

PHIL 162 - Contemporary Moral Issues

Summer II - Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 AM to 1:50 PM in H&SS 2150

Instructor: Danny Weltman

dweltman@ucsd.edu | Office Hours: 2 to 3 PM Tuesdays + Thursdays in H&SS 7054

Teaching Assistant: Kathleen Connelly

kacconnelly@ucsd.edu | Office Hours: by appointment

About This Course: Topic and Goals

In this course, we will be investigating issues that all of us face in our lives. We will be asking *moral* questions: what should I do? What is right and wrong? What is good and bad?

Our class sessions and homework are designed not just to help you learn about philosophy and morality, but also for you to learn how to:

- Identify someone's ideas and arguments and summarize them in your own words
- Generate questions about, extensions of, and objections to the ideas and arguments
- Reflect on, refine, and articulate your own views on the various topics we address

Course Content

As a class, we will choose which topic to focus on each week after the first week. I have put all the possible readings on a separate sheet so that the syllabus is not huge. When we pick the topics we will examine, I will give you a new sheet that is updated with just the articles we will read. All readings are available on the course TED page. Each week has one or more primary readings, all of which you should read by Tuesday, plus a list of additional readings from which you should choose at least one article to read in addition to the primary readings. ***Please bring the readings to class each day***, either printed out or in *easily accessible* electronic form.

Assignments and Grading

There are three kinds of assignments in this class: **weekly reading quizzes**, **weekly discussion posts**, and the **final take-home exam**. Late quizzes or posts will not be accepted except in case of emergency. (Computer issues are not an emergency.) The final will lose 1/3rd of a letter grade for each day that it is late. Turning in a final exam is required in order to pass the course.

Weekly Reading Quizzes (5% of your grade) are to help you focus on the important parts of the reading and to get instant feedback on whether you have understood the reading. Quizzes are due midnight on Monday (except week one). There is one quiz per week, for a total of five quizzes.

Weekly Discussion Posts (40% of your grade) are your opportunity to get practice writing concisely about philosophy. There are two weekly discussion posts due on the TED discussion board for that week. One is due by midnight Wednesday and the other is due by midnight next Monday. The first one must be 500 words or less, and it should summarize a point from one of the readings, then offer a **question**, an **extension of the idea or argument**, or a **critique of the idea or argument**. The one due the *next* Monday is 250 words or less, and it should be a comment on someone else's post, offering an **answer to their question**, **your own question**, an **extension** to their post, or a **critique** of their post. There are nine weekly discussion posts due: one for week 1, and two for weeks 2-5. Posts are graded no credit/half credit/full credit and your lowest score will be dropped. Posts that exceed the word limit will earn half credit at most.

The **Take-Home Final Exam** (40% of your grade) will ask you to summarize points from four of the readings we have done, and then offer **extensions of the idea or argument** or **critiques of the idea or argument**. You may use your discussion posts as a basis for your answers on the final exam. The exam is due September 3rd at 2:30 PM via email or in class but you can turn in any or all of its four parts early. They will be graded and returned within three days.

Class Participation (15% of your grade) is required. This includes attendance, listening respectfully to me, the TA, and your fellow students, and offering thoughtful questions and contributions to the discussion. Texting, browsing the Internet, coming in late, not showing up, or otherwise ignoring people is not respectful and will reduce your participation grade.

Grade Breakdown:

5% - Weekly Reading Quizzes (5 total)

40% - Weekly Discussion Posts (9 total, lowest dropped)

40% - Take-Home Final (due September 3rd at 2:30 PM)

15% - Class Participation

OSD Information

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to me and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged.

Contact the OSD for further information:

(858) 534-4382 | osd@ucsd.edu | <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu>

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Any time you use **words, phrases, ideas**, or **anything else** that you did not think up on your own, you must **cite** your source the best of your ability. Words and phrases from others must be enclosed in quotation marks to show that you did not write them yourself. Failure to cite a source is **plagiarism** and it's not okay. Plagiarism may result in a zero on the assignment and may be forwarded to the Academic Integrity office. You should not need to use (or cite) outside sources for this class. It is perfectly okay to use points made by your classmates in class or on the discussion boards, *as long as you cite them to the best of your ability*. The one exception is that you do not need to cite me in this class.

PHIL 162 - List of Potential Topics and Readings

Week 1 - Introduction and Morally Judging Others (August 2 + August 4)

This week, in our first meeting on Tuesday, we will talk about the class in general terms: what is morality? How is class going to work? What are good methods for reading, evaluating, and writing philosophy?

Next we will go through the potential topics and discuss which ones we want to spend the rest of the class on. We will also learn about some moral theories that philosophers have proposed so that we have some tools to use for the rest of the course.

Then, on Thursday, we will turn to our first topic, making moral judgments about other cultures. A discussion post is due by midnight on Wednesday, August 3rd.

Required Reading (August 4):

Midgley, Mary. "Trying Out One's New Sword."

The topics for the next four weeks depend on your votes! Here are the topics to choose from:

Abortion

Should women have the right to abort a fetus they are carrying?

Required Reading

Warren, Mary Anne. "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion." (Optionally: read from the beginning up to the end of the first paragraph on page 45, then skip to page 47 and start reading from the paragraph beginning "Our own inquiry" and read until the end of the article.)

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Card, Robert. "Infanticide and the Liberal View of Abortion."

Warren, Mary Anne. "The Moral Difference Between Infanticide and Abortion: A Response to Robert Card."

Marquis, Don. "Why Abortion is Immoral." (Optionally: stop after page 188)

Thomson, Judith Jarvis. "A Defense of Abortion."

Basic Income

Should the United States provide everyone with a basic income each year, without any limitations?

Required Reading

Zwolinski, Matt. "The Libertarian Case for a Basic Income."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Whaples, Robert. "Skeptical Thoughts on a Taxpayer-Funded Basic Income Guarantee."

Munger, Michael. "One and One-Half Cheers for a Basic-Income Guarantee."

Henderson, David. "A Philosophical Economist's Case against a Government-Guaranteed Basic Income."

Collegiate Athlete Monetary Compensation

College athletes aren't supposed to receive payment for playing sports - they are supposed to be 'amateurs,' according to the NCAA, and there are rules that prevent them from being paid. Does this make any sense? Are college athletes being exploited by their colleges, by the NCAA, and by society? Would paying college athletes make it hard for them to focus on academic pursuits?

Required Reading

Brown, Jeff. "Compensation for the Student-Athlete: Preservation of Amateurism."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Haden, Christopher. "Foul! The Exploitation of the Student-Athlete: Student-Athletes Deserve Compensation for Their Play in the College Athletic Arena."

Trahan, Kevin. "How the NCAA's Marxist Philosophy Is Hurting Its Athletes."

Wilbon, Michael. "College Athletes Deserve To Be Paid."

Yanka, Ekow. "Why N.C.A.A. Athletes Shouldn't Be Paid"

Cultural Appropriation

Is it wrong to depict cultures other than your own in artwork? Is it okay for people to take aspects of another culture and use those to tell their own story or make their own statement?

Required Reading

Fung, Richard. "Working Through Appropriation."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Browning, Janisse. "Self-Determination and Cultural Appropriation."

Young, James. "Profound Offense and Cultural Appropriation."

Fusco, Coco. "Who's Doin' the Twist? Notes Towards a Politics of Appropriation." (skip or skim pages 72-3)

Rowell, John. "The Politics of Cultural Appropriation."

Hsu, Hua. "The Struggle: Macklemore Wrestles With His Place in Hip-Hop."

Berg, Chris. "Is Cultural Appropriation the Bogeyman It's Made Out to Be?"

Sol, Najva. "What Is Cultural Appropriation, And How Can You Avoid It?"

Patterson, Steve. "Why Progressives Are Wrong to Argue Against Cultural Appropriation."

Deaf Children

Should we treat children who are deaf by giving them cochlear implants? Is it okay for a deaf couple to genetically select for a child who will be deaf?

Required Reading

Lane, Harlan and Michael Grodin. "Ethical Issues in Cochlear Implant Surgery: An Exploration into Disease, Disability, and the Best Interests of the Child."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Davis, Dena. "Cochlear Implants and the Claims of Culture? A Response to Lane and Grodin."

Spriggs, M. "Lesbian Couple Create a Child Who is Deaf Like Them."

Levy, N. "Deafness, Culture, and Choice."

Anstey, K. W. "Are Attempts to Have Impaired Children Justifiable?"

Directed Organ Donation

Is it okay to pick and choose who to donate organs to? Do websites that let people pick organ recipients turn into a "beauty contest" where pretty people get the organs? What should we do if racist people say that they only want to donate their organs to a specific race?

Required Reading

Wilkinson, T. M. "Racist Organ Donors and Saving Lives."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Neidich, E. M., A. B. Neidich, J. T. Cooper, and K. A. Bramstedt. "The Ethical Complexities of Online Organ Solicitation via Donor-Patient Websites: Avoiding the 'Beauty Contest.'"

Moorlock, Greg. "Directed Altruistic Living Donation: What is Wrong with the Beauty Contest?"

Wilkinson, T. "What's Not Wrong with Conditional Organ Donation?"

Arnason, Wayne. "Directed Donation: The Relevance of Race."

Eating Animals

Humans eat a lot of non-human animals, including non-human animals raised in factory farms, where conditions are pretty bad. Is it morally acceptable to eat non-human animals?

Required Reading

Norcross, Alastair. "Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases"

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Warren, Mary Anne. "Difficulties with the Strong Animal Rights Position."

Adams, Carol. "The Sexual Politics of Meat."

Harman, Elizabeth. "Eating Meat as a Morally Permissible Moral Mistake."

Hsiao, Timothy. "In Defense of Eating Meat."

Steinbeck, Bonnie. "Speciesism and the Idea of Equality."

Diamond, Cora. "Eating Meat and Eating People."

Erasing Traumatic Memories

If we could invent a drug that erased traumatic memories, would it be a good idea to take it? Is there any reason not to erase one's traumatic memories with a drug?

Required Reading:

Henry, Michael, Jennifer Fishman, and Stuart Younger. "Propranolol and the Prevention of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Is it Wrong to Erase the 'Sting' of Bad Memories?"
and

Henry, Michael, Jennifer Fishman, and Stuart Younger. "Response to Open Commentaries for 'Propranolol and the Prevention of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Is It Wrong to Erase the 'Sting' of Bad Memories?'"

Focus on just the section relevant to the secondary reading you picked.

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Hall, Wayne and Adrian Carter. "Debunking Alarmist Objections to the Pharmacological Prevention of PTSD."

Kolber, Adam. "Clarifying the Debate Over Therapeutic Forgetting."

Rosenberg, Leah. "Necessary Forgetting: On the Use of Propranolol in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Management."

Bell, Jennifer. "Preventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Pathologizing Bad Memories?"

Craigie, Jillian. "Propranolol, Cognitive Biases, and Practical Decision-Making."

Kabasenche, William. "Emotions, Memory Suppression, and Identity."

Hurley, Elisa. "The Moral Costs of Prophylactic Propranolol."

Liao, S. Matthew and David Wasserman. "Neuroethical Concerns about Moderating Traumatic Memories."

Tenenbaum, Evelyn and Brian Reese. "Memory-Altering Drugs: Shifting the Paradigm of Informed Consent."

Sade, Robert. "On Moralizing and Hidden Agendas: The Pot and the Kettle in Political Bioethics."

Genetic Enhancement

Should we use technology to increase our physical and mental abilities? Should we alter babies before they're born so that they won't have certain diseases, or so that they will have certain traits?

Required Reading:

Kamm, Frances. "Is There a Problem with Enhancement?"

and

Kamm, Frances. "Response to Commentators on 'What's Wrong with Enhancement?'"

Focus on just the section relevant to the secondary reading you pick.

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Miller, Franklin and Howard Brody. "Enhancement Technologies and Professional Integrity."

Schwartz, Peter. "Defending the Distinction Between Treatment and Enhancement."

Ashcroft, Richard and Karen Gui. "Ethics and World Pictures in Kamm on Enhancement."

Coors, Marilyn and Lawrence Hunter. "Evaluation of Genetic Enhancement: Will Human Wisdom Properly Acknowledge the Value of Evolution?"

Liao, S. Matthew. "Are 'Ex Ante' Enhancements Always Permissible?"

Martin, Adrienne and Jehanna Peerzada. "The Expressive Meaning of Enhancement."

Robert, Jason Scott. "Human Dispossession and Human Enhancement."

Strong, Carson. "Lost in Translation: Religious Arguments Made Secular."

Trachtman, Howard. "A Man is a Man is a Man."

Global Justice

People around the world are starving to death and dying very young of easily preventable diseases. What sorts of moral duties do we have to these people? What must we do to help them, if anything?

Required Reading

Singer, Peter. "Famine, Affluence, and Morality."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Reader, Soran. "Distance, Relationship and Moral Obligation."

Green, Karen. "Distance, Divided Responsibility and Universalizability."

Immigration

Is it acceptable to place any limits on immigration? Why or why not?

Required Reading

Kukathas, Chandran. "The Case for Open Borders."

or

Miller, David. "Immigration: The Case for Limits."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Kukathas, Chandran. "The Case for Open Borders."

