

PHIL 534 A01
CRN#12524

September – December 2017
TWF: 11:30am – 12:20am

Contemporary Consequentialism

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2:30pm – 4:30pm

Course Description:

It is easy to write off consequentialism as a theory so plagued with difficulties that it is not worth serious consideration as a contemporary ethical theory. Indeed, many students complete their undergraduate degrees in philosophy wondering why anyone still defends the view. They view it as a curious historical artifact that was put to sleep in the late 20th century when contractualist forms of deontology gained widespread acceptance and virtue ethics began its modern reincarnation. One reason for students adopting this view is that introductory courses expose them to simple formulations of the theory and the many objections that consequentialism invites. Rarely is there time for students to explore the complexity of the theory's contemporary formulations. Our aim will be to correct this deficiency so that students become familiar with the many complicated variations of consequentialism that are currently available. Of course, many students will still not be persuaded that consequentisliasm is a viable ethical theory. This is entirely acceptable. The aim of the course is not to persuade anyone that consequentialism ought to be endorsed; the aim is rather to ensure that students are fully aware of the resources available to consequentialism when they make their own decision about what normative ethical theory they consider to be the most persuasive.

Texts: *Consequentialism* by Julia Driver
Readings available via Uvic *CourseSpaces*

Requirements:	participation	10%
	quote & comments	20%
	seminar presentation	20%
	term paper essay	50%

Policy on Late Assignments: 5% per working day will be subtracted from grade unless documentation is provided of illness or family emergency.

Plagiarism: Review the *University Policy on Academic Integrity* (pp. 45-48) *carefully*, and be aware that anti-plagiarism software may be used in this course.

Grading System: Please consult p. 44 of the *Uvic Graduate Calendar*. If you receive a grade that you consider to be unfair, please begin by discussing the matter with me in a respectful, open-minded manner. Rest assured that if you still consider the grade you received to be unfair you can appeal the matter to the chair of the department.

Uvic is committed to providing a safe, supportive learning environment for all members. Further information regarding Uvic policies on human rights, equity, discrimination and harassment are located in the Uvic calendar (p. 9), but if you have any particular concerns in our course please do not hesitate to contact me.

Counseling Services: Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health during their years as undergraduate students. Make sure you are familiar with *Uvic Counseling Services*, which is an excellent resource you have at your disposal on campus. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, but if at any point you can benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact *Counseling Services*. They genuinely want to help, and why not take advantage of this free resource?

Important Dates: Please consult the Uvic calendar's *Academic Year Important Dates* for information about last possible dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, etc.

Uvic Territory Acknowledgment: we ought to acknowledge and respect the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Note: *Dates and particular readings are subject to change!* Class attendance is essential to stay informed about scheduling changes. Material ought to be read *before* the class in which it is discussed.


Page numbers refer to *Consequentialism* by Julia Driver. Readings from other authors are available via *CourseSpaces*. If you encounter any difficulty accessing the readings, please let me know *before* it impedes your ability to keep up with the schedule.

Dates Topics & Readings

<u>Week 1</u>	<u>Introduction to Utilitarianism</u>
Sep. 6	First Meeting
Sep. 8	pp. 5 – 16 + Gerald J. Postema: “Bentham’s Utilitarianism”

<u>Week 2</u>	Background History
Sep. 12	pp. 16 – 25 + J.S. Mill: <i>Utilitarianism</i> , ch. 2 & 4 + Elizabeth S. Anderson, “John Stuart Mill and Experiments in Living”
Sep. 13	Roger Crisp: “Sidgwick and Utilitarianism in the Late Nineteenth Century”
Sep. 15	G.E. Moore: <i>Principia Ethica</i> , ch. 3, s. 49 – 57 + Peter Schaber: “Value Pluralism: Some Problems”
<u>Week 3</u>	Hedonism Reconsidered
Sep. 19	pp. 26 – 38 + David Sobel: “Varieties of Hedonism”
Sep. 20	Sharon Hewitt: “What Do Our Intuitions about the Experience Machine Really Tell us about Hedonism?”
Sep. 22	Eden Lin: “How to Use the Experience Machine”
<u>Week 4</u>	Maximization and Satisficing
Sep. 26	pp. 38 – 52 + Michael Slote: “Satisficing Consequentialism”
Sep. 27	Alastair Norcross: “The Scalar Approach to Utilitarianism”
Sep. 29	Gerald Lang: “Should Utilitarianism Be Scalar?”
<u>Week 5</u>	Negative Responsibility
Oct. 3	pp. 52 – 66 + Bernard Williams: “A Critique of Utilitarianism”, s. 3 – 5
Oct. 4	Daniel D. Moseley: “Revisiting Williams on Integrity”
Oct. 6	Elizabeth Ashford: “Utilitarianism, Integrity and Partiality”
<u>Week 6</u>	Aggregation
Oct. 10	pp. 67 – 85 + Derek Parfit, <i>Reasons and Persons</i> , ch. 17
Oct. 11	Gustaf Arrhenius, Jesper Ryberg & Torbjörn Tännsjö: “The Repugnant Conclusion (SEP entry)”
Oct. 13	Roger Crisp: “Equality, Priority, and Compassion”
<u>Week 7</u>	Indirect Consequentialism

Oct. 17	pp. 86 – 95 + Brad Hooker: “Rule-Consequentialism”
Oct. 18	Holly M. Smith: “Measuring the Consequences of Rules”
Oct. 20	Tim Mulgan: “Rule Consequentialism and Famine” + Brad Hooker: “Rule-Consequentialism and Obligations Toward the Needy”
Reminder	How Many Quote & Comment Assignments have you Finished?
<u>Week 8</u>	Sophisticated Act-Consequentialism
Oct. 24	pp. 96 – 102 + Henry Sidgwick, <i>The Methods of Ethics</i> , book IV, ch. III
Oct. 25	Peter Railton: “Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality”
Oct. 27	Elinor Mason: “Can an Indirect Consequentialist be a Real Friend?”
<u>Week 9</u>	Moral Schizophrenia + Subjective Consequentialism
Oct. 31	pp. 102 – 114 + Michael Stocker: “The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories”
Nov. 1	Scott Woodcock: “When Will Your Consequentialist Friend Abandon You for the Greater Good?”
Nov. 3	pp. 114 – 130 + Frank Jackson: “Decision-Theoretic Consequentialism and the Nearest and Dearest Objection”
<u>Week 10</u>	Consequentialism and Practical Deliberation
Nov. 7	pp. 131 – 144 + Christopher Woodard: “What’s Wrong with Possibilism”
Nov. 8	Rob van Someren Greve: “Objective Consequentialism and Avoidable Imperfections”
Nov. 10	Derek Baker: “Knowing Yourself – And Giving up on Your own Agency in the Process”
<u>Week 11</u>	Global Consequentialism
Nov 13-15	Reading Break – No Class
Nov. 17	pp. 145 – 153 + Philip Pettit & Michael Smith: “Global Consequentialism”

<u>Week 12</u>	Consequentialism and Moral Psychology
Nov. 21	Peter Singer: “Ethics and Intuitions”
Nov. 22	F.M. Kamm: “Neuroscience and Moral Reasoning: A Note on Recent Research”
Nov. 24	Joshua D. Greene: “Beyond Point-and-Shoot Morality: Why Cognitive (Neuro)Science Matters for Ethics”
<u>Week 13</u>	Consequentialism and Moral Psychology
Nov. 28	Peter Railton: “The Affective Dog and Its Rational Tale: Intuition and Attunement”
Nov. 29 	Scott Woodcock: “When Will a Consequentialist Push You in Front of a Trolley?”
	** Last Day for Quote & Comment Assignments **
Dec. 1	Review and Debate

Citation information for all readings should be either (a) clearly marked on the first page, (b) listed in relevant citations from the Julia Driver text, or (c) absurdly simple to find on Google Scholar! If none of these options work out for you, please let me know.

Term Papers Due Friday, December 8th, 2017 at 4pm