

**Philosophy 28 Ethics and Society II****Fall, 2018****Instructor: Richard Arneson****revised 10/08/2018****Welcome to Philosophy 28!**

Class meets Mondays and Wednesdays 5:00-5:50 in Peterson Hall 108.

**Teaching Assistants:**

**Ayoob Shahmoradi** (section 1, Mondays 2-2:50 & section 2, Mondays 3-3:50, both in Room HSS 1128A). Office hours Thursdays 8-10 a.m (HSS 7043).

**Jonathan Knutzen** (section 3, Mondays 6-6:50 p.m., Room HSS 2154 & section 5, Wednesdays 6-6:50 p.m., Room HSS 2150). Office hours Wednesdays 2-4 p.m. (HSS 7086).

**William Albuquerque** section 7, (Fridays 11-11:50 a.m. and section 8, Fridays 12-12:50 p.m., both in (Room HSS 2154). Office hours Tuesdays 1-2 and Wednesdays 4-5 at Mandeville Coffee Cart.

The final exam for this course will take place on Thursday, December 13 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. If you enroll in this class, you must be free to take a regular final exam for this course at this time.

**Course aims:** 1) to improve our skills at reading and understanding difficult writings and thinking clearly about complex issues and writing about those issues (2) to improve our skills at assessing moral arguments, and (3) to become more aware of the structure of our own moral views and of moral positions opposed to our own. A secondary aim is to hone our argumentative writing skills.

For further information about the course, which will change week by week, consult the Philosophy 28 course TritonEd page. Required readings, slides shown in lectures, this course syllabus, the two writing assignments, and eventually advance information handouts on the final exam will be made available at this TritonEd page.

To access course materials in TritonEd, go to the TritonEd course web page, from the left-hand side of page menu click on "Content." A list of Phil 28 class materials will then show up on the screen.

**Course themes:** This course examines disparate topics. There's no overarching theme. The topics go be covered are (1) the justification of freedom of expression and of its proper limits, (2) some issues in the morality of doing harm and preventing harm when the effects of what one does or allows depend on what other people also do, and (3) what renders a person morally blameworthy or praiseworthy.

More on topic (3): There's the question, whether what one does or omits doing in a situation is morally permissible or impermissible, and there is the further question, whether one is blameworthy or not, or praiseworthy or not, regarding that situation. Another way of characterizing topic (3): What makes you responsible for what you do, in such a way that you are properly assessed as morally praiseworthy or blameworthy depending on its quality?

More on topic (2): One question is, "Does morality sometimes require one to do or abstain from doing some action even if one's doing or abstaining would make no difference to any further events that might ensue?" Another: If you along with others could together achieve some good (prevent some harm), when, if ever, are you morally obligated to do more if others do less? Another: Are duties to provide positive aid to others always, or ever, based on special ties (such as contract, promise, friendship, love, or shared family, clan, ethnic group, or national community membership)?

Examining these three topics, we contrast two competing approaches to determining answers to them. One is **consequentialism**. This says, for choice of individual conduct, one ought always do whatever would bring about the best reachable outcome (impartially assessed), and for choice of public policy, the policy that should be enacted is the one that would bring about the impartially best outcome. A prominent version of consequentialism is utilitarianism. The utilitarian identifies the best reachable outcome as the one in which the aggregate sum of happiness of all persons who might be affected is maximized. A contrasting approach is **constraint-based deontology**. This says that morality requires

acting with due consideration for others, which means respecting individual moral rights and (to some degree) promoting their fulfillment. On this approach, morality does not **require** bringing about maximally good consequences, because if you are not harming others in ways that violate their rights you are usually free to act as you like, pursuing your own projects and aims. Moreover, morality does not **permit** always doing what would bring about maximally good consequences, because doing so would violate some people's moral rights. A prominent version of constraint-based deontology is the natural rights doctrine, which says that each person has certain moral rights, which obtain regardless of prevailing political and legal arrangements, anyone's subjective beliefs and opinions, and prevailing cultural norms and practices. The common-sense worry "Does the end justify the means?" raises the issue, are there some things we must not do, whatever the consequences.

Many questions about the nature of morality, we set to the side and ignore in this course. The fact that we set questions aside does not mean that they are not good questions, well worth pursuing. One might wonder why something we call "morality" ever gives us reasons to choose one action over any other. What if anything gives morality rational authority? Suppose we assume, moral demands sometimes provide genuine reasons for choice, considerations that bear on what it makes sense to choose. A further question is, how much authority or force do moral reasons have, when they conflict, as they often do, with reasons of other sorts, prudential and strategic reasons? We might also think that reasons ultimately arise from our desires. We have reason to do what satisfies our desires. Why then should I obey dictates of morality when my desires are opposed to doing that? A further question about morality is whether there is a correct answer as to what one morally ought to do when different people's views conflict. People disagree about what is morally right and wrong. Can some people's moral claims nonetheless be true, or is there no true or false in this domain? **Note: in this class we ponder the question, if there is a true and false in ethics, what might be the most reasonable moral principles, that determine the truth as to what actions are morally required, permissible, and forbidden. But we don't claim to answer it. In this course your moral opinions and judgments are not graded. Your work in this course is assessed according to the understanding of course materials that you display, the cogency of your reasoning in interpreting and assessing them, and the clarity of your writing. "Course materials" include required readings, lectures, lecture notes (powerpoint slides), and material introduced in section discussions. This means that readings listed as merely recommended will not be covered on the final exam; nor will understanding any of them be required for writing course essays. The merely recommended readings are optional supplements that approach lecture material from different angles.**

#### **Evaluation for purposes of determining your course grade.**

1500 word essay due October 22, at 5 pm. (counts for 20 % of your grade). Essay topics to be assigned in class.