Miller, David. "Immigration: The Case for Limits."

Mendoza, José Jorge. "Discrimination and the Presumptive Rights of Immigrants."

Walzer, Michael. "Membership."

Carens, Joseph. "Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders."

Legalizing Drugs

Should any drugs be illegal? Why or why not?

Required Reading

Husak, Douglas. "Four Points About Drug Decriminalization."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Marneffe, Peter. "Against the Legalization of Heroin."

Sher, George. "On the Decriminalization of Drugs."

Hunt, Lester. "Epilogue: What Good Are Drugs Anyway?"

Moral Status

Who do we have moral duties to? Is it just to our fellow citizens? All human beings? What about animals? Which animals? All of them, or just some of them? Why?

Required Reading

Warren, Mary Anne. "The Concept of Moral Status."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Herzog, Harold. "The Moral Status of Mice."

Tooley, Michael. "Personhood."

Duran, Jane. "The Moral Status of the Joshua Tree."

Lovering, Robert. "Mary Anne Warren on 'Full' Moral Status."

Metz, Thaddeus. "An African Theory of Moral Status: A Relational Alternative to Individualism and Holism"

Sachs, Benjamin. "The Status of Moral Status."

Arneson, Richard. "What, if Anything, Renders All Humans Morally Equal?"

Morality and God

Do we need to believe in any gods to believe in objective morality? Can anything be right or wrong without religion?

Required Reading

Brink, David. "The Autonomy of Ethics."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Sullivan, Stephen. "Arbitrariness, Divine Commands, and Morality."

Zagzebski, Linda. "Does Ethics Need God?"

Craig, William Lane and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong. "God and Objective Morality: A Debate."

Rogers, Katherin. "God and Moral Realism."

Multiculturalism and Women

Here are two things that we might think are true: we ought to respect other cultures, and women ought to be treated equally. But what happens when these two things conflict? Some cultures treat women in ways that are unequal, like forbidding them from pursuing education or preventing them from getting jobs. What should we do when respect for other cultures conflicts with equality for women?

Required Reading

Moller Okin, Susan. "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?"

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Pollitt, Katha. "Whose Culture?"

Kymlicka, Will. "Liberal Complacencies."

Honnig, Bonnie. "'My Culture Made Me Do It'"

al Hibri, Azizah. "Is Western Patriarchal Feminism Good for Third World/Minority Women?"

Tamir, Yael. "Siding with the Underdogs."

An-Na'im, Abdullahi. "Promises We Should All Keep in Common Cause."

Sassen, Saskia. "Culture beyond Gender."

Bhabha, Homi. "Liberalism's Sacred Cow."

Raz, Joseph. "How Perfect Should One Be? And Whose Culture Is?"

Nussbaum, Martha. "A Plea for Difficulty."

Tertiary Reading (Optional)

Moller Okin, Susan. "Reply."

Same-Sex Marriage

Should same-sex couples be allowed to marry?

Required Reading

Card, Claudia. "Gay Divorce: Thoughts on the Legal Regulation of Marriage."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Callahan, Joan. "Same-Sex Marriage: Why It Matters - At Least for Now."

Benn, Piers. "The Gay Marriage Debate - Afterthoughts."

Self-Driving Cars

If a self-driving car has a choice between killing five pedestrians or killing the driver, what should it do? How should we program cars that drive themselves when it comes to ethical dilemmas? What other ethical issues arise when our cars drive themselves?

Required Reading

Lin, Patrick. "Why Ethics Matters for Autonomous Cars."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Howard, Don. "The Moral Imperative of the Driverless Car."

Bonnefon, Jean-François et al. "The Social Dilemma of Autonomous Vehicles."

Hevelke, Alexander and Julian Nida-Rümelin. "Responsibility for Crashes of Autonomous Vehicles: An Ethical Analysis."

Goodall, Noah. "Machine Ethics and Autonomous Vehicles."

White Supremacy

White is white supremacy? Do we live in a white supremacist nation? What does that mean, and what are the ethical implications?

Required Reading

Mills, Charles. "White Supremacy as a Sociopolitical System: A Philosophical Perspective."

Secondary Readings (Choose one or more):

Mendoza, José Jorge. "Immigration: The Missing Requirement for an Ethics of Race."

Zack, Naomi. "White Ideas."

Ansley, Frances Lee. "White Supremacy (And What We Should Do about It)"

McIntosh, Peggy. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies."