

# PHIL 335

## Contemporary Moral Philosophy



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**Office:** Clearihue B314  
**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 1:35–2:05 in person  
Thursdays 8:00 am–9:30 am on Zoom

### Course Description

In this course we will attempt to develop a solid understanding of four prominent normative ethical theories: contractarianism, Kantian ethics, consequentialism and contractualism. We will begin with a classic text in each tradition and move through contemporary attempts to explain, develop and critique these different conceptions of ethics. We will try to understand the intuitions and problems that motivate these accounts, the reasoning that supports them and some of the issues they have yet to resolve. Throughout, we will be asking whether any of these theories help us to understand what makes an action right or wrong or help us to answer the pressing questions of what kind of people we should be and how we ought to live our lives.

### Texts

All of the readings for the course will be available on-line through Brightspace.

To access the readings and other course information on Brightspace go to [bright.uvic.ca](http://bright.uvic.ca) and log in with your regular network ID. If you have difficulty accessing Brightspace or if a link to a particular reading is malfunctioning, please let me know by email right away so that I can take care of the problem.

### Course Work

#### Five Quote and Comment Assignments 6% each

These will be very short written responses to the reading assigned for the day they are due. Details are available on Brightspace. **Be sure to read that more detailed statement of the assignment.** Note that part of the assignment is to participate in class discussion the day the Q/C is due. Those due dates are marked with a **Q/C** on the schedule below.

#### Missed Quote and Comments

If you miss a quote and comment assignment you can do a makeup Q/C on April 3.

#### Two Exams Exam One 30% and Exam Two 15%

The exams will be in-class exams covering material from the readings and class discussion. They will be a combination of short answer questions and essay questions. Review questions for the exams will be posted on Brightspace.

#### Missed Exams

If you miss an exam you should contact me as soon as possible and we will schedule a make up exam.

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## One Essay 25%

I will give you a list of suggested essay topics, but you are very welcome to propose your own topic. If you intend to write on a topic of your own devising you need to submit your idea *for approval*. You must get your proposed topic to me in writing (email is fine) by the last day of classes. Further details about the essay assignment are available on Brightspace along with advice on how to write a philosophical essay.

### Late Essays

After the Initial Cutoff (5pm April 11) you will have four additional days to get your essay in without a grade penalty. Essays submitted in the grace period – after the Initial Cutoff and before the Final Cutoff (5pm April 15) – will receive full credit but they will not receive any comments. Essays submitted after the Final Cutoff will not be accepted without a successful application for academic concession. If you find that you cannot get your essay in by the final cutoff, you can find information about your options here: <https://www.uvic.ca/registrar/students/appeals/acad-concession/index.php>

## Academic Integrity

The University Policy on Academic Integrity (covering plagiarism, multiple submission, falsifying materials, cheating and aiding others to cheat) will be enforced in this course. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the policy. You can find it online in the UVIC Calendar at [https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk\\_0xsM\\_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies](https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk_0xsM_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies)

## Grading

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

Percentage	Grade
90 - 100	A+
85 - 89	A
80 - 84	A-
77 - 79	B+
73 - 76	B
70 - 72	B-
65 - 69	C+
60 - 64	C
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.

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## Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is tentative.  
Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Brightspace.

All readings can be found through Brightspace.

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### **Contractarianism**

T 1/9	Introduction
W 1/10	Hobbes <i>Leviathan</i> , Part One, Chapter XIII
F 1/12	Hobbes <i>Leviathan</i> , Part One, Chapters XIV and XV
T 1/16, W 1/17	Gauthier Why Contractarianism?
<b>Q / C F 1/19</b>	<b>Held Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory</b>
T 1/23	Baier Demoralization, Trust, and the Virtues

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### **Kantian Ethics**

W 1/24	Kant <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , Preface
F 1/26	Kant <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , First Section
T 1/30	Baron Acting from Duty
W 1/31	Kant <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , Second Section
<b>Q / C F 2/2</b>	<b>Herman Mutual Aid and Respect for Persons</b>
T 2/6, W 2/7	Korsgaard The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil
F 2/9	Slote The Problem We All Have with Deontology
T 2/13	Kagan Kantianism for Consequentialism

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### **That at which all things aim**

W 2/14	Bentham from <i>An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> Nussbaum Mill between Aristotle and Bentham
<b>Q / C F 2/16</b>	<b>Griffin Utilitarian Accounts: State of Mind or State of the World?</b>

**2 / 19 – 2 / 23 Reading Break – No Classes**

T 2/27	MacIntyre The Nature of the Virtues
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**W 2/28 Exam One**

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## Consequentialism

	F 3/1, T 3/5	Sidgwick from <i>The Methods of Ethics</i>
	W 3/6	Williams Consequentialism and Integrity
	F 3/8	Railton Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality
Q/C	T 3/12	Mason Can an Indirect consequentialist Be a Real Friend?
	W 3/13	Rawls Classical Utilitarianism
	F 3/15	Budolfson The Inefficacy Objection to Consequentialism and the Problem with the Expected Consequences Response
Q/C	T 3/19	Nefsky How You Can Help, without Making a Difference

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## Contractualism

	F 3/20	Rawls from A Theory of Justice
	F 3/22	Hampton Feminist Contractarianism Radzik Justice in the Family: A defence of Feminist Contractarianism
	T 3/26	Scanlon Contractualism and Utilitarianism
	W 3/27	Hooker Contractualism, Spare Wheel, Aggregation

**3 / 29 – 4 / 1      Easter Break – No Classes**

	T 4/2	Kumar Contractualism on the Shoal of Aggregation
Q/C makeup	W 4/3	Mendus The Magic in the Pronoun 'My'

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**F 4/5      Exam Two**

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**F 4/11      Essay Initial Cutoff – 5 p.m.**  
**M 4/15      Essay Final Cutoff – 5 p.m.**