

PHILOSOPHY 335 - Moral Philosophy Fall 2021

Class meets: Thursday 11:30 am-12:50 am Cornett A129

Instructor: Prof. Colin Macleod (pronouns: he & him)

Office: CLE B328

Phone: 721-7521

e-mail: cmacleod@uvic.ca

Office Hours: Monday 1:30 pm –3:30 pm and by appointment (via zoom)

Texts

There are no required texts that you must purchase for the course. All the readings will be available via web resources, the University Library or Brightspace. However, it may be useful for you to acquire a copy of Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. There are many editions available of this text and the text can be accessed via the web but the edition edited and translated by Allen W. Wood (Yale University Press 2002) has some valuable interpretative essays in it. You may also want to acquire an edition of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Henry Sidgwick's *The Methods of Ethics*.

Additional Resources

The Routledge Companion to Ethics (available online via UVIC library)

<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/poltheory/cuws/>

<http://www.utilitarianism.com/index.htm>

Course Outline/Course Objective

This course explores some of the most important and influential theories about the nature of morality that have been developed in the tradition of Western philosophy. Towards this end, we will study excerpts from some of the classic texts of Hobbes, Kant and Sidgwick as well as some work in moral theory by a variety of contemporary philosophers. The objective of the course is to provide students with a sound understanding of the main problems in normative ethics and the different moral theories that have been developed in response to them. We devote special attention to the following broad theories: consequentialism (especially utilitarianism), Hobbesian contractarianism, contractualism, and Kantian theory. Although the course examines some classic texts in the history of philosophy, we will approach the material with an emphasis on the relevance of the material studied to theories and debates in contemporary moral philosophy.

About Colin Macleod

Colin Macleod B.A. (Queens), M.A. (Dalhousie), Ph.D. (Cornell) is a Professor of Philosophy and Law. He joined the Philosophy department at the University of Victoria in 1998. His research focuses on issues in contemporary moral, political and legal theory with a special focus on the following topics: (1) distributive justice and equality (2) children, families and justice and (3) democratic ethics. He is the author

of *Have A Little Faith: Religion, Democracy and the American Public School* (University of Chicago Press 2016) [co-written with Ben Justice]; *Liberalism, Justice, and Markets: A Critique of Liberal Equality* (OUP 1998) and coeditor with David Archard of *The Moral and Political Status of Children* (OUP 2002). His articles have appeared in journals such as *The Chicago-Kent Law Review*, *Theory and Research in Education*, *Politics and Society*, *The Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, *The Canadian Journal for Law and Jurisprudence*, *Law and Philosophy*, and *Dialogue*. He is an executive editor of the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*. When he is not engaged in philosophical discussion and argument, he enjoys playing hockey and tennis and strumming his guitar while jamming with his musical friends.

Territorial Acknowledgement

I acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the University of Victoria stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Formal Course Requirements

Written work for the course consists of 1 term paper (approximately 3,000 words in length), 1 midterm exam, 1 final exam and (as many as) 10 quote and comment assignments. The term paper is worth 40% of the course grade, the midterm is worth 20% of the course grade, the final exam is worth 30% of the course grade and the quote and comment assignment is worth 10% of the course grade.

Informal Course Expectations

Although no grade is assigned for participation in class discussion or attendance, I expect students to attend class regularly and to participate actively in class discussion. You should feel free to pose questions and raise philosophical issues related to the material we are studying. I expect students to be attentive to and respectful of the perspectives of others in the class but this does not mean you should not voice disagreements with or raise criticisms about the philosophical views presented by members of the class. We can all learn a lot from lively exchanges of different points of view. So, I encourage voice your views in an open and thoughtful manner. You should expect to challenge the views of others and to have your views challenged by me and other members of the class. If there is material in the course that you find puzzling or difficult to understand please ask me about at an appropriate juncture in class or discuss your questions with me during my office hours.

Appropriate Academic Conduct

Students are expected to understand and abide by the University regulations concerning academic misconduct - e.g., plagiarism, cheating, etc. For further information about these matters students can consult the University Calendar. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism or academic misconduct, consult me before submitting an assignment

Brightspace You can access the Brightspace page for this course by signing in with your netlink id. Various essential course materials will be posted there (e.g., powerpoint slides, some readings, assignments, etc.) Access to the zoom meetings will also be posted there.

Please note that all assignments for this course and all materials posted to Brightspace are the intellectual property of myself and the University of Victoria. Do not circulate this material or post it to note-sharing sites without my permission. Posting course materials to note-sharing sites or otherwise circulating course materials without the permission of your instructor violates the *Policy on Academic Integrity* (<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcl.html>).

