

Phil 232 Moral Problems of Contemporary Society
Spring 2023

Instructor: Peter Dietsch, PhD
Lectures: TWF 1:30-2:20
Office hours: tbd
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Course description

We will discuss ethical issues facing contemporary societies. Specifically the course will touch on ethical questions regarding education, health, race relations, climate change, borders, natural resources, assisted dying, human enhancement, corporations, tax justice, money and private debt markets. Students from all faculties are welcome.

Course Website

Online materials will be made available via Uvic Brightspace. Access your customized Brightspace page by signing in to Uvic and clicking on Online Tools. You should see Brightspace as an option.

Texts

Core readings will be available as a course pack for sale at the UVic Bookstore.

Grading System

Interpretation of these grade definitions is up to the discretion of the instructor. If you

For additional information regarding undergraduate grades, please consult the [Grading](#) section of the Uvic Undergraduate Calendar.

All evaluations of tests and assignments will be calculated according to percentage scores. Letter grades and grade point scores are listed purely for reference.

Final examinations are the property of Uvic and are not returned. They are available for

Week 7 (Feb 28 - Mar 3): Assisted Dying

Compulsory reading

- Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Physician-Assisted Suicide: Two Moral Arguments", *Ethics* 109/3 (1999), 497-518.

Complementary literature

- Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* 3rd edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 7.
- James Rachels, "Killing and Letting Die", *Encyclopedia of Ethics* 2nd edition, Lawrence Becker and Charlotte Becker (eds.), New York: Routledge, 2001, vol.2, pp.947-50.
- Dan W. Brock, "Medical Decisions at the end of life", in: Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer (eds.), *A Companion to Bioethics*, Blackwell, 1998.

Week 8 (Mar 7-10): Human enhancement

Compulsory reading

- Michael J. Sandel, *The case against perfection*, Cambridge, MA, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007, chapter 1.

Complementary literature

- Paul Robinson, "Prenatal Screening, sex selection and cloning", in: Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer (eds.), *A Companion to Bioethics*, Blackwell, 1998.
- Dan W. Brock, "Cloning Human Beings: An Assessment of the Ethical Issues Pro and Con", in: Martha C. Nussbaum and Cass R. Sunstein, *Clones and Clones: Facts and Fantasies about Human Cloning*, New York, W.W. Norton, 1998.

Week 9-11 (i)-2 (t)-12 (y)20 (P)-4 (r)3 (e)4 (s)-1 (s)-1 (, 2007, c)4 (h)-10 (a)4 (p")4 (1(l)-2 (one)4 (s)-
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- Adam Kern, “Illusions of Justice in International Taxation”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 48/2 (2020): 151-84.

Week 11 (Mar 28-31): Normative dimensions of money

Compulsory reading

- Robert Hockett and Aaron James, *Money from Nothing. Or, why we should learn to stop worrying about debt and love the Federal Reserve*. Brooklyn/London: Melville House, 2020, chapters 2 and 3.

Complementary literature

- Peter Dietsch, “Money creation, debt, and justice”, *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 20/2 (2021): 151-79.
- Pavlina Tcherneva, “Money, power, and distribution: Implications for Different Monetary Regimes”, *Journal of Self-Governance and Management Economics* 5/3 (2017): 727.

Week 12 (Apr 5-6): Private debt markets

Compulsory reading

- Lisa Herzog, “What Could Be Wrong with a Mortgage? Private Debt Markets from a Perspective of Structural Injustice”, *Journal of Political Philosophy* 25/4 (2016): 411-34.

Complementary literature

- Alex Gourevitch, “Debt, Freedom, and Inequality”, *Philosophical Topics* 40/1 (2012): 135-51.
- Marco Meyer, “The right to credit”, *Journal of Political Philosophy* 26/3 (2018): 304-26.
- Boudewijn