

PHIL 337 A01
CRN# 22297

January – April 2021
TWF: 1:30pm – 2:20pm

Ethics: Theory and Practice

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10am – 11am

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to normative ethical theory and the respective strengths of competing ethical theories when they are put into practice. We will look at the four most prominent traditions in contemporary analytic philosophy: Utilitarianism, Social Contract Theory, Kantian Ethics and Virtue Ethics. In each case, we will study a major historical source of the tradition (i.e. J.S. Mill, Hobbes, Kant and Aristotle). We will then examine current articulations of the tradition as it is represented in the contemporary literature. By comparing the traditions and their practical applications to modern ethical issues, students should be able to develop a detailed understanding of how each of these traditions applies to difficult cases in practical ethics.

Course Website: Online course materials will be available via Uvic

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

A Note on Diversity:

You might notice that our historical readings are 100% “dead white men”, and you might wonder, “Why we don’t read more women and non-European philosophers?” It’s a fair question, and here are some initial answers:

1. This course introduces students to a thread of ethical theory that is grounded in work from Ancient Greece and European enlightenment thinking, but it should not be taken to be the *only*

Jan. 19

Mar. 9	Todd Calder: <i>Kant and Degrees of Wrongness</i>
Mar. 10	Colin Hickey: <i>Biomedical Enhancement and the Kantian Duty to Cultivate Our Talents</i>
Mar. 12	Lucy Allais: <i>Kant’s Racism</i>
Mar. 16 	Philippa Foot: <i>The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect</i> *** Last Day to Start Writing Q&C Assignments for Full Marks ***
Mar. 17	Judith Jarvis Thomson: <i>The Trolley Problem</i>
Mar. 19	Christa M. Johnson: <i>How Deontologists Can Be Moderate (and Why...)</i>
Mar. 23	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> [Book I; pp. 1 – 18]
Mar. 24	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> [Book II; pp. 18 – 30]
Mar. 26	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> [Book III; pp. 40 – 45]
Mar. 30	Rosalind Hursthouse: <i>Virtue Theory and Abortion</i> , pp. 223 – 233
Mar. 31 	Rosalind Hursthouse: <i>Virtue Theory and Abortion</i> , pp. 233 – 246 *** Term Paper Writing Assignment Due ***
April 2	Good Friday – No Class
April 6	Julia Driver: <i>Virtue Theory</i>
April 7 	Charles E. Harris Jr.: <i>The Good Engineer: Giving Virtue its Due in Engineering Ethics</i> *** Last Day to Submit Q&C Assignments ***
April 9	Review + “One Theory to Rule Them All” Class Debate

***** Note: There will be an Online Exam in April *****

COVID-19 Online Teaching Information

This will continue to be a strange and challenging year at the University of Victoria, and like most other courses this winter at Uvic, the course will be taught online. Here are some details related to how this will work:

Lecture Format

The lectures will occur in the regular time slot for the course (TWF: 1:30pm – 2:20pm) via Zoom. However, to promote accessibility for students facing challenges like variable wifi availability, living in other time zones, losing access to daytime childcare, etc., I will record the lectures and make them available via *Brightspace*. Students should therefore be aware that their **participation in lecture discussions will be recorded**.

If you can attend the lectures live via Zoom, then I strongly recommend it so you can ask questions as we discuss the material. It will take time to adjust to the online format, but my aim is to facilitate as much collaborative discussion as there would be in an ordinary lecture. We will work out the relevant Zoom conventions for making this happen during the first week of class. However, if at any point you find that you face challenges to fully participating in the course please let me know so that we can try to work out a solution.

Online Testing

The midterm test will be run online during regular class time (1:30pm-2:20pm). If you are unable to write the midterm at that time, please contact me in advance to make other arrangements. The end of term exam will be online at a time TBA after classes are over.

Technical Support

Most technical difficulties are best answered by the Uvic [Computer Help Desk](#), but if you find yourself facing persistent technical difficulties, please get in contact with me so I can help in whatever way I can.

Intellectual Property of Course Materials

Note that all of the assignments, lectures and other materials posted to *Brightspace* are the intellectual property of myself and the Un