

Intro to Ethics & Value Theory

PHIL 2700F | Section 550 | Fall of 2022 (in person)

Instructor: Dr. Jonathan P. Marsh

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Please allow 24 hours for replies

Office Hour: TBA

Class Times and Location(s): Tuesdays, 6:30 PM - 9:30 PM, in HC-H112

Description

We are going to be asking two questions:

Q1. What, if anything, do all morally “right” actions have in common?

Q2. What, if anything, do all “good” (happy, meaningful) lives have in common?

In response to the first question, we’ll compare answers from UTILITARIANISM, KANTIAN ETHICS and NATURAL LAW, in Unit 1, and apply them to a number of controversies—concerning, for instance, our obligations in connection with the poor, PVS patients and non-human animals.

In Unit 2, we shall survey some recent criticisms of these traditions.

Finally, moving on to the second question, in Unit 3, we’ll discuss rival accounts of well-being and related goods against the backdrop of the problems of suffering and death.

Prerequisite(s): None

Anti-requisite(s): [Governance, Leadership and Ethics 2002F/G](#).

3 hours. This course is cross listed as [GLE 2002F/G](#) when offered at Huron Campus only.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: CATEGORY B i

Subject Code: PHILOSOP

Methods

Teaching methods include lectures, dialogues, film analysis, crowdsourcing, work sessions and tutorials.

Technical Requirements



Internet connection

(for accessing assignment instructions and submitting assignments via OWL etc.)



Laptop or desktop



Working microphone

(for podcast recordings only — online classes are not currently anticipated, but do see the appendix note below entitled “pandemic contingency” .)




Working webcam

Text

There is no textbook. All readings will be made available via OWL's weekly checklist.

Aims / Outcomes

By the end of the semester, every committed student will

1. be acquainted with some of the leading ethical theories, their applications, and various controversies regarding well-being and death (**THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING**),
2.  have carefully reflected on their own value scale, including what they regard as having final worth, with the purpose of making more choiceworthy decisions (**SELF-KNOWLEDGE & PRACTICAL WISDOM**),
3. have presented and defended their own sustained argument on a topic in ethics and/or value theory in the midst of having carefully entertained criticisms and alternative perspectives (**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**),
4. have cultivated intellectual virtues pertaining to argumentation, dialogue, interpretation, research and clear writing (to help with outcomes 1-3) (**SKILLS**).

Evaluative Requirements

Assignments	Values	Due Dates	Corresponding Aims
• 1. Applied Ethics Podcast (in groups)	20%	Oct 6	1 - 4
• 2. Research Paper	30%	Oct 28 (option A) <i>or</i> Nov 28 (option B)	3 & 4
• 3. Exam	30%	December exam period (TBA)	1
• 4. Active & Informed Participation	20%	Weekly	1 & 4

Applied Ethics Podcasts (20%): This assignment (performed in small groups) is designed to encourage students to reflectively integrate course material. To ensure that all students are available, each podcast will be recorded immediately after one of our classes, which will end a bit early. Unlike some podcasts, which involve prolonged improvisation and open questions, with unspecified aims, these podcasts will need to be brief, efficient, to the point, and well-organized.

Advanced planning is, accordingly, strongly recommended. To encourage this, I will provide group numbers, basic job descriptions and instructions ahead of time.

Research Paper (30%): It is important for university students to conduct their own research and advance a sustained argument, in writing, with the goal of moving a discussion forward. This is the aim of your research paper. I will provide some broad topics, but each student must come up with their own project and thesis statement. Please note: there is **only one paper per student**.

Final Exam (30%): Anything we cover in class, at any point, is admissible and hence a proper object of study, unless I explicitly say otherwise in writing (via OWL). Although the final exam will take place during the December examination period of 2022, the specific date has not yet been determined. Please look for that info, online, when the official exam schedule is posted by the College. Also, **be sure not to make any irrevocable travel arrangements, or plans, until you know the exam date.** The exam will likely contain some sort of combination of shorter answers and longer answer(s), though these details should not impact your preparation methods. More details will be provided during our final session.

Active & Informed Participation (20%) Good philosophy requires conversation. As such, the success of our weekly sessions will be largely determined by the overall quality of the comments of the participants. Students are, accordingly, expected to take active measures to advance the discussion. Such measures include:

- (a) being attentive,
- (b) knowing and thoughtfully engaging the assigned readings,
- (c) applying the tools and virtues associated with critical thinking (e.g., careful argumentation, open-mindedness, reflective questioning, virtuous disagreement, and active listening),
- (d) following the College's student conduct requirements and any course-specific policies (see OWL), including our **attendance policy** as well as our strict **no recording policy** (which helps protect student privacy and confidentiality),
- (e) not using one's laptop/cellphone or talking while other students are presenting ideas,
- (f) being reliably present (this includes avoiding a post-midterm attendance nosedive),
- (g) following OWL's weekly checklist religiously (which may, on occasion, ask you to submit typed questions) to help you prepare for our sessions,
- (h) submitting all required participation comments, via OWL's forum, when prompted
 - These typically 1-3 sentence assignments will be briefly worked on in class and cannot be submitted late, from outside the classroom, or by a surrogate submitter (e.g., a group member/classmate). Nor will the questions be circulated ahead of time.

