

PHIL 232 A01
CRN#22531

January – April 2024
TWF: 11:30am–12:20pm

Moral Problems of Contemporary Society

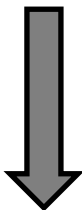
Instructor: Scott Woodcock [he/they]
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Email: woodcock@uvic.ca
Office Hours: Tues 10:30-11:30am open hrs + individual zoom meetings by appointment

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 learn how to articulate their opinions in the most persuasive way possible. The issues we will address in the course include the following: the ethics of genetic engineering, the basis for our obligation to protect the environment, the moral status of abortion, the duty to help alleviate global poverty, the ethics of prostitution, the distinctive wrong of colonization, and the possible decriminalization of addictive recreational drugs. Class participation will be strongly encouraged in order to generate thoughtful discussion of the philosophical arguments proposed in the readings and their application to current events.

Course Website: On OWIW Required Assignments


- First Paper (10%)
- Mid-term Test (20%)
- Second Paper (20%)
- Final Exam (40%)
- Assignments (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.

Policy on Late Assignments: 5% per working day will be subtracted from grade unless students encounter [unexpected/unavoidable circumstances](#).

Plagiarism: R

Feb. 2	Suggested = Dan Baum: <i>Legalize it All</i> Peter De Marneffe: <i>Against the Legalization of Heroin</i> Suggested = Brian D. Earp: <i>Racial Justice Requires Ending the War on Drugs</i>
<u>Week 5</u>	Environmental Ethics
Feb. 6	Joseph DesJardins: <i>Biocentric Ethics and the Inherent Value of Life</i>
Feb. 7	Ben Bradley: <i>The Value of Endangered Species</i> Suggested = Steph Yin: <i>We Might Soon Resurrect Extinct Species. Is It Worth the Cost?</i>
Feb. 9 	Robert Elliot: <i>Faking Nature</i> Suggested = Marc Ereshefsky: <i>Where the Wild Things Are: Environmental Preservation and Human Nature</i> *** First Paper Due ***
<u>Week 6</u>	Midterm + Implicit Bias
Feb. 13	Review
Feb. 14	*** Midterm Test ***
Feb. 16	Garrett Hardin: <i>The Tragedy of the Commons</i> Suggested = Simo Kyllonen: <i>Climate Change, No-Harm Principle, and Moral Responsibility of Individual Emitters</i>
Feb 19-23	Reading Break – No Class
<u>Week 7</u>	The Moral Status of Abortion – Part One
Feb. 27	Mary Anne Warren: <i>On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion</i> Suggested = Cixin Liu: <i>The Village Teacher</i>
Mar. 1	Don Marquis: <i>Why Abortion is Immoral</i> Suggested = Amy Berg: <i>Abortion and Miscarriage</i>
<u>Week 8</u>	The Moral Status of Abortion – Part Two
Mar. 5	Judith Jarvis Thomson: <i>A Defense of Abortion</i>

April 3	Glen Sean Coulthard: <i>Seeing Red</i> (ch. 4 from <i>Red Skin, White Masks</i>) Suggested = Eve Tuck & K. Wayne Yang: <i>Decolonization is not a Metaphor</i> *** Last Day to Submit Q&C Assignments *** *** Last Day to Submit Activist Letters ***
April 5	Review

Warning: there will be a **Registrar Scheduled Exam in April**. I do not control the date of this exam, and I do not have the power to change it once scheduled. Therefore, *do not book travel during the exam schedule* until you know this date.

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.

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Q:

Q: When is the last day to start handing in Q&C's if I want to get full marks?

A: This term it would be March 12. Read the Q&C instructions so you understand why.

Q: Are you willing to look over drafts of our assignments?

A: In principle, yes, but in a large class it is not always feasible. It is preferable to send me a provisional outline of your argument so that I can make suggestions.

Q: What is the last day to hand in Q&C's if I want to get full marks?