Course description

The aim of this course is to help students think through the right and wrong of ethically significant issues of our societies, such as euthanasia, abortion, poverty, sexual relations and drugs. We begin with a discussion of the distinction between ethics and applied ethics, the role of arguments in ethics, and the relation among ethics, religion and law.

The remainder of the course is divided into three sections. Each section introduces some relevant theories, which can then be applied to particular morally relevant problems in today's society.

The first section concerns the ethical principles that we live by as individuals. The second deals with ethical principles by which we may negotiate our relation to society. The third considers ethical principles by which we may help maintain or transform certain aspects of our world.

Section I. Principles individuals live by: right, good and fair, introduces the Kantian, the utilitarian, and the Rawlsian approaches. We consider how those perspectives may help us to think through our relation to animals, euthanasia, and abortion.

Section II. Principles for life in society: rights, solidarity and care, introduces Locke's account of property rights, Singer's notion of solidarity with the suffering, and Manning's conception of care ethics. We consider the help that these accounts may provide us regarding hunger and poverty, women and development, and First Nations Rights.

Section III. Principles for making our world: earth, selves and connections, introduces the land ethic, Sartre's existentialist ethic, and the Buddhist approach. We will draw on these outlooks to understand better what stand to take with regard to the natural environment, sexual relations, and drugs.

Texts and Coursespaces readings

Required text: A Coursepack, plus selected texts to be downloaded from Coursespaces (see details on the schedule of lectures below). Be attentive to announcements in class and on Coursespaces. Recommended optional supplementary: Anthony Weston, A Rulebook for Arguments (Hackett, 2009).

Course organisation and student engagement

Assigned weekly readings need to be done ahead of class lectures. Attendance during class periods, constructive participation, and tolerance with regard to the views of others will be expected. Students are responsible for materials covered, and for informing themselves about announcements missed if absent. Weekly class time will be
devoted to brief presentation of key points from the material assigned and to class discussion. Attendance, constructive engagement, and performance of weekly assignments all contribute to the participation grade credit.

**Tips for best performances**
1. Do readings ahead of class periods and read material attentively (by asking questions about the material), and do weekly assignments.
2. Come to class, and participate in class discussion with constructive points.
3. Speak to the instructor if failing to understand the material.

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term test</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A final, comprehensive, take-home exam</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation, including weekly assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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1. **The mid-term test** will cover both readings and further points raised in lectures. Both understanding and recall of material covered, and reflective analysis, will be expected. Test questions will likely consist of a combination of shorter and longer answer questions.

2. **The final exam** will be a comprehensive take-home exam with short answer and long answer questions. Questions will be handed out on the last day of classes, and the completed exam must be brought to the Department of Philosophy **no later than 7 days after exam questions hand-out, before 2:00 p.m.** Late exams will **NOT** be accepted (they will receive 0%). **Exams also have to be submitted simultaneously through Coursespaces.** Understanding of material covered and reflective analysis will be expected. Answers will be assessed on the basis of the following three criteria: (1) explanation of key points, (2) well-developed discussion of points presented, (3) clarity, neatness, and organisation of points.

3. **Participation** is assessed the basis of a) **regular attendance** and **constructive participation in class discussion**, and b) **weekly assignments** based on the course readings and personal analysis of the issues under discussion. Class attendance will be taken, and is particularly encouraged in the case of guest speakers. Justified absences should be discussed with the instructor ahead of time. Both quantity and quality of assignments, and of contributions to class discussion, will be taken into account in grading.

**Other matters**

**Numerical and letter grades**

Grades will be given as percentile marks. The percentile mark for the course will be converted to a letter grade in the following manner: A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 - 79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49. The A range means exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. A grade in the B range means a very good, good and solid performance. A grade in the C+ or C range means satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory, performance. A grade of D or D- indicates merely passable or marginal performance. An F indicates unsatisfactory performance.

**Late assignments**

Late assignments will **not** be accepted (they will be worth 0%) and exams will **not** be rescheduled. If a test is missed for significant reasons of a medical sort (provide medical certificate), or for other serious, **documented** personal reasons, arrangements will be made to accommodate the student within reason. Documented evidence for having legitimately missed an exam and an explanatory statement in writing have to be received **no more than ten days after the deadline or exam missed.**

**Plagiarism and other policies**

Academic honesty will be expected in this course. **Plagiarism (e.g. copying from others or working together on the take-home exam) may lead to dismissal from the course and the university.** Any matters not covered in this handout will be handled in accordance with University and Department policies.
Transition and inclusivity/diversity

Students who are new to the University, and would like assistance may contact the Transition Office, www.uvic.ca/transition. This course is committed to inclusivity and diversity, in line with the policy of the University Senate outlined in 1999, which states that “UVic is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.”

Course Experience Survey (CES)
Toward the end of term students have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding their learning experience. It is intended to provide feedback to the university regarding the course and my teaching. In the last two weeks of classes, you will receive an e-mail about this. If you do not receive such an invitation, you can go directly to http://ces.uvic.ca. Class time will be set aside to do the CES.

