



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME
PHIL 106: CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL ISSUES
20 POINTS**

TRIMESTER 2 2016

Key dates

Trimester dates: 11 July to 13 November 2016

Teaching dates: 11 July to 16 October 2016

Mid-trimester break: 22 August to 4 September 2016

Study period: 17–20 October 2016

Examination/Assessment Period: 21 October to 12 November 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

	Stream 1 (CRN 2044)	Stream 2 (CRN 27003)
Lectures:	Tues, Wed, & Fri: 1:10pm - 2pm	Tues, Wed, & Fri: 3.10-4.00pm
Venue:	COLT122	COLT122

Tutorials

Please see the Academic Timetable 2016 www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/timetables.

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: Nick Agar
Room No: MY 601
Phone: x5046
Email: nicholas.agar@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours: by arrangement
Lecturer: Felice Marshall
Room No: MY 705
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Office hours: by arrangement

Lecturer: Ramon Das
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Phone: 463 5038
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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

An introduction to issues in applied ethics. Topics may include: the morality of the death penalty, war, cloning, abortion and euthanasia, and the moral status of non-human animals.

Course content

Weeks 1-2: Felice Marshall: Introduction to ethics

Weeks 3-6: Ramon Das: Euthanasia, ethics of animals, global poverty, and ethics of immigration.

Weeks 7-12: Nick Agar: the threat from Artificial Intelligence, genetic enhancement, the ethics of chemical castration for sex offenders, the death penalty

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students passing the course should be able to:

1. explain the fundamental ethical principles that govern good scholarship in philosophy
2. explain some of the current debates in the field of applied ethics
3. evaluate a variety of arguments
4. define clearly and precisely key concepts in the field of applied ethics.

Teaching format

PHIL 106 is delivered through three 50-minute lectures per week and one 50-minute tutorial per week. The tutorial sessions reinforce lecture themes and help you prepare for the assessments.

Tutorials: Students must sign up to a tutorial group using **myAllocator**, which can be accessed from the Tools section on the Current Students homepage. Tutorials begin in

week 2 of the trimester. Tutors will be announced in class and on Blackboard. A list of tutorial topics will be available at the start of term (posted on Blackboard). The topic of each week's tutorial will be the material covered in lectures in the previous week.

Mandatory course requirements

~~There are no mandatory course requirements beyond achieving an overall pass mark of 50%.~~

Workload

In accordance with Faculty 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 100 hours Breakdown of assessment:

In-class tests: 15 hours

Tutorial exercises: 15 hours

Essay: 35 hours

Examination: 35 hours

For a total of 200 hours.

Assessment Item	Weighting	CLOs	Due Date
In-class test	15%	2,3,4	12 August
Tutorial exercises (best 5 out of 6)	15%	1,2,3,4	See below
Essay, 2000 words	35%	1,2,3,4	19 September - 5.00 pm
Final Exam (two hours)	35%	2,3,4	In the examination period: 21 Oct-12 Nov

1. In-class test:

An in-class test will be held on Friday August 12, during the usual lecture time. The question will be posted on Blackboard in time for students to prepare their answers.

2. Tutorial exercises:

Over the course of the trimester there will be six exercises held during tutorials. A student's *five* best test results will count toward 15% of his/her final grade (and the weakest result will be ignored). These tests begin in week 2 of term (i.e., the first tutorial), and thereafter in weeks 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12. These will be very short tests, more like mini-quizzes. There will be no make-up tests for students who miss the tutorial without a documented excuse.

3. Essay:

The essay should be approximately 2000 words long and must be typed. It is worth 35% of the final grade. Essays must be submitted electronically to Blackboard; a hard copy is not required. The essay is due no later than **5.00pm on Monday, 19 September**.

Essay questions: Answer one of the following two questions.

[1] Is the use of animals in biomedical research morally justified? Why or why not? Defend your answer with reference to the relevant readings on Blackboard.

[2] Nick Bostrom identifies existential catastrophe as "the default outcome of an intelligence explosion." Why does he think this? Is his assessment of the threat from AI warranted? [Be circumspect in your use of material from the Internet. The best answers will focus on Bostrom's book and one response. Make sure that you accurately cite any material that you use.]

4. Final examination:

The date and time will be announced later in the trimester, but will fall between 21 Oct – 12 Nov. The exam consists of three essay questions, and is worth 35% of the final grade.

The tutorial exercises will assess your knowledge of the material covered in lectures during the previous week, the in-class test will assess your understanding of the material given in previous weeks, the essay will assess your knowledge of the topics and ability to

critically analyze the central philosophical issues, and the examination will focus on the comprehension and understanding of the topics in the latter part of the course.

Submission and return of work

Essays must be submitted electronically to Blackboard; a hard copy is not required. The title of your file should have the following format: last name, underscore, first name, underscore, dot, doc/docx (for example: smith_mary.docx). Please also ensure that pages are numbered. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

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

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

The development of work discipline and time management skills are an important part of the education process and it is expected that each student takes responsibility for allocating sufficient time for their studies.

Late submission of assignments will not be accepted unless the student makes an appointment as soon as practically possible with the course coordinator, Nick Agar, 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).

There will be no make-up tests for students who miss the tutorial without a documented excuse.

Penalties

The Philosophy Programme policy stipulates that late submission of essays is penalised if no extension has been granted. Late essays submitted without extensions having been obtained will receive a penalty of 5 points per week (or part thereof) late.

Set texts

There is no required textbook for PHIL 106. Readings will be posted on Blackboard.

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

Based on student feedback in recent years, the way the course is assessed has been broken down into smaller exercises and emphasis has been taken off the examination (now worth 35% rather than 50%).

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