

## **Course Description**

Philosophers are known for making, in the words of William James, "an unusually obstinate effort to think clearly." In this course we will take a philosophical approach to a variety of controversial and sometimes emotionally charged moral issues facing us today. Topics we will address include the treatment of non-human animals, genetic engineering, abortion, our handling of the environment, collective action problems, sex work, our response to human starvation and suffering, and AI in the role of friend or caregiver. As we approach each of these issues, we will consider what various philosophers have said makes an act right or wrong and see whether their theories help us in solving moral problems. We will make a determined effort to develop well-reasoned positions on these issues, articulating and evaluating arguments on both sides of the debates. In short, we will be thinking in a philosophical way about how we should live our lives.

#### **Class Meetings**

We will meet on Zoom. Access will be through a link on the course **Brightspace** page. To access the page go to <u>bright.uvic.ca</u> and log in with your regular netlink ID.

#### Texts

You'll need this book: Daniel DeNicola. **Moral Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction.** Broadview Press. 2018. You can buy a digital copy direct from Broadview Press <u>here</u>. It's also available as a paperback through the UVic Bookstore.

All of the other readings for this course will be available through the Brightspace page. Please let me know right away if you have any difficulty accessing the readings.

**Course Requirements** (See schedule below for dates.)

Five Quizzes 6% each First Paper 25% Panel Discussion 15% Second Paper 30%

**The papers** will be opportunities for you to develop and defend a position on one of the issues we have been discussing in class. The first paper will be 1300 words maximum. The second will be 1500 words maximum. Due dates for the papers can be found on the schedule below. Detailed instructions for the papers are available on Brightspace.

# Help with Papers

Advice about how to write a philosophy paper is available on the Brightspace page. Prior to the due dates for both papers xxxxxxxxxx, the teaching assistant for the course, and I will have additional office hours to help you with your papers. It is wise to start work on your paper early enough to take advantage of this extra help.

### Late Papers

If you have a legitimate reason for submitting your paper late, please notify me immediately. Unexcused lateness will result in a 5% reduction in the grade for that assignment each day. No essay will be accepted for grading after **June 11** unless academic concession has been granted. For policies concerning academic concession see <a href="https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HJjAxiGO4?bc=true&bcCurrent=11%20-%20Academic%20Concessions&bcltemType=policies">https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HJjAxiGO4?bc=true&bcCurrent=11%20-%20Academic%20Concessions&bcltemType=policies</a>.

#### **Academic Integrity**

Please familiarize yourself with the University Policy on Academic Integrity. It will be enforced in this course. You can find it online in the UVIC Calendar at <a href="https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk 0xsM V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcItemType=policies">https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk 0xsM V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcItemType=policies</a>

<u>Please Note</u>: Anyone who does not write both of the two assigned papers will receive a grade of N for the course.

**The quizzes** will be online quizzes given on Brightspace. The first quiz will be done as a group project in class. All the other quizzes will be done individually. All of the quizzes other than quiz one are timed quizzes. That means that once you open the quiz a timer will start and you will not be able to reopen the quiz once you close it.

All of the quizzes are open-book and open-notes.

If you miss a quiz due to illness or accident, contact me immediately to schedule a make-up.

**The panel discussions** will be group presentations applying ethical theories to a particular topic and leading class discussion of that topic. You'll sign up for a topic on Wednesday, May 15. Details about the assignment are available on Brightspace.

#### Grading

Grades for the course will be assigned using the UVIC Undergraduate Grading Scale:

Percentage	Grade	
90 - 100	A+	
85 - 89	Α	
80 - 84	A-	
77 - 79	B+	
73 - 76	В	
70 - 72	B-	
65 - 69	C+	
60 - 64	С	
50 - 59	D	
Below 50	N or F	

A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically **superior**, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations.

B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates **good** comprehension of the course material, good command of the skills needed to work with it, and full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application.

C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an **adequate** comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.

D is earned by work that indicates **minimal** command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.

N indicates that the course requirements were not completed.

## **Equity**

Uvic is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive, supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members. Information about Uvic policies on human rights, equity, discrimination and harassment are available at <a href="https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HkQ0pzdAN">https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HkQ0pzdAN</a> If you have any particular concerns about equity in our course please don't hesitate to contact me.

#### **Religious Accommodation**

Information regarding accommodation of religious observance can be located in the UVIC Calendar at <a href="https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/rla0gofdN?bc=true&bcCurrent=10%20-">https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/rla0gofdN?bc=true&bcCurrent=10%20-</a>

%20Accommodation%20of%20Religious%20Observance&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies

### **Territory Acknowledgement**

The University of Victoria acknowledges with respect the Lekwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the University of Victoria stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and  $\underline{W}$ SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day

## **Course Schedule**

Please note that this schedule is tentative.

Any changes to the schedule will be announced in class and posted on Brightspace.

All of the readings not in DeNicola's book can be found through Brightspace.

Also on Brightspace you'll find information about which sections to focus on in some of the longer readings.

M 5/13	Singer All Animals are Equal	
T 5/14	DeNicola Chapter Six: Utilitarianism	
W 5/15	DeNicola Chapter Seven: Kantianism Steinbock Speciesism and the Idea of Equality	SIGN UP FOR A PRESENTATION TOPIC TODAY
TH 5/16	Regan The Case for Animal Rights Varner The Prospects for Consensus and Convergence in the Animal Rights Debate	Quiz 1 In Class
F 5/17	DeNicola Chapter Nine: Virtue Ethics Driver Individual Consumption and Moral Complicity	INITIAL GROUP MEETING in CLASS TODAY

M 5/20	— Victoria Day No Class Meeting —	
T 5/21	Crowe 'It Makes No Difference What We Do': Climate Change and the Ethics of Collective Action Gambrel and Cafaro The Virtue of Simplicity	Quiz 2 open 11:00 am - 8 pm
W 5/22	The Philosophers' Magazine Would You Eat Your Cat? Nussbaum Discussing Disgust	
TH 5/23	Sandel The Case Against Perfection: What's Wrong with Designer Children, Bionic Athletes, and Genetic Engineering Kamm What Is and Is Not Wrong with Enhancement	Panel on Genetic Engineering
F 5/24	Jaggar Contemporary Western Feminist Perspectives on Prostitution Nussbaum Whether from Reason or Prejudice Klepper Sexual Exploitation and the Value of Persons	Panel on Sex Work

M 5/27	—Paper Help Day—  No Class Meeting  Karen and xxxxx will be available to help you 10:00 am - 11:30 am and 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm	Quiz 3 open 11:00 am - 8 pm
T 5/28	Singer Famine, Affluence and Morality Igneski Defending Limits on the Sacrifices We Ought to Make for Others	Panel on Humanitarian Aid
W 5/29	Thomson A Defense of Abortion Warren On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion	First Paper Due at 8 p.m.
TH 5/30	Marquis Why Abortion is Immoral Dworkin Life's Dominion	Panel on Abortion
F 5/31	Little Abortion, Intimacy, and the Duty to Gestate LaFollette Licensing Parents	Quiz 4 open 11:00 am - 8 pm

M 6/3	Von Maur Alice Does Not Care. Or: Why it Matters that Robots 'Don't Give a Damn' Ryland It's Friendship, Jim, but Not as We Know it	Panel on Al
T 6/4	DesJardins Biocentric Ethics and the Inherent Value of Life Rogers The Nature of Value and the Value of Nature Robert Elliot Faking Nature	
W 6/5	—Paper Help Day—  No Class Meeting  Karen and xxxx will be available to help you 10:00 am - 11:30 am and 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm  Last Day of the Course	Quiz 5 open 11:00 am - 8 pm
TH 6/6		Second Paper Due at 8 p.m.