

PHIL 232 A01
CRN#12673

September – December 2023
TWF: 12:30am – 1:20pm

Moral Problems of Contemporary Society

Instructor: Scott Woodcock [he/they]
Office: CLE B316
Phone: 472-4462
Email: woodcock@uvic.ca
Office Hours: Tues 1:30-2:30pm open hours + individual zoom meetings by appointment

Provisional Draft: This outline gives students a sense of what the course involves, but it is not the final, official outline.

Course Description:

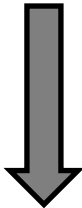
The aim of this course is to introduce students to a variety of controversial moral issues in contemporary society. In particular, students will be encouraged to carefully examine the *philosophical arguments* that arise in debates surrounding these controversial issues. The moral problems we will address 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 moral status of non-human animals, our obligations to protect the environment, the moral status of abortion, ethical questions related to pornography, the duty to help alleviate global poverty, and the moral status of capital punishment. ~~Course Participation will be strongly encouraged.~~ thoughtful discussion of the philosophical arguments proposed in application to current events.

Course Website: Online materials will available via Uvic *Brightspace*.

Texts: All readings available online via Uvic *Brightspace*.

Suggested text for reference: *Moral Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction*
Daniel R. Denicola, Broadview Press 2018

Requirements: First Paper (10%)
Mid-term Test (20%)
Second Paper (20%)
Final Exam (40%)
Activist Letters (5%)
Quote & Comment or News & Comment Assignments (5%)



Note: Writing assignment due dates and midterm test dates are posted below in the weekly schedule. *You are responsible for knowing these dates.* Plan ahead, and manage your overall personal workload accordingly.

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 C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements f.5 (4w 36 62.88 27.6 r

A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an **adequate** comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements f.5 (4w 36 62.88 27.6 r

Policy on Late Assignments: 5% per working day will be subtracted from grade unless students are delayed by illness or family emergency.

Plagiarism: Review the [University Policy on Academic Integrity](#) *very carefully*. Note that anti-plagiarism software may be used in this course, and students may be asked for oral explanations of their submitted written work. Resources will be provided via *Brightspace* for students seeking guidance about what constitutes plagiarism and how they can avoid it, but *it is the responsibility of the student*

<p><u>Week 5</u></p> <p>Oct. 3</p> <p>Oct. 4</p> <p>Oct. 6</p>	<p>Environmental Ethics</p> <p>Joseph DesJardins: <i>Biocentric Ethics and the Inherent Value of Life</i></p> <p>Ben Bradley: <i>The Value of Endangered Species</i></p> <p>Suggested = Steph Yin: <i>We Might Soon Resurrect Extinct Species. Is It Worth the Cost?</i></p> <p>Robert Elliot: <i>Faking Nature</i></p> <p>Suggested = Marc Ereshefsky: <i>Where the Wild Things Are: Environmental Preservation and Human Nature</i></p> <p>*** First Paper Due ***</p>
<p><u>Week 6</u></p> <p>Oct. 10</p> <p>Oct. 11</p> <p>Oct. 13</p>	<p>Collective Action Problems</p> <p>Garrett Hardin: <i>The Tragedy of the Commons</i></p> <p>Suggested = Simo Kyllonen: <i>Climate Change, No-Harm Principle, and Moral Responsibility of Individual Emitters</i></p> <p>Review</p> <p>*** Midterm Test ***</p>
<p><u>Week 7</u></p> <p>Oct. 17</p> <p> </p> <p>Oct. 20</p>	<p>The Moral Status of Abortion – Part One</p> <p>Mary Anne Warren: <i>On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion</i></p> <p>Suggested = Cixin Liu: <i>The Village Teacher</i></p> <p>Don Marquis: <i>Why Abortion is Immoral</i></p> <p>Suggested = Amy Berg: <i>Abortion and Miscarriage</i></p>
<p><u>Week 8</u></p> <p>Oct. 24</p> <p> </p> <p>Oct. 27</p>	<p>The Moral Status of Abortion – Part Two</p> <p>Judith Jarvis Thomson: <i>A Defense of Abortion</i></p> <p>Suggested = An-226-29 (i)29 (t)-3r- w-9 (boB)3(m)9.1(e)4 (. 2)()/TT0.T2 1 Tf0 Tc 0.0eek4 (M</p>

<p><u>Week 9</u></p> <p>Oct. 31</p> <p>Nov. 1</p> <p>Nov. 3</p>	<p>The Moral Status of Pornography</p> <p>Judith M. Hill: <i>Pornography and Degradation</i></p> <p>Suggested = Mary Kate McGowan: <i>On Multiple Types of Silencing</i></p> <p>A.W. Eaton: <i>Feminist Pornography</i></p> <p>Suggested = John Danaher: <i>Building Better Sex Robots: Lessons from Feminist Pornography</i></p> <p>Ellen Willis: <i>Feminism, Moralism, and Pornography</i></p> <p>Suggested = Jennifer Moorman, “<i>The Hardest of Hardcore</i>”: <i>Locating Feminist Possibilities in Women’s Extreme Pornography</i></p>
<p><u>Week 10</u></p> <p>Nov. 7</p> <p>Nov. 8</p> <p>Nov. 10</p>	<p>Obligations to Relieve Global Poverty</p> <p>Peter Singer: <i>Famine, Affluence, and Morality</i></p> <p>+</p> <p>Peter Singer: <i>What Should a Billionaire Give—and What Should You?</i></p> <p>Robert Noggle: <i>Give Till It Hurts? Beneficence, Imperfect Duties, and a Moderate Response to the Aid Question</i></p> <p>Suggested = Elizabeth Ashford: <i>Obligations of Justice and Beneficence...</i></p> <p>Judith Lichtenberg: <i>Negative Duties, Positive Duties, and the New Harms</i></p> <p>Suggested = Thomas Pogge: “<i>Assisting</i>” <i>the Global Poor</i></p>
<p><u>Week 11</u></p> <p>Nov14-15</p> <p>Nov. 17</p>	<p>Structural Injustice and Unjust Enrichment</p> <p>Reading Break</p> <p>Todd Calder: <i>Shared Responsibility, Global Structural Injustice, and Restitution</i></p> <p>Suggested = Andrea Sangiovanni: <i>Structural Injustice and Individual Responsibility</i></p>
<p><u>Week 12</u></p> <p>Nov. 21</p> <p>Nov. 22</p>	<p>The Wrong(s) of Colonialism</p> <p>Anna Stilz: <i>Occupancy Rights and the Wrong of Removal</i> [Parts I and III]</p> <p>Suggested = Margaret Moore: <i>The Taking of Territory and the Wrongs...</i></p> <p>Lea Ypi: <i>What’s Wrong with Colonialism</i> [Parts I-III, VII-VIII, & X, XI]</p>

The subject matter can sometimes cover extremely sensitive topics with which students may have firsthand experience. I will try to mitigate how difficult this can be as best I can, but students should be aware that these difficult topics will be explored.

In general, our aim will be to promote an inclusive environment in which students work together to examine controversial topics in a detailed but cooperative manner.

Frequently Asked Questions

Please read these over so you can anticipate common issues before it is too late. If you have any further questions about the answers provided here please don't hesitate to ask.

Q: Do I really need to read the material before class? It's hard to understand.

A: Yes, *make the effort*. We can sort things out in class, but reading the material on your own first will prepare you for class and help you to understand the content at stake.

Q: Do I need to complete each of the course requirements to pass the course?

A: No, in this particular course (unlike some other courses at Uvic), I do not require each

Q: