

University of Waterloo
Department of Philosophy
Phil 110B - 001
Philosophy: Ethics and Values
Fall 2013
T Th 2:30-3:50, AL 124

Instructor: Patricia Marino
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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-2:00 and by appointment
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Course Description

This course is an introduction to philosophical thinking about ethics and value, that is, about what is good, right, fair, and just, in life and in society. This course does not endorse any particular conclusions about the topics under consideration. Rather, the aim is to give you conceptual tools that will help you to develop your own views in a sophisticated and intelligent way and to make sense of the ethical and political disagreements and debates you're likely to encounter in life.

We'll start by considering various competing ethical theories and frameworks. Utilitarianism focuses on the collective good, saying that the right action is that which brings about the best consequences overall. Kantian moral theory focuses, instead, on individual autonomy, and says that right action must treat all persons as ends-in-themselves and never as mere means. Contractarians see morality as the result of implicit self-interested agreements with others. During the next part of the course we'll discuss ethical theories through the examples of abortion and life and death choices for disabled infants.

In week seven we'll shift our focus to broader and more political matters, starting with abstract issues of freedom and liberty, then moving to a more in-depth consideration discussion of distributive justice and inequality: are there limits on how much inequality in a society can be justified? During the last few weeks we turn to a few specific questions of liberty, choices, and the limits of markets in a complex society, including a study of intellectual property, surrogacy, sex work, and gender inequality.

Course Requirements

Requirements: Attendance at class meetings, one paper, two in-class tests, and a take-home final exam. The paper should be 900-1200 words and topics will be handed out. Paper assignments will ask you to write about your own ideas about a philosophical problem while engaging the texts and ideas we've encountered in class. The focus is on presenting an original argument. Of course this means the ideas in your papers must be your own; we will talk more in class about how to ensure that the ideas you present as your own really are, and how to cite any outside

sources you do use appropriately. If you have any questions at any time about academic honesty and what it requires, do not hesitate to ask. Just raise your hand or approach me after class. In-class tests will be a mix of quotation identification, quotation explanation, short answer, and short essay. The take-home final, due during the exam period, will ask you to write about a few specific questions using the theoretical concepts learned in class.

All readings are posted on the LEARN course page as pdfs you can download. Everyone is expected to have read the reading before the date for which it is listed and to be ready to discuss it in class. I will post study questions on LEARN ahead of time for each week's reading and you should come to class having given some thought to these. Course announcements and information will be on the LEARN page so please check it daily.

Although attendance and participation are not a formal component of your grade, you should participate in class discussion. There will be time in each class meeting for clarification questions and discussion questions from the students -- come to class with questions of both kinds.

Though I will be posting the lecture slides I use on the LEARN page, those slides serve as lecture outlines and not as sources of information. To know what is going on in class you have to be there. On days you can't make it to class you're responsible for finding out what we covered and talked about. Don't hesitate to take notes in class -- it can help keep you actively involved in what is going on in addition to being useful for studying.

Philosophy texts are often dense with argumentation and you should expect to read each reading more than once. In class, I will explain some context for the ideas in the readings, raise questions, propose topics for discussion, and answer particular questions you have about the readings. But I won't be summarizing the readings or presenting the ideas in simplified form. The main reason for this is that one thing you are learning in a philosophy course is how to think for yourself about complex ideas, and this means encountering ideas in their original form, so you can develop your own opinions. In a course like this, improving your reading, thinking and expression skills is much more important than learning any particular set of information.

If you have questions about the syllabus, the course, the requirements, the assignments, or anything else to do with this course, please do not hesitate to ask at any time!

Grades:

Test 1, Oct 3, 25%

Test 2, Oct 24, 25%

Paper, due (before midnight, via LEARN) Nov 14, 25%

Take home final, due (before midnight, via LEARN) Dec 10, 25%

Topics and Reading Assignments

Week 1: Introduction, and Utilitarianism

Sept 10 Introduction

Sept 12 Mill, "Utilitarianism" (read Ch 2, that is pages 9 to 27 of the pdf).

Week 2: Utilitarianism, continued

Sept 17 Carritt, "Criticisms of Utilitarianism," from Bratman and Perry eds., *Introduction to Philosophy* (read the whole thing), and Robert Nozick, "The Experience Machine," reprinted in Russ Shafer-Landau, *Ethical Theory* (Wiley-Blackwell) 254-265 (read the whole thing).

Sept 19 Williams, "Consequentialism and Integrity," reprinted in Scheffler, *Consequentialism and Its Critics* (Oxford University Press, 1988) (read sections 2 and 4, that is, pages 30 to 35 and 42 to 50).

