

PHIL140: Contemporary Moral Issues
Spring 2017
M/W 12-12:50pm
Marie Mount Hall (MMH) 1400
(FRI Discussion Sections Times & Locations on Testudo)

Instructor: Kelsey Gipe
kgipe@umd.edu
Skinner Bldg. 1120C
Office Hours: W 1:00-2:30pm & by appointment

TAs: Xuan Wang – Skinner 1110C – xuanwang@umd.edu - Office Hours: M/W 1-2pm
Kenneth Hall – Skinner 1119A – kenhall@umd.edu – Office Hours: M 1-2pm, Th 4-5pm

Required Texts: Lewis Vaughn, *Doing Ethics*, 4th Edition, Norton. ISBN: 9780393265415.
Supplementary texts will be uploaded to the ELMS course page under the “Files” tab.

Course Description: This course will focus on a number of contemporary moral issues, including – but not limited to – physician-assisted suicide, global justice, abortion, and animal rights. Class meets twice a week and will involve lectures as well as group work and class discussions.

Course Goals: By the end of this course students can expect to be able to critically analyze current ethical debates, approach emotionally-charged topics in an impartial and rational manner, and communicate well-formed philosophical arguments both verbally and in writing.

Expectations and Grading Procedures: Final grade will combine grades from three exams, one short paper, 10 reading quizzes, and class participation, weighted as follows.

5% class participation

Students must attend class regularly in order to participate. Good philosophy requires sharing ideas and arguing (respectfully) with each other! Don't be afraid to raise questions/objections and be sure to pull your weight in group activities.

10% reading quizzes

12 short reading quizzes will be randomly administered at the beginning of discussion sections over the course of the semester. The 10 highest quiz scores will be factored into your final grade. This means you may miss two quizzes with impunity (although I wouldn't recommend tardiness or missing class as a rule).

20% paper

5 pages, double-spaced, 11-12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins. Topics will be chosen from a list of options to be provided by the instructor no less than two weeks in advance of paper due date.

20% 1st exam

Multiple choice, T/F, etc. No short answer or essay questions.

20% 2nd exam

Multiple choice, T/F, etc. No short answer or essay questions, non-cumulative.

25% final exam

Multiple choice, T/F, etc. No short answer or essay questions, non-cumulative.

See undergraduate catalogue for description of grades, e.g., A+, A, A-, etc.:

<http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1534>

Classroom Etiquette: Please raise your hand in order to ask questions or make comments during lecture. Doing so will help keep the classroom atmosphere from becoming too chaotic. Use of electronic devices is not prohibited, but absolutely not recommended. If you must use a laptop for notetaking, please sit at the back of the classroom so that you won't distract your peers. Recording lectures (voice and/or video) is prohibited, no exceptions.

Communication Regarding this Course: Instructor and TAs will use email to convey important information, and students are responsible for keeping their email address up to date, and must ensure that forwarding to another address functions properly. Failure to check email, errors in forwarding, and returned email are the responsibility of the student, and do not constitute an excuse for missing announcements or deadlines. *Please note that the instructor will only check and respond to email during normal working hours (M-F 9AM-5PM).*

Emergency Protocol: If an emergency situation (e.g. weather) necessitates classes being canceled for longer than two weeks, lectures and class discussions will be continued on ELMS.

Course Procedures and Policies: A full list of course-related policies and relevant links to resources may be found at: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Attendance or Absences: Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Consistent attendance offers students the most effective opportunity to gain command of course concepts and materials. Events that justify an excused absence include: religious observances; mandatory military obligation; illness of the student or illness of an immediate family member; participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g. death in the family, required court appearance). Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g. unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems do not typically qualify for excused absence.

Students claiming an excused absence must notify the course instructor in a timely manner and provide appropriate documentation. The notification should be provided either prior to the absence or as soon afterwards as possible. In the case of religious observances, athletic events, and planned absences known at the beginning of the semester, the student must inform the instructor during the schedule adjustment period. All other absences must be reported as soon as is practical. The student must provide appropriate documentation of the absence. The documentation must be provided in writing to the instructor via email. This means that – in addition to any email correspondence notifying the instructor of your absence – you must send the instructor scanned copies of any documents (e.g. doctors' notes, athletic schedules) pertaining to the absence. This will help the instructor to maintain a digital record of excused absences.

Academic integrity: The UMD Honor Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).

Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council:
<http://www.shc.umd.edu>

Students who engage in academic dishonesty in this course will receive no points for the assignment in question, and will be immediately reported to the Honor Council and Office of Judicial Programs for further action. There will be no warnings. Definitions for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, etc. can be found at: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Disability Support: Students with a documented disability should inform the instructors within the add-drop period if academic accommodations will be needed. You are expected to meet with your instructor in person to provide them with a copy of the Accommodations Letter and to obtain your instructor's signature on the Acknowledgement of Student Request form. You and your instructor will plan together how accommodations will be implemented throughout the semester. To obtain the required Accommodation Letter, please contact Disability Support Service (DSS) at 301-314-7682 or dissup@umd.edu

Academic Accommodations for Students who Experience Sexual Misconduct: The University of Maryland is committed to providing support and resources, including academic accommodations, for students who experience sexual or relationship violence as defined by the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy. To report an incident and/or obtain an academic accommodation, contact the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct at 301-405-1142. If you wish to speak confidentially, contact Campus Advocates Respond and Educate (CARE) to Stop Violence at 301-741-3555. As 'responsible university employees' faculty are required to report any disclosure of sexual misconduct, i.e., they may not hold such disclosures in confidence. For more information: <http://www.umd.edu/ocrsm/>

Diversity: The University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body. Along with the University, I am committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Potential devaluation of students in the classroom that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion is inappropriate.

Copyright Notice: Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted. They are the property of the instructor - do not sell them, do not post them on a website. They may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor. Copyright infringements may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

For information on elms, counseling, health, learning workshops, tutoring, writing help, student rights in undergrad courses, questions about graduation or add/drop/withdraw, please see <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Syllabus may be subject to change as the course progresses. Any changes will be announced via ELMS and a revised copy of the syllabus will be uploaded.

Course Schedule: *Note - This schedule may be subject to change as the course progresses. All changes will be announced via ELMS and a revised copy of the syllabus will be uploaded.*

Week 1: January 25

Syllabus and Intro

*****NO SECTIONS FRIDAY, JAN 27*****

Week 2: January 30 & February 1

Why Ethics Matter

Vaughn ch.1 + “Euthyphro”

Week 3: February 6 & 8

What Makes a Good Moral Reasoner?

Vaughn ch.2 + “Trying Out One’s New Sword”

+ “Moral Relativism” (on ELMS)

Week 4: February 13 & 15

Moral Arguments

Vaughn ch.3

Week 5: February 20 & 22

Moral Theories: Intro to Moral Theories & Consequentialism

Vaughn ch.4&5 + “Utilitarianism”

Week 5: February 27 & March 1

Moral Theories: Kantianism & Virtue Ethics

Vaughn ch.6&7 + “Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals” + “Nicomachean Ethics”

Week 6: March 6 & 8

Virtue Ethics cont’d.

March 15th: Test 1!

Week 7: March 13 & 15

TBA

*****MARCH 19-26 – SPRING BREAK*****

Week 8: March 27 & 29 – GUEST LECTURER THIS WEEK!

Abortion

Vaughn ch.8 + “A Defense of Abortion” + “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion” + “Why Abortion is Immoral”

Week 9: April 3 & 5

Genetic Enhancement & Cloning

Vaughn ch.9 + “Genetic Enhancement” + “Is Gene Therapy a Form of Eugenics?” + “Cloning Human Beings: An Assessment of the Ethical Issues Pro and Con”

Week 10: April 10 & 12

Euthanasia

Vaughn ch.10 + “Active and Passive Euthanasia” + “Voluntary Active Euthanasia”

Week 11: April 17 & 19

Euthanasia cont’d.

Readings TBA

April 21: Paper topics assigned.

Week 12: April 24 & 26

April 24: Wrap up & Review

April 26: Test 2!

*****NO SECTIONS FRIDAY, APRIL 28 – WORK ON YOUR PAPERS!*****

Week 13: May 1 & 3

Animal Rights

Vaughn ch.16 + “All Animals are Equal” + “The Case for Animal Rights” + “Difficulties with the Strong Animal Rights Position”

May 5: Papers Due! Upload to ELMS by 11:59pm.

Week 14: May 8 & 10

Global Justice

Vaughn ch.19 + “On Justice” + “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, May 18th 8-10am

If you can't get enough of philosophy, consider joining the UMD Philosophy Club:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/umdfilosophyclub/>

Additionally, the philosophy department holds regular colloquiums you should check out:

<http://www.philosophy.umd.edu/events/colloquium>