

Moral Problems of Contemporary Society

Ph 232 A01 Fall 2021

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Territory acknowledgment

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples, on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNE peoples, whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. This acknowledgment entails a commitment to ongoing dialogue and reconciliation with the peoples of these lands. For information about support for indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the UVic Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement.

Course description

In this course we discuss ethically significant issues of our societies from a philosophical perspective. We begin with a discussion of how applied ethics works, the role of arguments in ethics, and the relation of ethics to religion and to law. Throughout the remainder of the course key ethical principles and theories are introduced and applied to contemporary issues such as euthanasia, abortion, poverty, uranium mining and sexual relations. Students from all faculties are welcome.

Course objectives

- To learn about ethical theories and their application to the complexities of issues of our contemporary world.
- To carefully examine the philosophical arguments that arise surrounding the controversial issues discussed in the course.
- To sharpen our ability for critical analysis of assumptions and arguments, and how to assess their strength and weaknesses, supported by consideration of realistic cases.

Texts

All texts will be found on *the Brightspace website*. To access the website, of the views of others
reflective about his or her own beliefs, and to constructively
work

- Do readings *ahead of class periods*, read

will be given if most of the assignments are handed in and most lectures have been attended and class participation was constructive; a grade in the C range will be given if less than 2/3 of assignments have been handed in and attendance has been less than 2/3 of the time; a grade in the D range will be given if half the

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of the missed exam. Documented evidence for having legitimately missed a test and an explanatory statement in

get connected as needed. More information about New Student Connect can be found at:

<https://www.uvic.ca/services/studentlife/initiatives/new-student-connect/index.php>

Student Mental Health Supports / UVic Support Connect

Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health during their years as undergraduate students. This may especially be the case during the present Covid-19 times. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, however, if at any point you believe that you could benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact the new UVic Student Wellness Centre / UVic Support Connect. In addition to providing face to face help, they offer a 24 x 7 phone & online mental health counselling and support program, no matter where you are located, at any time. This is an excellent resource at your disposal on campus. They genuinely want to help, so do consider taking advantage of this free resource.

Week 1

6-12 Sept

Introduction and situating ethics

Optional recommended: Silberbauer, George, "Ethics in small-scale societies"

Wednesday 8 Sept: first day of classes

****Assignments are due from Tuesday 14 of September onwards****

Week 2

13-19 Sept 3Tw 1.3.7830(t)2 Td

Ethics: preventing suffering

Week 10
8-14 Nov

Fairness and environmental justice

Brook, Andrew, "Ethics of Wastes: The Case of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle"
Collins-Chobanian, Shari, "Environmental Racism, American Indians, and
Monitored Retrievable Storage Sites for Radioactive Waste"
Film: Lewis, Avi and Klein, Naomi, *This Changes Everything*

Week 11
15-21 Nov

Ethics and caring for the earth
