

PHIL 232 A01:
Moral Problems of Contemporary Society

Instructor: Karen Brown
Email: klbrown@uvic.ca
Office: Clearihue B314

Office Hours: Tuesdays &
Thursdays 2:30-3:00
and by appointment

Course Description

William James once described philosophy as "the unusually stubborn attempt to think clearly." In this course we will take a philosophical approach to a variety of controversial and sometimes emotionally charged moral issues facing us today. Topics we will address include the treatment of non-human animals, pornography, abortion, our handling of the environment, prostitution, euthanasia, and our response to human starvation and suffering. As we approach each of these issues, we will consider what various philosophers have said makes an act right or wrong and see whether their theories help us in solving moral problems. We will make a determined effort to develop well-reasoned positions on these issues, articulating and evaluating arguments on both sides of the debates. In short, we will be thinking in a philosophical way about how we should live our lives.

Texts

All of the readings for this course will be available through the CourseSpaces page. To access the page, go to coursespaces.uvic.ca and log in with your regular network ID.

Course Requirements (See schedule below for dates.)

| | | | |
|--------------|-----|----------|-----|
| First Paper | 25% | Exam One | 20% |
| Second Paper | 30% | Exam Two | 25% |

The exams will be in-class exams consisting of short answer questions. If you miss an exam due to a documented illness or accident, contact me immediately to schedule a make-up.

The papers will be opportunities for you to develop and defend a position on one of the issues we have been discussing in class. The first paper will be 1200 words maximum. The second will be 1500 words maximum. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the days indicated on the schedule below.

Late Papers

If you have a legitimate documented reason for submitting your paper late, please notify me immediately. Unexcused lateness will result in a 5% reduction in the grade for that assignment each day. No essay will be accepted for grading after June 8 unless academic concession has been granted.

Plagiarism

Please familiarize yourself with the University Policy on Academic Integrity. It will be enforced in this course. You can find 50.1 (d) -0.1 () 0

Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is tentative.

Any changes to the schedule will be announced in class and posted on CourseSpaces.

