



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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

**PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME**  
**PHIL 444 Advanced Ethics**

15 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

**Last assessment item due:** 13 June

**Withdrawal dates:** Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds)

**Class times and locations**

Lectures: Thursdays 10 am – 11:50 am

Venue: Murphy 617

**Names and contact details**

Course Coordinator: Richard Joyce

Room No: Murphy 713

Phone: (04) 463-7199

Email: [Richard.joyce@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Richard.joyce@vuw.ac.nz)

Office hours: By appointment

**Communication of additional information**

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid [myvuw.ac.nz](http://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 seminar programme will be advised by email, announced in lectures, and posted on the course Blackboard site.

## Prescription

This course examines contemporary debates in philosophy about the fundamental moral principles that govern and constrain human behaviour.

## Course content

The subject of reconciling our evolutionary past with our sense of right and wrong is undergoing a resurgent wave of interest. This course is an examination of the field of evolutionary ethics—focused on examining whether empirical findings about the origins of human moral judgments might have metaethical implications. The course falls roughly into two parts. First we will look at some attempts to show that the evolutionary origins of morality might in some sense *undermine* our moral judgments (showing them all to be false or all to be unjustified, for example). Second we will look at some attempts to show that the evolutionary origins of morality might provide some sort of *vindication* of our moral judgments. Each week one or two articles/chapters will be read and discussed in detail.

## Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students passing the course should be able to:

1. understand and appreciate the current state of research and knowledge in a variety of fields within analytic philosophy,
2. properly evaluate current and future research within those fields, and
3. under supervision, embark on a research project within those fields.

## Teaching format

The course will involve one seminar per week, which will run for one hour and 50 minutes. The weekly meetings will include lecturing and discussion. Students are expected to attend all classes, take part in class discussion, and keep up with the reading.

## Workload

In accordance with University guidelines, students will nominally devote 150 hours to the course throughout the trimester. This includes weekly attendance at lectures, reading, and revision for and completion of all set assessment tasks. An approximate indication of the hours to be spent on each component of the course is as follows:

Classes:	24 hours
Reading:	60 hours
Essay:	66 hours

## Assessment

Coursework consists of one 5000 word essay, which is due **June 13th at 5 pm**. Opportunity will be given to submit a draft and receive feedback.

Each essay will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. succinctness, clarity and precision of expression,
2. originality of thesis,
3. soundness of argument,
4. understanding and survey of related literature.

### **Submission and return of work**

All essays must be submitted in two ways. A copy of the essay must first be submitted digitally via Blackboard. Make sure you save your file as a Microsoft Word document. The title of your file should have the following format: last name, underscore, first name, underscore, essay number, dot, doc/docx (for example: smith\_mary\_5.docx). Please also ensure that pages are numbered. A hard copy of the essay must then be submitted to one of the school administrators located in MY518.

Comments will be either posted on Blackboard or returned with the hard copy of the essay. (In the latter case, students can collect their essays from MY518 between the hours of 2.00 and 3.00 pm from Monday to Friday and must show their Student ID card.) Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

### **Extensions and penalties**

- All extensions must be obtained directly from the course coordinator, Richard Joyce.
- Late submission of assessment tasks will not get a grade higher than a C- unless the student contacts the course coordinator as soon as practically possible to explain the lateness (preferably before the assessment task 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: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf>.)

### **Set texts**

Every week there will be one or two readings that will form the basis of seminar discussion. These will be journal articles and chapters from books. Students will be advised of these in advance and (where possible) copies will be made available on Blackboard.

### **Student feedback**

Since PHIL444 is a new course in 2016, there has not yet been an opportunity to gather student feedback. Student feedback on University courses may be found at [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://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](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://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](http://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](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://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](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)