Week 3: Kantian moral philosophy

Sept 24 Kant, Chapter 1 of *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Jonathan Bennett, trans. (read pages 5 to 12).

Sept 26 Korsgaard, "The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1986 15(4) (1986), 325-337 (read pages 325-337).

Week 4: Contractarianism and Test 1

Oct 1 Gauthier, "Morality and Advantage" *The Philosophical Review*, 76(4) (1967), 460-475 (read the whole thing).

Oct 3 TEST 1

Week 5: Abortion and life and death decisions for infants

Oct 8: Singer, selection from *Practical Ethics 2nd edition* (Cambridge University Press, 1993) (read pages 83-109).

Oct 10: Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 86(4) (1989), 183–202 (read the whole thing).

Week 6: Abortion and life and death decisions for infants, cont'd

Oct 15 Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1(1) (1971), 47-66 (read the whole thing).

Oct 17 Singer, selection from *Practical Ethics* (read "Life and Death Decisions for Disabled Infants" section only) and Johnson, "Unspeakable Conversations," *New York Times Magazine*, February 16, 2003 (read the whole thing).

Week 7: Liberty

Oct 22 Mill, "On Liberty" (Read only Chapter 1: Introductory, that is, pages 1 - 19).

Oct 24 Second test

Week 8 Inequality and justice 1: Rawls

Oct 29 Rawls, "Justice as Fairness," *The Philosophical Review*, 67(2) (1958), 164-194 (**read pages 164-178**).

Oct 31 Rawls, "Justice as Fairness," (**read the rest, that is, pages 178-194**).

Week 9 Inequality and justice 2: Nozick and Cohen

Nov 5 Nozick, "Distributive Justice," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Autumn, 1973), pp. 45-126 (**read pages 45 to 61**).

Nov 7 Cohen, "Robert Nozick and Wilt Chamberlain: How Patterns Preserve Liberty," *Erkenntnis*, 11(1), (1977), 5-23 (**read the whole thing**).

Week 10 Markets in context: intellectual property

Nov 12 Himma, K. E. (2008). "The Justification of Intellectual Property: Contemporary Philosophical Disputes," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 59(7), 1143–1161. doi:10.1002/asi.20853 (**read the whole thing**).

Nov 14 Paper due (and class cancelled)

Week 11 Choices in context: the limits of markets

Nov 19 Anderson, "Is Women's Labor a Commodity?" *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (1990), 71-92 (**read the whole thing**).

Nov 21 Satz, D. "Markets in Women's Sexual Labor," *Ethics*, 106(1) (1995), 63–85.s

Week 12 Positive freedom and oppression by choice

Apr 2 Christman, J. "Liberalism and Individual Positive Freedom," *Ethics* (1991) 343–359 (**read the whole thing**).

Apr 4 Cudd, "Oppression by Choice," *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 25 (1994), 22-44 (**read the whole thing**).

Late Work

Please submit your paper before class on the day it is due. Obviously, you should hand in your paper on time, but if you must be late, I will subtract five percentage points from your paper grade per day of lateness. If you experience unexpected difficulties like illness or personal difficulties, please let me know as soon as possible; if you expect to miss a deadline, let me know by email before the deadline rather than after.

Information on Plagiarism Detection

No formal or technological plagiarism detection mechanisms will be used in this class.

Electronic Device Policy

There is no formal policy against the use of laptops or tablets in class, but there are two rules: 1) you may not use any technology in ways that are distracting to me or to the other students and 2) you must be mentally present for what is going on in the classroom. This means no videos, no social networking, no email, no checking your phone during class. If you must use your phone, please leave the classroom.

Attendance Policy

Though attendance is not part of your assessment, in practice you have to be in class to understand the material in an appropriate way.

Etiquette and Email

Please call me "Patricia." Or you can call me "Professor Marino" or "Dr. Marino" if you prefer. For simple questions, feel free to email me or Ms. Drecun any time. For more complicated questions about course material and other topics, we prefer to meet in person. You can come by our office hours, talk to us after class, or email one of us to set up an appointment. Please use regular email rather than messaging through LEARN to contact us. Please sign your emails with your full name.

Institutional-required statements for undergraduate course outlines approved by Senate Undergraduate Council, April 14, 2009

Cross-listed course

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#).

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Other sources of information for students

[Academic integrity](#) (Arts) [Academic Integrity Office](#) (uWaterloo)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services office](#), located in Needles Hall Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.