

PHIL 338 A01
CRN#12493

September – December 2019
TWF: 1:30pm – 2:20pm

Metaethics

Instructor: Scott Woodcock
Office: CLE B316
Phone: 472-4462
Email: woodcock@uvic.ca
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:30 – 4:30pm

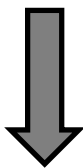
Course Description:

This course will examine philosophical issues related to the epistemic, metaphysical and semantic features of value judgements. We will assess the various theories that attempt to systematize our (often contradictory) judgments about these issues. Such theories include realism and anti-realism, cognitivism and non-cognitivism, relativism, error theory and nihilism. The literature on these topics is complicated and loaded with terminology with which students are not normally familiar. Nevertheless, we will try to keep focussed on the key questions that make metaethics so fascinating to anyone who has at some point pondered the deepest puzzles associated with ethical inquiry. What does it mean to claim that an action is morally wrong? Is this kind of claim different than ordinary descriptive claims about the world, e.g. that a table is flat or that an apple is red? Do ethical claims have an objective basis, or are they merely subjective statements that reflect our personal, emotional commitments to certain normative practices? Can ethical judgements be given truth values, and if not why do we assume that they ought to be governed by basic logical operators? The aim of the course will be for students to become familiar with the various positions in the current literature that try to make sense of these difficult questions.

Course Website: Online course materials will be available via Uvic [CourseSpaces](#).

Texts: . by Russ Shafer-Landau and Terence Cuneo
, by Andrew Fisher

Requirements: (Optional) First Paper (10%)
Midterm Test (10% or 20%)
Term Paper (30%)
Final Exam (40%)
Quote & Comment Assignments (10%)



Note: Due dates are posted below in the course schedule.
. Plan ahead, and manage your workload accordingly.

Important Dates: Please consult Uvic [Academic Year Important Dates](#) for information about last dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, etc.

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 a 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. Normal

3+ , / \$:RRGFRFN

6HSWHPEHU ± 'HF

\$ 1RWH RQ 'LYHUVLW\

<RX PLJKW QRWLFHUMKGLVQJRVLW WUKWVHFXBVZKLUWHZPHQ
\RX PLJKW WKLQN 3:VLUH DZKPRZHH ZRQYHQI DQGRSHU VQ WK
FRXUVH" ' , WTV QGDKLUHUXDUMLVROVHDLQLWLDO DQVZH

7KLV FRXUVH LQWURR D XFDHUWLVX GMDLQFWSKUL D DGRPSIKD QDKDVA
EHHQ YHU\ LQIOXHQLWDO DQG LVOEIQWVG V D G U D W IFRHS
WКУHDG EHJDQ^V KEGWKHUHDDJOG RDQADRWWKLVWRSJLFDO U
DUH VXEVTXHQWO\ E\ PHQ EHFDXVHZ DDPHYQV DFEROUHDF
GLVSURSRUWLRQ DEW HZCLW HSPUHQ H QWVHDLW QRQZXU\ WKD

7KLV QDUUDWLYH WКУHDG LV ZRULW D QFWXGRHQJ QRXWLEP
WKDW PHWDHWKLFDO LVVXHV GBQDQWDDIGLHWLRQRW KHUJF

7KH IDFW WKDHWZVRPHQ DQIGSRUUVXQVHRD FROUR DUVRQ LV
EHFDXVH WKH\ DFD DNVRSKILQVAFDMLHGVWLKDEHZEIXWH I
FLYLOLJDWLRQ KDMJHQRQJ GLVWULPQGDFRORRQLDDFLVP V
H[FOXGHG ZRPHQ DQG SHUVRQV RIKRORXRUSKURP WKH I

7KHUH LV VWLOOGRXQFK VRUPDMHR SEHQRVRSKIRLX D DPEIU
RI GLVDGYDQWDJHGEHURXSDWE XGMFUSOPVHR XUKFHKLWKRULH
PDQGLVWLQJXLVKHG SKLORVRSKHUV WRGDPERRHUUVH ZR
RIWKH /*%74 FRPPDQGLHG DQGVGRQW QDMXKZLQWKVZKRVH
JURXSV FDQ WDNHWKGVISLFDW WKDQWVWROROH PRQWDFSHRQD


,I \RX KDYH SDUWERXQDGLFRQFHVVQVLDJRXVWFLRXQVHRB KRZ
PD\ EH PRUH HIIHFQVLS D D SHRFRVDFVHPLWDWH WR FRQ

6FKHGXOH RM B D G \$ L Q J L J Q P H Q W V

1 R Vates listed are subject to change!5 H J X O D U F O D L W V H D W W Q H Q G D D F L Q R U
VWD\ LQIRUPHG DERXW VFKHGXOLB JUFH D Q E H V R F L O D W W H I Q D
ZKLFK LW LV GLVFXWKRQW SHD B L O X V E Z W E R R N R P D R X J U D Y D L C
RQOL Q d r s e s p a c e s % H V X U H W R D F F H V V W K H V H U M D G L Q J V Z H
PLQXWH WHFKQLFDO SUREOHPV

:HHN 5HDGLQJV

:HHN	, QWURGXFWRQ WR OHWDHWKLFV
6HSW)LUVW OHHWLQJ
6HSW	, QWURGXFWLRQ *HQHUDO , QFVSRSGXFWLRQ

<p><u>Week 2</u></p> <p>Sept. 10</p> <p>Sept. 11</p> <p>Sept. 13</p>	<p>Moore’s Open Question and its (Unintended) Legacy</p> <p>G.E. Moore, “The Subject Matter of Ethics”, pp. 465-473 The Open Question Argument, pp. 11-23</p> <p>Stephen Darwall, “Moore to Stevenson”,</p> <p>A.J. Ayer, “Critique of Ethics and Theology”, pp. 40-46 Emotivism, pp. 25-38</p>
<p><u>Week 3</u></p> <p>Sept. 17</p> <p> </p> <p>Sept. 20</p>	<p>Moral Disagreement</p> <p>C.L. Stevenson, “The Nature of Ethical Disagreement”, pp. 371-375</p> <p>David Brink, “Moral Disagreement”, pp. 376-382 Moral Realism and Naturalism, pp. 55-71</p>
<p><u>Week 4</u></p> <p>Sept. 24</p> <p> </p> <p>Sept. 27</p>	<p>Moral Realism</p> <p>Peter Railton, “Moral Realism”, pp. 186-205</p> <p>Russ Shafer-Landau, “Ethics as Philosophy”, pp. 210-221 Moral Realism and Non-Naturalism, pp. 73-89</p>
<p><u>Week 5</u></p> <p>Oct. 1</p> <p> </p> <p>Oct. 4</p> 	<p>Error Theory</p> <p>J.L. Mackie, “The Subjectivity of Values”, pp. 13-22 Error Theory, pp. 39-53</p> <p>Richard Joyce, “The Myth of Morality”, pp. 23-34</p> <p>*** First (Optional) Writing Assignment Due ***</p>
<p><u>Week 6</u></p> <p>Oct. 8</p> <p>Oct. 9</p> <p>Oct. 11</p>	<p>Quasi-Realism</p> <p>Review</p> <p>*** Midterm Test ***</p> <p>Simon Blackburn, “Is Objective Moral Justification Possible on a Quasi-realist Foundation?”</p>
<p><u>Week 7</u></p> <p>Oct. 15</p>	<p>Expressivism & the Frege/Geach Problem</p> <p>Allan Gibbard, “The Reasons of a Living Being”, pp. 71-78</p>

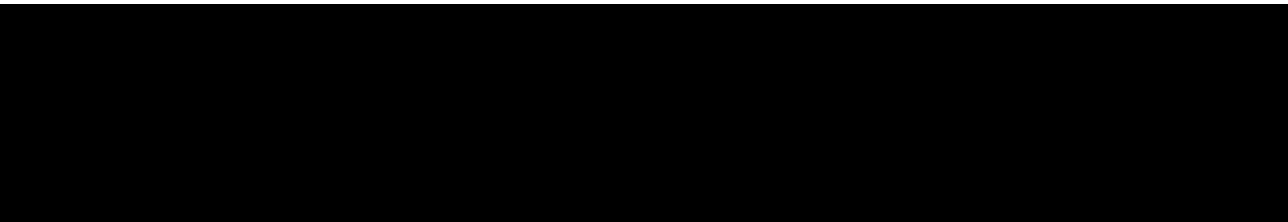
Oct. 18 	Quasi-Realism, pp. 91-109 Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, “Expressivism and Embedding”, pp. 485-494
<u>Week 8</u>	The Harman/Sturgeon Debate
Oct. 22 	Gilbert Harman, “Ethics and Observation”, pp. 333-336
Oct. 25	Nicholas L. Sturgeon, “Moral Explanations”, pp. 337-352
<u>Week 9</u>	Practical Reason
Oct. 29 	Phillipa Foot, “Morality as... Hypothetical Imperatives”, pp. 286-291
Nov. 1	Christine Korsgaard, “The Authority of Reflection”, pp. 93-106

Week 10 **Motivational Internalism/Externalism and Reflective**

Nov. 5

|

Nov. 8



Nov. 27	Margaret Olivia Little, “The Role of Affect in ...”, pp. 420-431
Nov. 29	Peter Railton, “The Affective Dog and Its Rational Tale: Intuition and Attunement” *** Last Day to Submit Q&C Assignments ***