

Phil 1110: Applied Ethics

Course description

This class addresses three contemporary ethical issues: the slaughter of animals for food, euthanasia, and punishment. Through in-class discussions and a series of short expository writing assignments, we'll first gain some understanding of pain, personhood, and moral responsibility. We'll then use this understanding to write persuasive essays on the factory farming industry, current medical policy, and the penal system.

Rationale

An indispensable tool in analytic philosophy is the argument; a set of statements designed to offer support for a conclusion. Philosophers in the analytic tradition are expected to state and defend their arguments by way of prose that is accurate, clear, concise, and rationally persuasive. When proficient, students will be able to comprehend difficult material, articulate themselves well, identify and avoid fallacies, offer strong support for their conclusions, and demonstrate why seemingly infallible positions are often deeply problematic. The analytic style translates well across disciplines, enabling students to excel in argumentation and debate regardless of the subject matter.

Learning outcomes and grading criteria

Accuracy - Your work should accurately capture the ideas and concepts presented in the source material.

Clarity - Any reasonably intelligent person unfamiliar with the content you are assigned to present should be able to cultivate an understanding of it from your work alone, and without much difficulty.

Concision - You should use only the amount of words necessary to accurately and clearly convey arguments, ideas, and assigned content.

Persuasiveness - Your arguments should persuade any reasonably intelligent, charitable, and disinterested individual that your position has a reasonable degree of plausibility. You are not expected to *prove* any claim beyond doubt.

Grading

In class assignments/quizzes = 25 points
 Paper 1 = 5 points
 Paper 2 = 5 points
 Paper 3 introduction/outline = 5 points
 Paper 3 draft = 5 points
 Paper 3 final = 10 points
 Paper 4 peer review = 5 points
 Paper 4 final = 20 points
 Paper 5 = 25 points

Grading scale

105-101=A+
 100-96=A
 95-91=A-
 90-86=B+
 85-81=B
 80-76=B-
 75-71=C+
 ...and so on.

Course materials will be available via Blackboard.

Policies

- You can use any non-disruptive device that facilitates your success in the class, provided that you *disable its internet connection*.
- You can come and go as you please, provided you *don't disrupt class*.
- You should freely express any ideas relevant to the discussion, but *only with respect, empathetic consideration, and good will* towards your fellow classmates.
- I offer alternate make-up assignments at my discretion and only with a viable excuse.
- *Note to students with disabilities*: If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, provide me with an accommodation notification letter from Student Disability Services. If you need immediate accommodations or physical access, please arrange to meet with me as soon as possible.

Academic integrity: In this course, the normal penalty for a violation of the Cornell standards for academic integrity (newstudentprograms.cornell.edu/AcademicIntegrityPamphlet.pdf) is an "F" for the term. If you cheat, you fail.

Course schedule

Week 1 Introductions

Thursday Jan 22nd - Course/syllabus, introduction to hedonism

Week 2 Well-being/III-being

Tuesday Jan 27th - Crisp *Haydn and the Oyster* and Mill *Utilitarianism (excerpt)*

Thursday Jan 29th - Nozick *Experience Machine* Workshop on paper 1

Paper 1 on Mill (expository essay) due by midnight Friday Jan 30th

Week 3 Well-being/III-being

Tuesday Feb 3rd - Parfit *Appendix I*

Thursday Feb 5th - workshop on Paper 2

Paper 2 on ill-being (expository essay) due by midnight Friday Feb 6th

Week 4 Arguments

Tuesday Feb 10th - Introduction to arguments. Arguments exercises.

Thursday Feb 12th - Picking out arguments in prose. Rachels' *Basic Argument for Vegetarianism*

Week 5 Animal Rights

Thursday Feb 19th - Rachels' *Basic Argument* and Norcross *Puppies Pigs and People*.

Week 6 Animal Rights

Tuesday Feb 24th - Workshop on Paper 3

Thursday Feb 26th - Workshop on Paper 3

Paper 3 draft 1 due by midnight Friday Feb 27th

Week 7 Persons

Tuesday Mar 3rd - SEP Personal identity excerpts

Thursday Mar 5th - Personal identity: Fission cases

Paper 3 draft 2 due by midnight Friday Mar 6th

Week 8 Euthanasia

Tuesday Mar 10th - Dworkin *Life Past Reason (excerpt)*

Thursday Mar 12th - Dworkin *Life Past Reason (excerpt)*

Paper 3 final draft due by midnight Friday Mar 13th

Week 9 Euthanasia

Tuesday Mar 17th - Shiffrin - *Autonomy, Beneficence, and the Permanently Demented*

Thursday Mar 19th - Dworkin/Shiffrin continued

Week 10 Euthanasia

Tuesday Mar 24th - Workshop on paper 4

Paper 4 first draft (persuasive essay) due by midnight Mar 25th

Thursday Mar 26th - **Bring an anonymized draft of paper 4 to class for peer review**

Week 11 Desert Theory

Tuesday Apr 7th - Harris case. Feinberg - *Justice and Personal Desert*.

Thursday Apr 9th - Strawson's *Basic Argument*.

Week 12 Expressionism

Tuesday Apr 14th - Feinberg *The Expressive Function of Punishment*

Thursday Apr 16th - Hanna *Say What? A Critique of Expressive Retributivism*

Final draft paper 4 due by midnight Friday Apr 17th

Week 13 Fair Play

Tuesday Apr 21st - Morris - *Persons and Punishment*

Thursday Apr 23rd - Husack - *Why Punish the Deserving* 457-461.

Week 14 Workshop

Tuesday Apr 28th - Desert theory. Moore - *Justifying Retributivism*.

Thursday Apr 30th - Fair Play. Dagger - *Playing Fair with Punishment*

Week 15 Workshop

Tuesday May 5th - Expressionism. Primoratz - *Punishment as Language*

Exam period May 11-19 **Paper 5 final draft due exam day TBA**