

PHIL 338 A01
CRN#12550

September – December 2021
TWF: 1:30pm – 2:20pm

Metaethics

Instructor: Scott Woodcock
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Office Hours: Wednesday 10-11am group hours + individual meetings by appointment

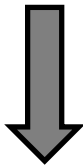
Course Description:

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 this course will be for students to become familiar with positions in the current literature that try to make sense of these difficult questions.

Course Website: Online course materials will be available via Uvic .

Texts: . by Russ Shafer-Landau and Terence Cuneo
, by Andrew Fisher [available as e-text via Uvic]

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. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
73 – 76	B	5	
70 – 72	B-	4	
65 – 69	C+	3	

A Note on Diversity:

<u>Week 7</u>	Error Theory
Oct. 19	J.L. Mackie, “The Subjectivity of Values”, pp. 13-22
	Error Theory, pp. 39-53
Oct. 22	Richard Joyce, “The Myth of Morality”, pp. 23-34
<u>Week 8</u>	The Harman/Sturgeon Debate
Oct. 26	
Oct. 29	

Week 13

Nov. 30