



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME

PHIL 202: ETHICS

20 POINTS

TRIMESTER 1 2016

Key dates

Trimester dates: 29 February to 29 June 2016

Teaching dates: 29 February to 5 June 2016

Easter break: 24–30 March 2016

Mid-trimester break: 25 April to 1 May 2016

Study period: 6–9 June 2016

Examination/Assessment Period: 10–29 June 2016

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.

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

Class times and locations

Lectures: Wednesday 11-12:50

Venue: HMLT001

Lectures: Friday 11-12:50

Venue: HMLT001

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: Nick Agar

Room No: MY 601

Phone: x 5046

Email: nicholas.agar@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours: by arrangement

Lecturer: Felice Marshall
Room No: MY 705
Email: felice.marshall@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: by arrangement

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 advised by email, announced in lectures, and posted on the course Blackboard site.

Prescription

This course is an examination of the 20th century approaches to ethics. Topics that may be discussed include: What is the nature of ethics and morality? Are our ethical judgments systematically mistaken? How and why have we evolved to make moral judgments?

Course Content

Weeks 1-6: Three big theories of normative ethics (Nick Agar)

In the central weeks of the course Nick will examine some of the big philosophical approaches to normative ethics – consequentialism, Kantian ethics, virtue ethics. We will consider what these three very different views say about what we should do, but also what they say about what kinds of beings we are.

Weeks 7-9: Metaethics (Nick Agar)

Metaethics investigates the bases of our ethical judgments. Do we have reason to believe in the truth of our ethical beliefs? What is the relationship between ethical claims and evolution?

Week 10: Moral duties to non-human life (Felice Marshall)

Felice will introduce questions surrounding the moral status of non-human animals and the environment.

Week 11: Moral duties under extreme circumstances (Nick Agar)

Nick will discuss the ethics mount climbers have to assist one another in life threatening circumstances on Mount Everest

Week 12: Friendship (Felice Marshall)

Felice will explore some puzzles that arise in respect of the moral status of friendship

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. demonstrate an in-depth understanding of ethical ideas
2. critically evaluate a variety of ethical arguments
3. analyse or elucidate complex ethical ideas and concepts

Teaching format

The twice-weekly meetings will include some lecturing, plus discussion, informal group assignments, and time for questions. There are no tutorials for this course.

Students are expected to attend classes regularly, take part in class discussion, and keep up with the reading.

Workload

In accordance with University Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 200 hours to the course throughout the year. An approximate indication of the hours to be spent on each component of the course is as follows:

| | |
|--|----------|
| Preparation and attendance at classes: | 60 hours |
| In-class test preparation: | 20 hours |
| Essay: | 60 hours |
| Examination: | 60 hours |

Assessment

| | Assessment items and workload per item | % | CLO(s) | Due date |
|---|--|-----|---------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Two-hour in-class test | 15% | 1, 2, 3 | 1 April during class time |
| 2 | 2000 word essay | 25% | 1, 2, 3 | 13 May, 12.00 pm |
| 3 | Three-hour closed-book final examination | 60% | 1, 2, 3 | Exam period 10–29 June |

The essays and examination will be evaluated against the following five criteria:

1. directness and clarity in answering the question
2. support of answer with relevant and reasoned argument
3. knowledge of relevant material presented in readings and lectures
4. consideration of alternative viewpoints and arguments
5. quality of writing, including clarity of handwriting where relevant

Submission of work

Essays must be submitted electronically to Blackboard; a hard copy is not required. Feedback will be available on Blackboard. Since submission and grading of the essay will occur on-line there will be no hardcopy to collect.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

Late submission of assignments will not be accepted unless the student makes an appointment as soon as practically possible with the course coordinator to explain the lateness (preferably before the assignment is due to be submitted). The circumstances under which an extension will be considered are outlined in section 3.2.1 of the Assessment Handbook.

(See: www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf).

Penalties

Philosophy Programme policy stipulates that late submission of essays is penalised. Late essays submitted without extensions having been obtained will receive a penalty of 5 points per week (or part thereof) late.

Set texts

Students should purchase the PHIL 202 Coursebook. This is available from vicBooks. Please see their website: www.vicbooks.co.nz for details on purchasing it.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course.

Student feedback

Many aspects of this course have changed in response to student feedback. Following discussion with students in previous years an in-class test was introduced. Feedback from students enrolled in 2016 will lead to further improvements.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz