

Intro to Ethics & Value Theory

PHIL 2700G | Sec 550 | Summer Evening Term 2 (online)
June 19-July 28, 2023 [6 weeks]

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Zoom Sessions: Tu and Th at 6:30 pm [see comment box at the bottom of this page]

Virtual Office Hours: Directly after our Zoom meetings.

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.

Technical Requirements

Stable internet connection



Laptop or desktop



(for attending Zoom meetings, and submitting assignments via OWL etc.)

Privacy



(To respect the privacy and confidentiality of all members of this class, no videos, pictures, or voice recordings, during any of our Zoom meetings, is permitted.)




This fully online course will contain a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous learning methods. All synchronous (i.e., live Zoom) sessions will take place at the Tuesday and Thursday start times above. Zoom meetings will never last a full 3 hours. As an alternative, students will be given material to prepare for those sessions, asynchronously, at their own discretion. A **weekly schedule** will be made available on OWL. **Note:** if you are working outside of Huron’s local time zone, and if joining our meetings would be unduly burdensome (e.g., would take place at 2:30 AM for you), please see the opt-out note below (p. 3).

Text

There is no textbook. All readings will be made available via OWL.

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	Dates	Corresponding Aims/Outcomes
• 1. Ethics Podcast (in groups)	20%	July 7	1 - 4
• 2. Paper	30%	July 23	3 & 4
• 3. Exam	30%	July 27	1 & 2
• 4. Participation	20%	Weekly	1 & 4

Ethics Podcast (20%): For this assignment, you will work, virtually, in small groups, including a moderator, that your instructor will assign. After the class population stabilizes, I'll distribute instructions and group numbers via OWL. You'll then get a chance to meet each other in class/make plans. Following that, each group will record a video (or audio) podcast, over Zoom (**July 6**), and submit it (**July 7**) for a grade.

Paper (30%): It is important for university students to conduct their own research and then defend an argument, in writing, that moves 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.

Final Exam (30%): To take place on **July 27 at 6:30 PM**. Students will have 2 hours to complete — and properly submit — the exam, via OWL's assignment tab, unless they formally qualify for extra time; in that case, it will automatically be provided. As this exam will be "open book", and written from home, its purpose is to test the student's integrative understanding of course material. As answers to such questions cannot be unreflectively pasted from the slides, advanced preparation is strongly recommended. To prepare, please follow your weekly checklists (OWL) and ask questions during class and during my office hours. 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). More details will be provided during our review session. **Be sure not to make any irrevocable travel arrangements, or plans, on our exam date**

Active, Informed & Critical 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) knowing and thoughtfully engaging the assigned readings,
- (b) applying the tools and virtues associated with critical thinking (e.g., careful argumentation, open-mindedness, reflective questioning, virtuous disagreement, and active listening),
- (c) following the College's student conduct requirements and any course-specific policies (see OWL), including our strict **no recording policy** (which helps protect student privacy and confidentiality),
- (d) not using one's laptop/cellphone or talking while other students are presenting ideas,
- (e) being reliably present (this includes avoiding a post-midterm attendance nosedive, as well as early departures and late arrivals),
- (f) in addition to verbal contributions, submitting all required participation comments, in writing, via OWL's forum, whenever prompted.
 - These (typically 1-3 sentence) assignments will be briefly worked on in class and **cannot be submitted late**, and/or **outside the classroom**, and/or by **a surrogate submitter** (e.g., a group member/classmate). Nor will the questions be circulated ahead of time. Any technical difficulties, with OWL, must be brought to my attention immediately, in class, as submissions, after class or when the window closes, are never permitted.

Note: if you are working outside of Huron's local time zone, and if joining our meetings would be unduly burdensome (e.g., would take place at 2:30 AM for you), please note this in OWL's DropBox, by **June 23** by simply writing "**Opt-Out Request for Online Participation**" in the subject title. I would be pleased to fully accommodate you. Also, I will post slides corresponding to the tutorials. These accommodations are only for our weekly classes. Please record your podcast during a time that works for you and everyone else in your group.

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

Please note: 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.

Methods

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

Course Map

Week #1A [June 20]

- Groundwork: Why Study Ethics & Value Theory?
- **First meeting. No readings. Simply sign into Zoom (Zoom info on OWL)**

UNIT 1: CONVENTIONAL ETHICAL THEORIES AND THEIR APPLICATIONSWeek #1B [June 22]

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

Week 2A [June 27]

- 1.1.2. Animals Ethics

Week 2B [June 29]

- 1.1.3. Population Ethics
- **We'll finish early. This will allow you to meet your podcast group members.**

Week 3A [July 4]

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

Week 3B [July 6]

- 1.2.2. Medical Ethics Part 2: Issues at the End of Life
- **Podcast recordings take place, after class, on July 6. Due on July 7.**

UNIT 2: CRITICISMS OF CONVENTIONAL ETHICAL THEORIESWeek 4A [July 11]

- 2.1. A Multiple-Principles Critique
- 2.1.1. Sample Application: Climate Ethics

Week 4B [July 13]

- 2.2.B. Metaethical Critiques
- 2.2.1. Relativism(s) and Emotivism(s)

UNIT 3. DEATH & THE GOOD LIFEWeek 5A [July 18]

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

Week 5B [July 20]

- 3.1.3. List Theories
- 3.1.4. Hybrid Theories
- **Papers Due on July 23**

Week 6A [July 25]

- 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 + Review Q&A

Week 6B [July 27]

- **Final Exam on July 27 at 6:30 PM**

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



Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations Summer 2023

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 \(uwo.ca\)](#). 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://academicsupport.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 \(uwo.ca\)](#)