Late Assignments/Missed Tests and Grace Period Policy

Unless you provide me with a written note that provides a compelling reason (e.g. a documented medical problem) for granting an extension or for missing an exam, I will not change the due date of assignments nor will I reschedule exams for you. I will accept, without grade penalty, essays (but no other assignments) that are submitted up to one week after the due date. However, **essays** that are submitted in this period will not receive any comments. After this grace period unexcused essays will not be accepted. For other information with regards to missing deadlines, etc. please see the UVic University Calendar.

Important Dates

Term Paper: Due on or before December 6 (Grace period ends December 13)
Quote and Comment Assignments: Throughout the term (maximum 1 per week)
Midterm Exam: Thursday October 15.
Final Exam: As Scheduled by the University

Grading System

Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage*	Description
A+	9	90 - 100	An 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. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
A	8	85 - 89	
A-	7	80 - 84	
B+	6	77 - 79	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full

Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage*	Description
B	5	73 - 76	engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material.
B-	4	70 - 72	
C+	3	65 - 69	A 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.
C	2	60 - 64	
D	1	50 - 59	A 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.
COM	N/A	N/A	Complete (pass). Used only for 0-unit courses and those credit courses designated by the Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings.
CTN	Excluded Grade	N/A	Continuing. Denotes the first half of a full-year course.

Failing Grades

Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage*	Description
F	0	0 - 49	F is earned by work, which after the completion of course requirements, is inadequate and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.
N	0	0 - 49	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental. This grade may only be assigned by the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations.

Reading Schedule

Note: This is a provisional reading schedule. Some revisions may be made during the course of the term.

BS = available on Brightspaces

Week of September 6 - The Ethical Impulse and Enduring Puzzles about Value

Allen Wood 'Relativism' **(BS)**

James Sterba, 'Understanding Evil: American Slavery, the Holocaust, and the Conquest of the American Indians', *Ethics* Vol. 106, No. 2 (Jan., 1996), pp. 424-448 (available online via UVIC library)

Week of September 13 – The Right and the Good: Considering the Relation Between Living Well and Living Morally

Ian Parker, 'The Gift' in *The New Yorker* August 2, 2004 (available online via UVic Library)

Visit: <https://www.effectivealtruism.org/>

Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* Chapters 1-4 available online at <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/poltheory/bentham/ipml/ipml.toc.html>

Robert Nozick, 'The Experience Machine' **(BS)**

James Griffin, 'Utilitarian accounts: state of mind or state of the world' **(BS)**

Derek Parfit, 'What Makes Someone's Life Go Best?' **(BS)**

Recommended background reading: Singer, P. (1972). 'Famine, affluence, and morality. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 1(3), 229-243. (available online via UVic Library)

Supplementary Readings:

Larissa MacFarquhar, *Strangers Drowning: Impossible Idealism, Drastic Choices, and the Urge to Help* (Penguin 2016).

Larissa MacFarquhar, "The Kindest Cut" in *The New Yorker* July 27, 2009 (available online via UVic Library)

Week of September 20 – Consequentialism & The Varieties of Utilitarianism

Henry Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, Book III, chapters 11- 14 and Book IV, chapters 1-2 (available online at <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/poltheory/sidgwick/me/index.html>)

Derek Parfit, "The Repugnant Conclusion" **(BS)**

Derek Parfit "The Non-Identity Problem" **(BS)**

Week of September 27 – Decolonization, Reconciliation and Morality

Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang. 2012. “Decolonization is not a Metaphor.”
Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society 1(1): 1–40 **(BS)**

Anna Cook, ‘Recognizing Settler Ignorance in the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission’, *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* Vol. , No. 4 (January 2008). Available online via UVIC Library.

No Class on September 30 - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Week of October 4 – Integrity and Demandingness

Elizabeth. Ashford, ‘Utilitarianism, Integrity, and Partiality.’ *The Journal of Philosophy* 97, no. 8 (2000): 421-39. (Available online via UVIC Library).

Julia Driver, ‘Consequentialism and Feminist Ethics’, *Hypatia* Vol. 20, No. 4, (Autumn, 2005), pp. 183-199 (Available online via UVic Library).

