

PHIL 232 A01
CRN# 22328

January – April 2018
TWF: 10:30am – 11:20am

Moral Problems of Contemporary Society

Instructor: Scott Woodcock
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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 ethics of genetic engineering, the basis for our obligation to protect the environment, the duty to help alleviate global poverty, the moral status of abortion, the ethics of prostitution, the definition of terrorism and the ethics of decriminalizing highly addictive drugs. Student 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.

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. 42-45) carefully, and be aware that anti-plagiarism software may be used in this course.

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's Academic Year Important Dates for information about last possible dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, 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.

Territory Acknowledgment

The University of Victoria is committed to acknowledging and respecting the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNE

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| <u>Week 7</u> Feb 12-16 | Reading Break – No Class |
| <u>Week 8</u> Feb. 20 Feb. 23 | The Moral Status of Abortion – Part One Mary Anne Warren: On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion Don Marquis: Why Abortion is Immoral |
| <u>Week 9</u> Feb. 27 Feb. 28 Mar. 2 | The Moral Status of Abortion – Part Two Judith Jarvis Thomson: A Defense of Abortion Judith Jarvis Thomson: A Defense of Abortion Sally Markowitz: Abortion and Feminism |
| <u>Week 10</u> Mar. 6 Mar. 7 Mar. 9 | The Moral Status of Prostitution + MMA Martha Nussbaum: "Whether from Reason or Prejudice" Taking Money for Bodily Services Scott A. Anderson: Prostitution and Sexual Autonomy: Making Sense of the Prohibition of Prostitution Steven Weimer: On the Alleged Intrinsic Immorality of Mixed Martial Arts |
| <u>Week 11</u> Mar. 13 Mar. 14 Mar. 16 | Obligations to Relieve Global Poverty Peter Singer: Famine, Affluence, and Morality Jan Narveson: We Don't Owe Them a Thing! Todd Calder: Shared Responsibility, Global Structural Injustice, and Restitution |
| <u>Week 12</u> Mar. 20 Mar. 21 Mar. 23 | The Wrong(s) of Colonialism Anna Stilz: Occupancy Rights and the Wrong of Removal [Parts I and III] Lea Ypi: What's Wrong with Colonialism? [Parts I-III, VII-VIII, & X, XI] Margaret Moore: The Taking of Territory and the Wrongs of Colonialism Kok-Chor Tan: Colonialism, Reparations, and Global Justice |

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| <u>Week 13</u> | The Morality of Terrorism |
| Mar. 27 | Igor Primoratz: What Is Terrorism? |
| Mar. 28 | Igor Primoratz: The Morality of Terrorism |
|  | *** Writing Assignment #2 Due *** |
| Mar. 30 | Good Friday – No Class |
| <u>Week 14</u> | The Ethics of Drug Decriminalization |
| April 3 | Douglas Husak: Four Points about Drug Decriminalization |
| April 4 | Peter De Marneffe: Against the Legalization of Heroin |
| April 6 | Review *** All Activist Letters Due *** |

Note: There will be a Registrar Scheduled Exam in April

WARNING: I do not control the date of the exam, and I do not have the power to change this date once it is scheduled by the Office of the Registrar. Therefore, do not book travel during the exam schedule until you know the date of your exams.