

PHIL 1104- Philosophy and Social Ethics

Instructor: Cody Turner
Tuesdays, 5-730 pm

Contact Information

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Office hours: by Skype, Webex, or Zoom appointment

Course Description

This course will provide an introduction to western, analytic philosophical thinking as it applies to issues in contemporary moral discourse. (“Western” and “analytic” refer to one of the styles or traditions of academic philosophy that is widely practiced today). Topics in metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics will be covered. The first unit of the course will focus on the foundations of morality and will introduce popular theories in normative ethics like consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics. The second unit will then examine important issues in applied ethics such as abortion, animal rights, and famine relief. Finally, the third unit will consider the relationship between ethics and technology; topics like AI ethics, enhancement ethics, and internet ethics will be covered. **All required readings for the class will be posted onto Huskyct.**

Grade Distribution

Note: Grades in the C+ to B- range represent performance that *meets expectations*; Grades in the B+ to A- range represent performance that is significantly *better than the expectations*; Grades in the A range represent work that is *excellent*. You may contact me for information about your current grade or your expected grade in the course.

Participation- 15%

Quizzes- 20%

Midterm- 30%

Final- 35%

Participation: Each week I will post a couple of discussion questions onto the discussion forum on Huskyct. These discussion questions will be based upon either the week’s required readings, or on content delivered in my video lecture/online handout. Each student is *required* to post a response to one of the discussion questions each week in order to meet the minimum requirement for participation. This response should answer, problematize, or analyze one of the discussion questions and should be a paragraph or two long (around 100-400 words). *The time frame for posting to the online discussion forum each week is Tuesday-Saturday at midnight.* Students are encouraged to answer more than one discussion question, but it is not required. Students are also encouraged to comment upon each other’s posts and use the discussion forum as a platform for lively interaction on the week’s topic. Students can boost their participation grade by commenting on each other’s posts, but this is not required. If you do comment upon another student’s post, the comment should be

respectful and professional. Harmful or abusive writing will not be tolerated. Another way to earn participation credit is to ask questions during the synchronous video meeting each week (see below).

- If you are unable to post on time and have a valid reason (unavoidable study disruptions, health issues), then send me an email as you would if you have to miss an in-person class and I will excuse you for that week. Let me know what's going on, I understand there are difficult times!

Quizzes: There will be two kinds of quizzes administered in this course. The first and most prevalent kind will be reading comprehension quizzes scattered throughout the semester. These quizzes will be multiple choice assessments held on Huskyct, and will be announced a week in advance. The quizzes will be available for a set amount of time on the day that we are set to have class (Tuesday). They will be *closed notebook* and will cover the required readings for the week. They will be administered using *Lockdown Browser*; all students are expected to download the lockdown browser software onto their computer. There will also be a few take home quizzes that students have a week to complete. These take home quizzes will be short writing assignments (around one page long) on the readings. There will never be a Huskyct quiz and a take home quiz administered during the same week and there will not be a quiz every week.

Midterm: The midterm will be a take home essay. Students will be provided a handful of questions based on the content of the first half of the class and will write an essay in response to one of these questions. The word length for the essay is 1,750-2,250 words (not including works cited). Students will have two weeks to complete the take home midterm.

Final: The final exam will be administered via Huskyct; it will feature a combination of multiple choice questions and short answer questions. The exam will be *cumulative, closed notebook* and will be administered using *Lockdown browser*. It will also be timed; once opened, students will have three hours to complete the exam. *The date of the final exam is determined by the Registrar.*

Online Nature of Course

Each week during class time we will meet as a class for a synchronous video call using either Zoom or Webex. I will send the link to the virtual space via email early in the day that we are set to meet (Tuesday). During this video call I will present a lecture on the material for the week. While every student is expected to be present for this synchronous meeting, I do plan to record each lecture and post the recording on Huskyct so students can access it for later reference. These recordings will not be posted anywhere else except our Huskyct page. I also plan to frequently post handouts on the course material. Students are encouraged to ask questions and participate during synchronous meetings. Each meeting will not last two and a half hours. It is understood that students have other obligations for the course (i.e. quizzes and contributing to the online discussion forum) that they undertake at their own leisure. These obligations are things that would in normal circumstances take place during class time.

Course Schedule

The schedule below is rough and tentative. Things are subject to change with reasonable notice.

Module 1: Meta Ethics and Normative Ethics

Sept. 1- Introduction to Course

Sept. 8- Meta Ethics

Sept. 15- Consequentialism
Sept. 22- Deontologism
Sept. 29- Virtue Ethics

Module 2: Ethics and Technology

Oct. 6- Ethics of Artificial Intelligence
Oct. 13- Enhancement Ethics: Augmented Reality, Genetic Engineering, and the Gamer's Dilemma (**Midterm exam distributed**)
Oct. 20- Internet Ethics: Social Media, Fake News, and Surveillance Capitalism
Oct. 27- Internet Ethics: Internet Censorship and the Dark Web (**Midterm exam due**)

Module 3: Applied Ethics

Nov. 3- Pandemic Ethics and Famine Relief
Nov. 10- Abortion
Nov. 17- Animal Ethics
Dec. 1- Moral Saints and Overpopulation

Academic Integrity Policy

The Policy: In addition to skills and knowledge, the University of Connecticut aims to teach students appropriate Ethical and Professional Standards of Conduct. The Academic Honesty Policy exists to inform students and Faculty of their obligations in upholding the highest standards of professional and ethical integrity. All student work is subject to the Academic Honesty Policy. Professional and Academic practice provides guidance about how to properly cite, reference, and attribute the intellectual property of others. Any attempt to deceive a faculty member or to help another student to do so will be considered a violation of this standard. It is your job to be sure that the instructor has no reason to suspect academic dishonesty. Any perceived dishonesty will be dealt with according to the guidelines of the UConn's Academic Integrity Policy.

Note: Plagiarism implies academic misconduct and is defined as "The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and presenting them as one's own". Importantly, plagiarism need not be intentional and can be the result of negligence.

Consequences: An instructor may impose a sanction on the student that varies depending upon the instructor's evaluation of the nature and gravity of the offense. Possible sanctions include but are not limited to, the following: (1) Require the student to redo the assignment; (2) Require the student to complete another assignment; (3) Assign a grade of zero to the assignment; (4) Assign a final grade of "F" for the course. A student may appeal these decisions according to UConn's Academic Integrity Policy.