



**SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS**

**PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM  
2010 TRIMESTER 1  
1 March to 4 July 2010**

**PHIL 202: ETHICS  
CRN 3589**

**Trimester dates**

Teaching dates: 1 March 2010 to 4 June 2010

Mid-trimester break: 5 April to 18 April 2010

Study week: 7 June to 11 June 2010

Examination/Assessment period: 11 June to 4 July 2010

**Withdrawal dates**

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawlsrefunds.aspx>

**COURSE COORDINATOR:** Nicholas Agar

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**LECTURER:** Ramon Das

**ROOM:** MY608

**PHONE:** 4635038

**EMAIL:** ramon.das@vuw.ac.nz

**LECTURE TIMES:** Tuesday and Thursday 9:00-10:50am

**VENUE:** KK 301

**OFFICE HOURS:** for both lecturers by appointment only

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Information about any changes to the timetable or programme will be announced in lectures and posted on Blackboard. There will be separate hand-outs with information about the lecture outline, essay topics, and readings.

**COURSE AIMS**

This course is an introduction to contemporary ethical theory. We begin with an examination of the three most important historical and contemporary traditions in ethical thinking - utilitarianism, Kantianism and virtue theory. We then explore meta-ethical issues. Are ethical statements claims about the natural world or are they reports of psychological dispositions? What's the relationship between ethics and evolution? The course concludes with an investigation of the ethical status of friendship and of issues connected with the

boundaries of the moral community. The course will conclude with an investigation of the unusual ethical dilemmas that arise in the 'death zone' on Mt Everest.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who pass the course will have a good understanding of some of the central issues in contemporary moral philosophy. They will be able to recognize, employ and critically analyze utilitarian, Kantian and virtue ethical arguments. They will also have an appreciation of how ethical theories connect with our understanding of the natural world.

## LECTURE OUTLINE

Weeks 1-2: Utilitarianism and Wellbeing (Das)

Week 3: Kant (Agar)

Week 4: Virtue Ethics (Agar)

Weeks 5-8: Relativism and Realism (Das)

Weeks 9-10: Biology and Ethics (Agar)

Weeks 11-12: The Ethics of Friendship and Life; Ethics on Mt Everest.(Agar)

## COURSE READING

You should purchase the PHIL 202/302 Coursebook.

For the first two weeks of trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two all undergraduate textbooks will be sold from vicbooks and student notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz). Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop. Customers will be contacted when they are available. Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

## ASSESSMENT

There will be one essay (30%), three short answer tests (the best two marks to jointly contribute 10%) and an exam (60%).

**i. Essay:** The essay should be approximately 2500-3000 words long. The due date is May 14. **You must submit your essay electronically via Blackboard** (please consult *Blackboard* for instructions). **This electronic version will be sent to turnitin.com, an anti-plagiarism website, and is the version that will be graded.** However, as a back-up **you must also submit a hard copy of your essay to the Philosophy Department office (MY 518) by 4:30pm on the due date.**

Essays submitted after the due date will be accepted but they will receive only limited written comments. There will be no grade penalty for late essays. The final submission date is June 4. Essays submitted after his date will not be marked.

**ii. In-class tests:** The dates of the short answer tests are as follows – March 18, April 29, May 27. The tests will take up the final 30 minutes of the lecture. Their purpose is to evaluate students' awareness of the literature in the coursebook.

**iii. Exam:** There will be a closed-book three hour exam for this course.

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities in assessment procedures.

**Relationship between assessment and course objectives:**

The essay gives students an opportunity for a relatively philosophically in-depth treatment of one of the issues covered in the course. The in-class tests should ensure that students are keeping up with the issues and literature as the course proceeds.

**Mandatory course requirements**

None

**Workload**

In accordance with Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 15 hours per week to PHIL 202. This includes 4 hours of lectures.

**Class Representative**

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. His or her name and contact details will be posted on blackboard. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

**Use of Turnitin**

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of

the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

### **GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES**

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

The AVC(Academic) website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx)