



**COURSE OUTLINE**

**PHIL 120**

**INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS**

**HOURS: 45**

**CREDITS: 3**

PREPARED BY: Matthew Cameron

DATE: August, 2016

APPROVED BY: Andrew Richardson

DATE:

APPROVED BY ACADEMIC COUNCIL: (date)

RENEWED BY ACADEMIC COUNCIL: (date)



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

## INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

---

**INSTRUCTOR:** Matthew Cameron

**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment

**OFFICE LOCATION:** N/A

**CLASSROOM:** A2601

**E-MAIL:** [mcameron@yukoncollege.yk.ca](mailto:mcameron@yukoncollege.yk.ca)

**TIME:** 4:00 - 5:30pm

**TELEPHONE:** (867)-668-8770 (Admin Ast.)

**DATES:** Tues./Thurs. (Sept. 8-Dec. 20)

---

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to essential topics and questions in moral philosophy: How ought we to live our lives? How are right and wrong determined? Are ethical judgments objective or subjective? Are values universal and absolute or culturally relative? What responsibilities do human beings have to one another, to other species, or to the planet? Students will analyze, interpret and evaluate ideas from major schools of ethical thought—including virtue ethics, deontological ethics, and consequentialism—and practice applying theories about ethics to contemporary moral dilemmas.

### PREREQUISITES

None.

### EQUIVALENCY OR TRANSFERABILITY

AI GD 330 (3)

AU PHIL 2xx (3)

CAMO PHIL 100 lev (3)

KPU PHIL 1110 (3)

OC PHIL 1xx (3)

SFU PHIL 120 (3) - B- Hum

TRU-OL PHIL 1021 (3)

TWU PHIL 100 lev (3)

UBC PHIL 1<sup>st</sup> (3)

UCW PHIL 202 (3)

UFV PHIL 110 (3)

UNBC PHIL 1xx (3)

UVIC PHIL 100 lev (1.5)

VIU PHIL 112 (3)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- analyze, interpret, synthesize, and evaluate ideas associated with major schools of ethical thought and/or key figures in the history of moral philosophy
- explain key terms in the field of moral philosophy, among them egoist ethics, virtue ethics, deontological ethics, consequentialism, categorical imperative, rights theory, utilitarianism, and feminist care ethics
- apply specific ethical theories to contemporary moral problems
- understand the importance of ethical decision-making and action in everyday life and in a range of fields: e.g., politics, economics, research, etc.
- draft, organize, format, revise, and edit university-level essays

## COURSE FORMAT:

The course will involve a mixture of lectures and group discussion on pre-assigned material.

## ASSESSMENTS

### Attendance & Participation

Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to actively participate in group discussions.

### Assignments

Students will be assessed on the basis of short weekly written assignments (12 in total, due each Thursday), two essays (1500 words each), the final exam, as well as active participation in group discussions. The first essay is due on **Thursday, October 13, 2016**. The second essay is due on **Thursday, Nov. 17, 2016**.

**Note:** All of the essays and weekly assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Late essays will be penalized by **5% per day to a maximum of 7 days**, unless there is a legitimate excuse approved by the instructor in advance of the deadline.

### Tests

A three-hour final examination will occur between Dec. 7 and Dec. 20, 2016, as scheduled by the School of Liberal Arts.

### **Other**

The last day to withdraw from credit courses without academic penalty is **Thursday, Nov. 10.**

### **EVALUATION**

Weekly Assignments	15%
Two Essays	50% (25% each)
Participation	10%
Final Exam	25%
Total	100%

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS**

Schafer-Landau, Russ (Ed.). 2013. *Ethical Theory: An Anthology*, Second Edition. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Wiley-Blackwell.

Selected additional readings to be distributed or made available online.

### **ACADEMIC AND STUDENT CONDUCT**

Information on academic standing and student rights and responsibilities can be found in the current Academic Regulations that are posted on the Student Services/ Admissions & Registration web page.

### **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Plagiarism occurs when students present the words of someone else as their own. Plagiarism can be the deliberate use of a whole piece of another person's writing, but more frequently it occurs when students fail to acknowledge and document sources from which they have taken material. Whenever the words, research or ideas of others are directly quoted or paraphrased, they must be documented according to an accepted manuscript style (e.g., APA, CSE, MLA, etc.). Resubmitting a paper which has previously received credit is also considered plagiarism. Students who plagiarize material for assignments will receive a mark of zero (F) on the assignment and may fail the course. Plagiarism may also result in dismissal from a program of study or the College.

## **YUKON FIRST NATIONS CORE COMPETENCY**

Yukon College recognizes that a greater understanding and awareness of Yukon First Nations history, culture and journey towards self-determination will help to build positive relationships among all Yukon citizens. As a result, to graduate from ANY Yukon College program, you will be required to achieve core competency in knowledge of Yukon First Nations. For details, please see [www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/yfnccr](http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/yfnccr).

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students requiring an academic accommodation to fully participate in this class. These accommodations are available for students with a documented disability, chronic condition or any other grounds specified in section 8.0 of the Yukon College Academic Regulations (available on the Yukon College website). It is the student's responsibility to seek these accommodations. If a student requires an academic accommodation, he/she should contact the Learning Assistance Centre (LAC) at (867) 668-8785 or [lassist@yukoncollege.yk.ca](mailto:lassist@yukoncollege.yk.ca).

## **THE LORENE ROBERTSON WRITING CENTRE**

Students are encouraged to make use of the Writing Centre for writing support, especially for planning, writing and editing essays. The Writing Centre is located in the Ayamdigut Campus Library, Room C2211, and can also be accessed online. Writing coaching sessions are available in person and through distance technologies (e.g., email plus Skype or phone). For further information or to book an appointment, visit the Writing Centre's website ([http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/student\\_info/pages/educational\\_help\\_centres/lorene\\_robertson\\_writing\\_centre](http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/student_info/pages/educational_help_centres/lorene_robertson_writing_centre)) or email [writingcentre@yukoncollege.yk.ca](mailto:writingcentre@yukoncollege.yk.ca).

## TOPIC OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE

**Note:** The schedule is subject to revision. All readings are from the textbook unless otherwise indicated.

Week	Dates	Topics/Assignments	Readings
1	Sept 8	<b>Introduction and Course Overview</b>	None
2	Sept 13  Sept 15	<b>Meta-Ethics: Why be moral?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plato, “The Immoralist’s Challenge” (ch. 15)</li> <li>▪ Joel Feinberg, “Psychological Egoism” (ch. 19)</li> <li>▪ James Rachels, “Ethical Egoism” (ch. 21)</li> <li>▪ Susan Wolf, “Moral Saints” (ch. 22)</li> </ul>
3	Sept 20  Sept 22	<b>Ethical Theory: Consequentialism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jeremy Bentham, “An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation” (chs. 1 and 4; to be distributed)</li> <li>▪ John Stuart Mill, “Utilitarianism” (ch. 48)</li> <li>▪ J.J.C. Smart, “Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism” (ch. 49)</li> <li>▪ Brad Hooker, “Rule Consequentialism” (ch. 50)</li> </ul>
4	Sept 27  Sept 29	<b>Ethical Theory: Consequentialism (Continued)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peter Railton, “Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality” (ch. 51)</li> <li>▪ R.M. Hare, “What is Wrong With Slavery?” (ch. 52)</li> <li>▪ Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence and Morality” (ch. 53)</li> <li>▪ John Harris, “The Survival Lottery” (ch. 54)</li> </ul>
5	Oct 4	<b>Applied Ethics: Animal Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immanuel Kant, “We Have No Duties to Animals” (ch. 42)</li> <li>▪ Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal” (ch. 43)</li> </ul>

	Oct 6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Joel Feinberg, “The Rights of Animals and Unborn Generations” (ch. 44)</li> <li>▪ Film: The Ghosts in Our Machines</li> </ul>
6	Oct 11	<b>Ethical Theory: Deontological Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immanuel Kant, “Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals” (ch. 55)</li> <li>▪ Christine Korsgaard, “Kant’s Formula of Universal Law” (ch. 56)</li> </ul>
	Oct 13	<b>FIRST PAPER DUE: FRIDAY, OCT. 13</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Onora O’Neill, “Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems” (ch. 57)</li> <li>▪ Robert Nozick, “The Rationality of Side Constraints” (ch. 58)</li> </ul>
7	Oct 18	<b>Ethical Theory: Deontological Ethics (Continued)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alan Gerwith, “The Golden Rule Rationalized” (ch. 59)</li> </ul>
	Oct 20		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Philippa Foot, “The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect” (ch. 60)</li> <li>▪ Judith Jarvis Thomson, “Killing, Letting Die, and the Trolley Problem” (ch. 61))</li> </ul>
8	Oct 25	<b>Applied Ethics: Environmental Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Garth Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons” (to be distributed)</li> <li>▪ Lynn White Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis” (to be distributed)</li> </ul>
	Oct 27		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stephen M. Gardiner, “Ethics and Global Climate Change” (to be distributed)</li> <li>▪ The Ethical Implications of Global Climate Change (UNESCO Report; to be distributed)</li> </ul>
9	Nov 1	<b>Ethical Theory: Virtue Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aristotle, “The Nature of Virtue” (ch. 66)</li> </ul>
	Nov 3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Martha Nussbaum, “Non-relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach” (ch. 67)</li> </ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rosalind Hursthouse, “Normative Virtue Ethics” (ch. 68)</li> </ul>
10	Nov 8	<b>Ethical Theory: Virtue Ethics (Continued)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Michael Slote, “Agent-Based Virtue Ethics” (ch. 68)</li> <li>▪ Christine Swanton, “A Virtue Ethical Account of Right Action” (ch. 69)</li> </ul>
	Nov 10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Julia Annas, “Being Virtuous and Doing the Right Thing” (ch. 71)</li> </ul>
11	Nov 15	<b>Applied Ethics: Indigenous Rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (to be distributed)</li> <li>▪ United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (to be distributed)</li> </ul>
	Nov 17	<b>SECOND PAPER DUE: THURS. NOV. 17</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow (to be distributed)</li> </ul>
12	Nov 22	<b>Meta-Ethics: The Status of Morality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ David Hume, “Of the Influencing Motives of the Will” and “Moral Distinctions Not Derived from Reason” (ch. 1)</li> <li>▪ A.J. Ayer, “A Critique of Ethics” (ch. 2)</li> <li>▪ J.L. Mackie, “The Subjectivity of Values” (ch. 3)</li> </ul>
	Nov 24		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gilbert Harman, “Moral Relativism Defended” (ch. 5)</li> <li>▪ G.E. Moore, “The Subject-Matter of Ethics” (ch. 7)</li> <li>▪ Michael Smith, “Realism” (ch. 9)</li> </ul>
13	Nov 29	<b>Review</b>	NONE
	Dec 1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Film: This Changes Everything</li> </ul>
14	Dec 6	<b>Review (Continued)</b>	NONE