Grading Information and Explanation of Grades

Each assignment will be accompanied with clear instructions. Students will be evaluated in accordance with how well they follow them. What follows is a university wide-grade explanation:

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Late assignments: Neglecting assignments which may not be submitted late (e.g., in class-assignments and work completed after the last day of class, including your final exam), all late assignments will receive a late penalty of 5% per day, including weekends.

Missed assignments: Any accommodations for missed assignments, if approved, will automatically come in the form of a grade transfer to the final assignment (exam). If the College recommends an extension for an assignment, where this is possible, this will not qualify as a missed assignment. Any missed assignments that do not qualify for accommodations will receive a grade of zero (o).

Course Map

Week of September 13

- Groundwork: Why Study Ethics & Value Theory?

UNIT 1: CONVENTIONAL ETHICAL THEORIES AND THEIR APPLICATIONSWeek of September 20

- 1.1. Consequentialist Theories [Utilitarianism & Ethical Egoism]
- 1.1.1. Poverty Ethics

Week of September 27

- 1.1.2. Animals Ethics

Week of October 4

- 1.1.3. Population Ethics
- **Podcast recording on 10/4 (immediately after class). Podcasts due: 10/6**

Week of October 11

- 1.2. Anti-Consequentialist Theories [Natural Law & Kantian Ethics]
- 1.2.1. Medical Ethics Part 1: Issues at the Beginning of Life

Week of October 18

- 1.2.2. Medical Ethics Part 2: Issues at the End of Life

UNIT 2: RECENT CRITICISMS OF CONVENTIONAL ETHICAL THEORIESWeek of October 25

- 2.1. A Multiple-Principles Critique
 - 2.1.1. Sample Application: Climate Ethics
 - **Papers Due on October 28 (for students who select Option A only)**
- Reading week. October 31–November 6, 2022.

Week of November 8

- 2.1.2. Feminist & Cosmopolitan Critiques

UNIT 3. DEATH & THE GOOD LIFEWeek of November 15

- 3.1. What is the Best Way to Live?
- 3.1.1. Pleasure Theories
- 3.1.2. Desire Theories

Week of November 22

- 3.1.3. List Theories
- 3.1.4. Hybrid Theories

Weeks of November 29 & December 6

- **Papers Due on November 28 (for students who select Option B only)**
- 3.2. Is Death Bad for Us?
- 3.2.1. Yes—Death Deprives Us...
- 3.2.2. No—Death is Neither Good Nor Bad
- 3.3.3. No—Death is Good for Us...Eventually (Immortality & Boredom)
- Course conclusion

Note: The above course map is tentative, and may be adjusted through the term.



Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations Fall/Winter 2022

Pandemic Contingency

Huron will continue to follow the guidance of public health and government officials. It is anticipated that there will be no further disruptions to in-person instruction. This is subject to change.

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/academic_calendar). The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Turnitin.com

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, tablets, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence

- (a) **Consideration on Medical Grounds for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade: **Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising****

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the [Student Medical Certificate](#). The instructor may not collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

b) Medical Grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of final grade: Go Directly to Academic Advising

University Senate policy, which can be found at [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#) requires that all student requests for accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade be made directly to the academic advising office of the home faculty (for Huron students, the “home faculty” is Huron), with supporting documentation in the form (minimally) of the Senate-approved Student Medical Certificate found at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The documentation is submitted in confidence and will not be shown to instructors. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the Dean.

c) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email huronsss@uwo.ca.

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: [accommodation_medical.pdf \(uwo.ca\)](#). Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at huronsss@uwo.ca for any further questions or information.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron’s Student Support Services

at huronsss@uwo.ca. An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>

Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>

Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1>

Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academicssupport.uwo.ca/>

Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>

Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

Wellness and Health Supports at Huron and Western

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. All Huron staff and faculty have received training on responding to disclosures of Gender-Based Sexual Violence (GBSV); students should know that the Community Safety Office is a resource for survivors, providing support and, if desired, guidance while referring them to the further supports that they may require. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services: huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca

Community Safety Office: safety@huron.uwo.ca

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

Western Calendar - Policy Pages -

[Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)