Schedule of lectures and tests
Please note that this schedule is subject to changes. Weekly reading assignments will be confirmed in class, so please be attentive to announcements both in class and on Coursespaces. Informed participation in class discussion will be expected, so please read the assigned texts in advance. Readings are from the Coursepack and from the Coursespaces website, unless otherwise indicated.

Week 1  Introduction and laying the groundwork
4-10 Jan  On the distinction between ethics and applied ethics, the role of arguments in ethics, and the relation among ethics, religion and law.
Begin readings: Rachels, James “Utilitarianism”

Week 2  Section I. Principles for individuals to live by: right, good and fair
11-17 Jan  GOOD: Rachels, James, “Utilitarianism”,
RIGHT: O’Neill, Onora, “A Simplified Account of Kant’s Ethics” (this is the first part of “Kant’s Formula of the End in Itself and World Hunger”, on pages 143-150 of the Coursepack)
FAIR: “Rawlsian Ethics” (Coursespaces)
**Assignments are due from this week onwards**

Week 3  Applications: animals and euthanasia
18-24 Jan  Singer, Peter, “Animal Liberation”
Regan, Tom, “The Case for Animal Rights”
Crisp, Roger, “Utilitarianism and Vegetarianism”
*20 Jan, last day for adding courses*

Week 4  Applications: euthanasia and abortion
2 – 31 Jan  Rachels, James, “Active and Passive Euthanasia”
Krutzen, Rudy, “The Case of Robert and Tracy Latimer”
Marquis, Don, “Why Abortion is Immoral”

Week 5  Applications: abortion continued, review, mid-term test
1-7 Feb  Thomson, Judith Jarvis “A Defense of Abortion”
**Mid-term in-class test on the last class day of the week, 5th of February**

Week 6  READING WEEK
8-14 Feb  No new readings, no worksheets
8 February **Family Day**

Week 7  Section II. Principles for life in society: rights, solidarity, autonomy and care

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1 Supplementary/optional: Dimock, Susan and Tucker, Christopher, “Kantian Deontology”.
16-22 Feb

Applications: refugees, world hunger and poverty

RIGHTS: Locke, John, “Creation of Property”
*Film: The Business of Hunger*

RIGHTS: Hardin, Garret, “Living on a Lifeboat”

SOLIDARITY: Singer, Peter “Rich and Poor”

Optional reading: Monbiot on ‘The Tragedy of Enclosure’ (Coursespaces)

Week 8

22 Feb – 28 Feb

AUTONOMY: O’Neill, Onora “Kant’s Formula of the End in Itself and World Hunger” (focus on 2nd half of article)

CARE: Manning, Rita, “Care Ethics” (Coursespaces)


Wednesday, 24th of February, GUEST SPEAKER: Michael J. Carpenter on “Autonomy and resistance in occupied territories” ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

Week 9

Applications: women, development and population, and First Nations’ rights

29 Feb – 6 Mar

Shiva, Vandana, “Development, Ecology and Women”

Extract from “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” (Coursespaces)

Dasgupta, Partha “Population, Poverty and the Local Environment” (Coursespaces)

Trudeau, P.E. “Remarks on Indian Aboriginal and Treaty Rights”

Wednesday, 2nd of March, GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Christine O’Bonsawin on First Nations Rights

ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

*29 February: Last day for withdrawing from courses without penalty of failure*

Week 10

Applications: First Nations Rights and the ethics of mining and power generation

7-13 Mar

McDonald, Michael, “Aboriginal Rights”

Brook, Andrew, “Ethics of Wastes: The Case of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle”


*Film: Uranium*

Week 11

Section III., Principles for making our world: earth, selves and connections

14-20 Mar

EARTH: Leopold, Aldo, “The Land Ethic”

SELVES: Sartre, Jean-Paul, “Existentialism is a Humanism” (Coursespaces)

CONNECTIONS: Brown, Karin, “Buddhist Ethics” (Coursespaces)

*Film: A Cut Above: My Grandfather Was a Logger* (To be confirmed)

Week 12

Applications: environment, sex and drugs

21-27 Mar

Garvey, James, Ethics of Climate Change: “Doing Something”, “Individual Choices” and “Epilogue”

Punzo, Vincent, vs. Goldman, Alan, “Must sex involve commitment?” (Coursespaces)

Husak, Douglas “Drugs legalisation” (Coursespaces)

Optional: Gardiner, “Ethics of climate change” (Coursespaces)

25 March GOOD FRIDAY: No Classes!

Week 13

Review, summary-conclusion

28 Mar – 3 Apr

Review, Course Experience Survey

28 March EASTER MONDAY

Week 14

*Monday 4 April: last Day of Classes. Final take-home exam questions handed out **

***Monday 11 April before 2:00 p.m., final exam submission to the Dept of Philosophy AND on Coursespaces***