



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME
PHIL 228/328: Ethics and Genetics

TRIMESTER 2 2012
16 July to 17 November 2012

Trimester dates

Teaching dates:	16 July to 19 October 2012
Mid-trimester break:	27 August to 9 September 2012
Study week:	22–26 October 2012
Examination/Assessment Period:	26 October to 17 November 2012

Note: *Students who enrol in courses with examinations must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the scheduled examination period above.*

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator:	Associate Professor Nick Agar
Room No.:	Murphy (MY) 601
Email:	nicholas.agar@vuw.ac.nz
Phone:	463 5046
Office hours:	by appointment only

Class times and locations

Can be found on the Victoria website at:
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/2012%20Academic%20Timetable%2020120501.html>
It is advisable to check the above for any changes to the timetable programme.

Lecture Time:	Monday, 3.10 – 6.00 pm
Lecture Venue:	Hunter (HU) LT323

Teaching learning summary

This course is taught in one three-hour lecture per week. The lecturer will encourage and make time for student discussion.

Communication of additional information

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid myvuw.ac.nz addresses. Please check that this account is active and you have organised email forwarding. Additional information and any changes to the timetable or lecture and tutorial programme will be announced in lectures, and posted on the PHIL 228/328 Blackboard site. There will be separate hand-outs with information about the lecture outline, essay topics, and readings.

Course prescription

This course deals with moral issues arising out of the application of genetic and other technologies to human beings. Topics to be covered include human cloning, stem cell therapy, radical life extension, and intellectual enhancement.

Course content

PHIL 228/328 explores a variety of issues that arise in connection with the modern scientific revelations about the alterability of human and nonhuman nature. We will begin by exploring the moral and scientific underpinnings of the Transhumanist movement. The transhumanists are a group of increasingly influential thinkers who think that we should use available technologies to transcend our humanity by radically extending our life spans and enhancing our capacities. We then turn to the debate provoked by research into human stem cells. Does the prospect of a regenerative medicine that might cure hitherto poorly treated diseases justify the moral costs involved in conducting research on human embryos? The final topic is the debate over the genetic modification of food. Will GM feed the hungry and reduce humanity's burden on the environment – or are they another tool for the rich to exploit both the poor and nature?

Learning objectives

Students who pass this course will have:

- acquired a good understanding of some of the central ethical issues connected with the prospect of scientifically modifying human and nonhuman nature.

Graduate attributes

As with all Philosophy courses, learning objectives of this course contribute to the attainment of specific attributes in the areas of logical and critical thinking, conceptual analysis and rational and ethical decision-making. For more details please consult our website

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/about/overview-of-the-school/phil-overview#grad-attributes>

Expected workload

In accordance with Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 200 hours to PHIL 228/328 throughout the trimester. This includes weekly attendance at lectures, completion of all set weekly readings and research and writing for set assessment tasks.

Group work

There is no assessed group work for this course.

Readings

Set texts: All of the required reading materials for this course will be posted on “Blackboard.”

Recommended reading: The first half of the course will make use of

Nicholas Agar, *Humanity's End: Why We Should Reject Radical Enhancement* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2010)

This book is recommended but not required. It is available from Amazon as a hardback kindle download.

Assessment requirements for PHIL 228

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 for the essay is Friday September 22. **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 Programme office (MY 518).**

Essays submitted after the due date will be accepted but they will receive only minimal written comments. There will be no grade penalty for late essays. The final date for the submission of work for this course is Friday October 19. No essay can be accepted after this date.

ii. In-class tests: The dates of the short answer tests are as follows – July 30, August 20, and September 24. The tests will take up the final hour of the lecture. Their purpose is to evaluate students' general awareness of topics covered in the lectures.

Initially all assignments will be returned in lectures. Uncollected assignment will be available from the Programme office Monday - Friday **between 2-3pm.**

iii. Exam: The final piece of assessment is a three hour, closed book exam. You should answer any three questions – the exam will **not** be divided into sections. You should avoid overlap between exam answers and work submitted during the course.

Examination dates for the second trimester 2012 are Friday 26 October to Saturday 17 November 2012 – see also Trimester Dates above.

Assessment requirements for PHIL 328

There will be two essays (25%), three short answer tests (the best two marks to jointly contribute 10%) and an exam (40%).

i. Essays: The essays should be approximately 2500-3000 words long. The due date for the first essay will be August 24. The second essay is due October 5. **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 Programme office (MY 518).**

Essays submitted after the due date will be accepted but they will receive only minimal written comments. There will be no grade penalty for late essays. The final date for the submission of work for this course is October 14. No essay can be accepted after this date.

ii. In-class tests: The dates of the short answer tests are as follows – July 30, August 20, and September 24. The tests will take up the final hour of the lecture. Their purpose is to evaluate students' general awareness of topics covered in the lectures.

Initially all assignments will be returned in lectures. Uncollected assignment will be available from the Programme office Monday - Friday **between 2-3pm.**

iii. Exam: The final piece of assessment is a three hour, closed book exam. You should answer any three questions – the exam will **not** be divided into sections. You should avoid overlap between exam answers and work submitted during the course.

Examination dates for the second trimester 2012 are Friday 26 October to Saturday 17 November 2012 – see also Trimester Dates above.

Penalties

Philosophy Programme policy stipulates that late submission of essays is penalised. **Students lose 5% for the first day late and 2% thereafter for a maximum of 10 weekdays.** After 10 days, work can be accepted for mandatory course requirements but will not be marked. Extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances, but **all extensions require the student to provide documentation.** If granted an extension, students must agree to a new due date. Contact your lecturer as soon as a problem emerges. Extension forms are available in the School office.

Mandatory course requirements

There are no mandatory course requirements.

Return of marked course work

Essays and tests will be returned at times to be advised. If students fail to attend these times, they may collect their essay from the School Office, Room 518, Murphy Building between the hours of 2.00 and 3.00 pm from Monday to Friday and must show their Student ID card before collection.

Class representative

A class representative will be elected in the first week, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. 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 (*only for courses which make 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.

Where to find more detailed information

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress.aspx>. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the Academic Office website, at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcademic.