



Summer 7-20-2020

Philosophy 21: Moral Problems - OER Course Syllabus

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PHIL 21 Moral Problems

Summer 2020

Contact & Course Information

Lou Matz, Professor of Philosophy

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Office Hours: 1 hour per week determined by students and by appointment

Course Time: Online with two weekly synchronous Zoom sessions TBD

Course Description

One of the goals of philosophy is to apply ethical theories and concepts to difficult and significant moral problems about which people can rationally disagree. Through primary philosophical writings, legal decisions, film and online class discussion, students will come to understand the nature and complexities of the following moral problems: the moral standing of non-human beings, abortion, doctor-assisted suicide, the limit of free speech, vigilante justice, illegal immigration, affirmative action in higher education, and sexual morality. This course satisfies GE 11-B. The course Learning Objectives, which will be defined by specific Outcomes or indicators in the assignments, are the following:

Outcome 1: An understanding of the issues, concepts, and arguments of the course

Outcome 2: A critical evaluation of the issues, concepts and arguments of the course

Outcome 3: Expression of one's ideas in writing in a clear, organized, and a cogent manner

Outcome 4: Application of ideas to one's life

Through engagement with the course material and one another, I hope that the course also helps you develop certain habits of the mind, such as carefully thinking through issues, being open-minded, being responsive to logical thinking and evidence, and being willing to live with unresolved questions.

On-line Format

The course activity will take place on the Canvas Learning Management System. There are instructions on the course Home page about the location of the syllabus, course content (readings, films, supplemental material, power-point slides), and the course assignments. Depending on student availability, we will have two synchronous sessions per week via Zoom, which will be recorded for students who are unable to attend. Students should use a computer, and not a cell phone, to access Canvas and post assignments. If you need help using Canvas, click on the "Help" icon in Canvas to talk with a Canvas support person or to 'chat' with one. If you need help with any computer issues, contact Pacific's technical help desk from 7:30 – 6:30 on Monday – Friday at 209-946-7400 or via email at helpdesk@pacific.edu.

Assignments

Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade / Points	Outcomes Tested
Reading Responses	30% / 300	1, 2, 3
Discussion Posts	30% / 300	1, 2, 3

Essay	30% / 300	1, 2, 3, 4
Course Reflection	10% / 100	1, 3, 4

Final Course Grade

A =1000-930; A- =929-900; B+ =899-880; B =879-830; B- =829-800; C+ =799-780; C =779-730; C- =729-700; D+ =699-680; D =679-630, F =629 or below

University, General Education, and Philosophy Program Outcomes

University: Critical Thinking, Written Communication

General Education: Critical Thinking, Written Communication, Ethical reasoning

Philosophy:

- comprehend complex philosophical texts (content and structure)
- write clear, succinct, well-organized essays, that demonstrate understanding of the topic and critically evaluate the claims and arguments for them
- express complex ideas and arguments clearly, succinctly and respectfully in both discussion and presentations
- recognize, create and/or respond to reasoned objections to an argument using relevant and convincing evidence and arguments.

Required Readings

The course readings are located on the Canvas Site.

Attendance Policy

Students who are able to attend the synchronous sessions are strongly encouraged to do so. Synchronous sessions will be recorded for those who cannot make them.

Late Work Policy

Reading Responses and Discussion Posts cannot be turned in late. If you have a legitimate reason that prevents you from turning in these assignments, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for the submission of your work. If your final paper is turned in late, it will be penalized two-thirds of a grade per calendar day (e.g., a 'B' becomes a 'C+').

Learning Tips

- Take notes on the key ideas and arguments in the readings and bring questions to the class sessions
- Quiz yourself on the key concepts and arguments in the readings
- Reorganize the course material into your own study guide.

Teacher Expectations

- Create an inviting, respectful environment for online class discussion.
- Be prepared to help you understand the readings and ideas in the course
- Have my ideas challenged, learn from students, and admit when I don't know something

Course Schedule

Date	Theme	Reading	Assignment Due
7/20	Course Introduction & Moral Reasoning	Course syllabus & C.S. Peirce 'The Fixation of Belief'	
7/21	Moral Reasoning	Pinker, The Moral Instinct and Interview with Pinker on Morality as the 'Sixth Sense'	RR 1
7/22	Moral Sophistry	Film: Thank You For Smoking	DP 1
7/23	Moral Standing of Animals: Eating Animals and Experimentation	Peter Singer 'All Animals Are Equal' and Mass meat production video clip	RR 2
7/24	Moral Standing of Animals: Eating Animals	Michael Pollan 'An Animals Place'	DP 2
7/27	Moral Standing of Animals: Animal Experimentation	Carl Cohen 'The Case For Use of Animals in Biomedical Research' Law & Order Video: <i>Whose Monkey Is It Anyway?</i>	RR 3
7/28	Moral Standing of Animals: Legal Rights for Chimpanzees	Film: Unlocking the Cage	DP 3
7/29	Abortion	Film: When Abortion Was Illegal: Untold Stories and Caitlin Flanagan 'The Dishonesty of the Abortion Debate' and Roe v. Wade	DP 4
7/30	Abortion	Don Marquis, 'An Argument that Abortion is Wrong'	RR 4
7/31	Abortion	Judith Jarvis Thomson 'In Defense of Abortion' and Mary Anne Warren 'On the Legal and Moral Status of Abortion'	RR 5
8/3	NO CLASS		
8/4	Doctor-Assisted Suicide	Film: Jack Kevorkian and the Right To Die and Dan Brock 'Voluntary Active Euthanasia'	RR 6
8/5	Doctor-Assisted Suicide	Film: How To Die in Oregon	DP 5
8/6	Doctor-Assisted Suicide	2018 Death With Dignity Act Annual Report Dying by Fasting	DP 6
8/7	Free Speech	J.S. Mill On Liberty	RR 7
8/10	Free Speech	Texas v Johnson & Snyder v Phelps	RR 8
8/11	Free Speech on campus	Charles Lawrence 'If He Hollers Let Him Go!'	DP 7
8/12	Illegal Immigration	How the US Immigration System Works & Matthias Risse 'On the Morality of Immigration'	DP 8
8/13	Illegal Immigration	Pevnik, Cafaro and Risse 'An Exchange: the Morality of Immigration'	RR 9
8/14	Illegal Immigration	Film: Separated: Children at the Border	DP 9
8/17	Affirmative Action in Higher Ed	Ronald Dworkin, 'A Defense of Affirmative Action' & Grutter v. Bollinger	RR 10
8/18	Affirmative Action in Higher Ed	Film: Admissions on Trial	DP 10
8/19	Sexual Morality	Alan Goldman 'Why Sexual Morality Does Not Exist'	DP 11
8/20	Sexual Consent	Janet Halley 'The Move to Affirmative Consent'	RR 11
8/21	Course Conclusion	Complete course evaluation	Personal Reflection
8/23	ESSAY DUE by 12:00 PM		Final Paper

Description of Assignments

Reading Responses

There will be at least two Reading Responses (RR) due each week. **Your responses are due at 11:00 AM** and must be submitted **in a word document** through the Assignments tab of Canvas. Reading responses will typically be no more than one single-spaced typed page. The purposes of these responses are to motivate you to read more carefully, to focus your attention on some of the essential ideas of the reading, and to practice writing. ***Reading responses cannot be made up.*** Reading response tips:

- Use your own words in answering the questions and use quotations sparingly. This demonstrates that you have a command of the ideas. If you stick too closely to the authors' own words in answering a question, I cannot easily tell what you understand.
- Be concise in answering the questions. Inclusion of unnecessary ideas or points usually indicates a lack of focused understanding
- When you are asked to "explain" something, don't simply state the view or criticism but explain what it means or the reason(s) for it.

Discussion Posts

In lieu of in-person class discussion, there will be at least two Discussion Posts each week in response to the reading and/or my notes for that day. **Your discussion posts are due at 11:00 AM.** The purpose of these posts is for you to demonstrate your understanding and application of concepts and arguments in the readings and to learn from the postings of your peers. Your postings must be *at least* a full paragraph, roughly 120 words. I will post a prompt or question for the discussion posts.

Essay

The essay will be a thesis-based, analytical essay on your choice of one topic in the course. I will post the topics and a handout that explains the essay expectations along. Expected minimum length is 4 pages.

Honor Code

The Honor Code at the University of the Pacific calls upon each student to exhibit a high degree of maturity, responsibility, and personal integrity. Students are expected to:

- act honestly in all matters
- actively encourage academic integrity
- discourage any form of cheating or dishonesty by others
- inform the instructor and appropriate university administrator if she or he has a reasonable and good faith belief and substantial evidence that a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy has occurred.

Violations will be referred to and investigated by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. If a student is found responsible, it will be documented as part of her or his permanent academic record. A student may receive a range of penalties, including failure of an assignment, failure of the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University. The Academic Honesty Policy is located in Tiger Lore and online at <http://www.pacific.edu/Campus-Life/Safety-and-Conduct/Student-Conduct/Tiger-Lore-Student-Handbook-.html>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations, please contact the Director of the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) for information on how to obtain an Accommodations Request Letter.

3-Step Accommodation Process

1. Student meets with the SSD Director and provides documentation and completes registration forms.
2. Student requests accommodation(s) each semester by completing the Request for Accommodations Form.
3. Student arranges to meet with his/her professors to discuss the accommodation(s) and to sign the Accommodation Request Letter

To ensure timeliness of services, it is preferable that you obtain the accommodation letter(s) from the Office of SSD (insert timeframe. Depending on course and session, expectation might be 1-2 weeks or 1-2 days). After the instructor receives the accommodation letter, please schedule a meeting with the instructor during office hours or some other mutually convenient time to arrange the accommodation(s). The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in the McCaffrey Center, Rm. 137. Phone: 209-946-3221. Email: ssd@pacific.edu. Online: www.pacific.edu/disabilities

Copies of student work may be retained to assess how the learning objectives of the course are being met