownership, duties to future generations, and the ethics of artificial intelligence.

This course satisfies the humanities general education requirement. Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering 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 analyze the relevant factors that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

This course satisfies the writing requirement of one (1) four thousand word course.

3 Assessment

Students will be assessed by a combination of participation, attendance, papers, and in class presentations.

1. Participation and Attendance 20%
2. Midterm Paper 35 %
3. Final Presentation 10%
4. Final Paper 35%

4 Assigned Readings

Assigned readings will be made available on the course Canvas page.

5 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

6 Policies

6.1 Grading Scale

A scoring rubric for evaluating written work is available on the course canvas page. The following grade scale will be used to assign final letter grades for the course.

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

Table 1: Grade Scale and Corresponding Grade Values

6.2 Attendance

Students are expected to attend class and to have completed all assigned reading in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect the students' ability to perform well in this course.

6.3 Canvas

This course is supplemented by online content in the e- Learning environment known as "Canvas." To log in 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 PHI2100 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.

6.4 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.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/>.

6.5 Accommodations

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565 or using the link below) 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.

1. Counseling and Wellness Center: [://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx), 392-1575
2. University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.
3. U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress. umatter@ufl.edu

7 Weekly Schedule (Subject to Changes)

• Week 1

5/12 Introduction
5/13 Shafer Landau, “Fundamentals of Ethics,” Ch. 11
5/14 Immanuel Kant “The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative” Ch. 9
5/15 John Stuart Mill “Utilitarianism” Ch. 8
5/16 Shafer Landau, “Fundamentals of Ethics,” pp. 130-143 (Ch. 9)

• Week 2

5/19 Judith Jarvis Thompson “A Defense of Abortion” Ch. 28
5/20 Don Marquis “Why Abortion is Immoral” Ch. 29
5/21 Jeff McMahan “Why Gun Control is Not Enough” Ch. 33
5/22 Michael Heumer “Is There a Right to Own a Gun” Ch. 34
5/23 Review and Paper Workshop

• Week 3

5/26 Holiday (No Class)
5/27 Alistair Norcross, Puppies Pigs and People Ch. 24
5/28 Immanuel Kant, Our Duties to Animals
5/29 Singer, P. (1972), “Famine, Affluence and Morality” *Philosophy and*

Public Affairs, 1:229–43

5/30 Review **Mid Term Papers Due by 5:00pm**

- **Week 4**

6/2 Caney, S. (2005a), “Cosmopolitan Justice, Responsibility, and Global Climate Change,” *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 18(4):747–775

6/3 Carens, J. (1987), “Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders,” *The Review of Politics*, 49(2):251–273

6/4 Review and Catch Up

6/5 Intro to Ethics of Technology

6/6 John Danaher (2017), “Will Life Be Worth Living in a World Without Work? Technological Unemployment and the Meaning of Life,” *Sci Eng Ethics*, 23:41–64

- **Week 5**

6/9 Sparrow, R. (2007), “Killer Robots,” *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 24(1):62–77

6/10 Castro, Clinton, and Adam K Pham (2020), “Is the Attention Economy Noxious?” *Philosophers’ Imprint*, 20(17):1–13

6/11-13 Presentations

- **Week 6**

6/16-18 Presentations **Final Paper Due 6/20 by 11:59pm**