

PHIL 232 A01  
CRN#12522

September – December 2018  
TWF: 11:30am – 12:20pm

# Moral Problems of Contemporary Society

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2pm – 4pm

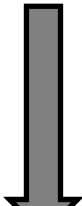
## Course Description

The aim of this course is to introduce students to a variety of controversial moral issues in contemporary society. In particular, students will be encouraged to carefully examine the philosophical arguments that arise in debates surrounding these controversial issues. The moral problems we will address in the course involve complex and often highly sensitive questions. The goal is to enable students to thoughtfully engage this subject matter and to learn how to articulate their opinions in the most persuasive way possible. The issues we will address in the course include the following: the ethical treatment of non-human animals, the basis for our obligation to protect the environment, the moral status of abortion, the duty to help alleviate global poverty, the moral status of pornography, the distinctive wrong of colonization, and the possible decriminalization of addictive recreational drugs. Class participation will be strongly encouraged in order to generate thoughtful discussion of the philosophical arguments proposed in the readings and their application to current events.

Course Website: Online course materials will be available via Uvic CourseSpaces. To access your customized CourseSpaces page, sign in to Uvic and click on Online Tools. You should see CourseSpaces as an option.

Texts: All readings available online via Uvic CourseSpaces

Requirements



- First paper (10%)
- Mid-term test (20%)
- Second paper (20%)
- Final exam (40%)
- Five: quote & comment assignments,  
news & comment assignments (5%)
- Two activist letters (5%)

Note: Writing assignment due dates and mid-term test dates are posted below in the weekly schedule. You are responsible for knowing these dates. Plan ahead, and manage your overall personal workload accordingly.

## Grading System

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definition
90 – 100	A+	9	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
85 – 89	A	8	
80 – 84	A-	7	
77 – 79	B+	6	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
73 – 76	B	5	
70 – 72	B-	4	
66 – 69	C+	3.5	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates adequate

Policy on Late Assignments 5% per working day will be subtracted from grade unless documentation is provided of illness or family emergency.

Plagiarism: Review the [University Policy on Academic Integrity](#) (pp. 45-47) carefully, and be aware that anti-plagiarism software may be selectively used in this course. Resources will be provided in CourseSpaces for students seeking guidance about what constitutes plagiarism and how they can avoid it, but it is the responsibility of each student to be informed about these details.

Counseling Services: Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health during their years as undergraduate students. Make sure you are familiar with Uvic [Counseling Services](#) which is an excellent resource you have at your disposal on campus. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, but if at any point you can benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact Counseling Services. They genuinely want to help, and why not take advantage of this free resource?

Important Dates: Please consult the Uvic calendar [Academic Year Important Dates](#) for information about last possible dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, examination period start/end dates, etc.

Technology in Classroom: Some students require laptops or voice recognition apps for their learning strategies, so do not prohibit their use in the classroom. However, studies demonstrate that multi-tasking reduces the performance of other nearby students so anyone caught on social media, internet surfing, etc. will be asked to leave and potentially subject to disciplinary action.

Academic Advising: For information about declaring a program, academic concessions or interpreting your Uvic CAPP report, please visit [Undergraduate Advising](#) or make an appointment with an adviser.

Minor in Applied Ethics: If you enjoy this class, you will most certainly want to look into the requirements for the [MAE program](#)

### Territory Acknowledgment

The University of Victoria is committed to acknowledging and respecting the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNE peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

For information about support for indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the Uvic [Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement](#)



Oct. 3	Ben Bradley: The Value of Endangered Species
Oct. 5	Robert Elliot: Faking Nature *** First Writing Assignment Due ***
<u>Week 6</u>	Collective Action Problems
Oct. 9	Garrett Hardin: The Tragedy of the Commons
Oct. 10	Review
Oct. 12	*** Midterm Test #1 ***
<u>Week 7</u>	The Moral Status of Abortion – Part One
Oct. 16	Mary Anne Warren: On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion
Oct. 19	Don Marquis: Why Abortion is Immoral
<u>Week 8</u>	The Moral Status of Abortion – Part Two
Oct. 23	Judith Jarvis Thomson: A Defense of Abortion
Oct. 26	Margaret Olivia Little: Abortion, Intimacy, and the Duty to Gestate

Nov. 9	Jan Narveson We Don't Owe Them a Thing!
<u>Week 11</u>	Sweatshop Labour and Just Restitution
Nov 12-14	Reading Break – No Class
Nov. 16	Todd Calder Shared Responsibility, Global Structural Injustice, and Restitution
<u>Week 12</u>	