Supplementary Readings:

Friedman, M. (1987). Beyond caring: The de-moralization of gender. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy ; Supplementary Volume, 13*, 87. (Available online via UVic Library)

Railton, P. (1984). Alienation, consequentialism, and the demands of morality. *Philosophy & Public Affairs, 13*(2), 134-171 (available online via UVic Library)

Week of October 11 –

October 11 No Class Due to Thanksgiving

MIDTERM EXAM October 14

Week of October 18- Contemporary Contractualism

Thomas Scanlon, ‘Contractualism and Utilitarianism’ **(BS)**

Rahul Kumar, ‘Contractualism’ in *The Routledge Companion to Ethics* (Available online via UVIC Library)

Supplementary reading:

Colin Macleod “Making Moral Judgements and Giving Reasons”, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 31, No. 2 June 2001: pp. 263-290. (Available online via UVic Library)

Week of October 25- Introduction to Kantian Ethics - The Good Will and Duty
Allen Wood, 'What is Kantian Ethics' **(BS)**

Kant, Preface of *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

Kant, First Section of *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

Week of November 1 - Interpreting the Categorical Imperative

Kant, Section Two of *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

Christine Korsgaard, 'Kant's Formula of Universal Law' *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, vol 66, # 1 & 2. (available online via Uvic Library)

Barbara Herman, 'Mutual Aid and Respect for Persons' *Ethics*, 94, No. 4 (July 1984), pp 577-602 (available online via UVic Library)

Week of November 8

READING WEEK NOVEMBER 10-12

November 8 – Life without Morality: 'Nasty, Brutish, Solitary, and Short'?

Excerpt from Plato's *Republic*, Book II from 357-368e (The Ring of Gyges available online)

Hobbes, *Leviathan* Chapters I, V, VI, XIII (available online in various places including: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3207/3207-h/3207-h.htm>)

Hobbes, *Leviathan* Chapters, XIV, XV, (XIII (available online in various places including: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3207/3207-h/3207-h.htm>)

Week of November 15 – Contemporary Hobbesian Contractarianism: Morality as Mutual Advantage

David Gauthier, 'Why Contractarianism?' **(BS)**

David Gauthier, Excerpt from *Morals by Agreement* **(BS)**

Susan Dimock, 'Why All Feminists Should Be Contractarians', *Dialogue*, Vol 47, No 2. Spring 2008 pp. 273-290 (available online via UVIC library)

Week of November – 22 – Other Directions?

Samantha Brennan, 'Feminist Ethics' in *Routledge Companion to Ethics* (Available

online via UVIC Library).

Thaddeus Metz, 'Toward an African Moral Theory', *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 15, 3 2007: 321-41. (Available online via UVIC library.)

Supplementary Readings:

Symposium on Metz's Toward an African Moral Theory in *South African Journal of Philosophy*, vol 26, No 4. 2007. (Available online via UVIC Library).

Week of December 6 - REVIEW

Quote and Comment Assignment Instructions

Over the course of the term, you may complete as many as 10 quote and comment assignments. However, you may only submit **ONE** quote and comment in any given week of term. In order to receive marks for the quote, comment, and critique assignment you must submit your assignment to the Brightspace page during the week that reading is on the outline. **You must also attend the class at which the reading is discussed in** order to receive credit for a submission. Your task is to identify an interesting passage in the assigned readings for the week and offer a clear, concise and thoughtful comment on the passage. Make sure you clearly identify **the author** and **source of the passage** you quote. In your remarks, provide a brief explanation of the issue raised in the cited passage and then provide a brief response – e.g., a criticism or comment or constructive question – about cited passage. Your remarks **should never exceed** a single, double-spaced piece of paper. Use 12 point font and regular margins. The date, your name, student number and the course number should be clearly indicated at the top left-hand side of the page. I will assign full marks to any assignment that reflects a good faith effort to engage the material in a thoughtful way.

Your assignment MUST have the following elements:

Your Name & Student #

The date

Philosophy 335

Quote & Comment # (e.g., #1)

Quotation and source (this can be single-spaced)

Your concise comment (this must be double-spaced)

Guide To Marginal Notations (used in marking papers)

? = the significance or relevance of a point is unclear or obscure

^ = missing word(s)

BX = be more explicit; develop the point you are making more fully

C = confusing passage;

CIT = incomplete or incorrect or missing citation

G = garbled; you have not effectively conveyed your point

I = incomplete analysis; you have not adequately explained your point

K = awkward or ungrammatical sentence construction

M = misleading

NA = needs argument; you have not developed your argument sufficiently

O = omit; you could have omitted this chunk of text

QL = quoted passage is unnecessarily long

RF = ambiguous or unclear referent

RS = run on sentence

SE = supporting evidence is needed to substantiate a claim

U = sentence or phrase does not clearly communicate your point

VA = vague

W = poor or incorrect choice of word