2000 word essay due November 26, at 5 p.m. (25%). Essay topics to be assigned in class.

In-class clicker quiz questions and participation (10 %).

Discussion section grade (5% attendance plus 5% participation = 10 %).

Final exam (35 %). The final exam will comprehend all course materials. One-half of the exam will consist of short-answer questions testing your understanding of course materials and one-half of the exam will consist of essay questions. The essay questions to be posed on the exam will be drawn from a list of questions given in a final exam advance handout.

**Clickers questions.** At some points during lectures an I-clicker question will be posed, and so each enrolled student must have an iclicker for this course. Some of these questions will test your understanding of some feature of the reading for that class or of the day's lecture; for these, you get credit both for answering and for answering correctly. Sometimes open-ended discussion or food-for-thought questions might be posed; for these types of question, your participation will count but no assessment of your answer will be made.

**Discussion sections.** You will need to attend the discussion section in which you're enrolled. One-half of your section grade will be based on attendance, one-half on the quality of your participation. I

recommend that you show up for each section meeting ready to ask questions about the assigned reading and to discuss the issues it raises. Responding respectfully to the thoughts and ideas expressed by fellow students will help make section discussions maximally productive.

**Disability accommodation.** Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), which is located in University Center 202, behind Centre Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to the course instructor (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the Philosophy Department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. 858 534 4382 (phone); [osd@ucsd.edu](mailto:osd@ucsd.edu) (email); <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu> (website).

**Academic integrity.** Integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and in so doing protect the validity of University intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. More information about UC San Diego's policy on academic integrity is available at <http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/appendices/2>

**Arneson's office hours: Wednesdays 1-2 and Fridays 2-3 in 8057 HSS Bldg., in Muir Campus.**

#### **SCHEDULE OF LECTURE/DISCUSSIONS**

**(You should do the reading listed for a given day before that day's class. Hint: A key to success in the course is keeping up with the readings week by week.**

Week 1. October 1-7.

MON: Introduction to ethics and society. Morality, what? Consequentialism versus constraint-based deontology. Reading: Russ Shafer-Landau, "Introduction" and "Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions" from his *The Fundamentals of Ethics*. Merely recommended adding: Thomas Nagel, "Right and Wrong," from his *What Does It All Mean?*; also R. Shafer-Landau, "Ethical Pluralism: Prima Facie Duties and Moral Particularism"; also R. Shafer-Landau, "Consequentialism: Its Difficulties."

WED: Freedom of speech. Reading: J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*, chapter 2. Accessible at <https://www.utilitarianism.com/ol/two.html>

{Please be aware that this reading is not available at the course TritonEd page.}

Merely recommended reading: David Lewis, Mill and Milquetoast." Also posted: a folder on "Alex Jones" including a discussion by Gerald Dworkin on internet censorship.

Week 2. October 8-14.

MON: Freedom of speech. Reading: T. M. Scanlon, "A Theory of Freedom of Expression."

WED: Legal restriction of Hate Speech. Reading: Jeremy Waldron, "Dignity and Defamation: The Visibility of Hate." (pages 1597-1635, Sections I and II only). Merely recommended reading: Waldron, "Dignity and Defamation" (pages 1635-1657, Section III). Further merely recommended reading: James Weinstein, "An Overview of American Free Speech Doctrine and its Application to Extreme Speech."

Week 3. October 15-21.

MON: Freedom of speech. Reading: Seana Shiffrin, "Lying and Freedom of Speech."

WED: Lying and deception. Reading: Seana Shiffrin, "Lies and the Murderer Next Door." Merely recommended reading: Immanuel Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropic Motives."

Week 4. October 22-28.

MON: **First writing assignment due in class.** Privacy. Reading: Thomas Nagel, "Concealment and Exposure."

WED: Can you have an obligation to do something (or omit doing something), if it makes no difference whether or not you do it? If you along with others could together achieve some good (prevent some

harm), are you morally obligated to do more if others do less? Are duties to provide positive aid to others always duties based on special ties (such as contract, promise, friendship, love, or shared family, clan, ethnic group, or national community membership)? Case 1, voting & the duty to obey the law. Reading: Jason Brennan, *The Duty To Vote*, chapter 2. Merely recommended reading: Brennan, *The Duty To Vote*, chapter 1.

Week 5. October 29-November 4.

MON: Case 1 voting, continued. Reading: Alex Guerrero, "The Paradox of Voting and the Ethics of Political Representation."

WED: Case 2. Climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. Reading: Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, "'It's not My Fault:' Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations."

Week 6. November 5-11.

MON: Case 2, Climate change. Reading: John Broome, *Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World*, chapters 4 and 5. Merely recommended reading: Broome, *Climate Matters*, chapters 1-3 & 6.

WED: Case 3, Aiding distant needy strangers. Reading: Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." also Merely recommended reading: Leif Wenar, "Poverty Is No Pond."

Week 7. November 12-18.

MON: Veterans Day holiday.

WED: Case 3, Aiding distant needy strangers. Reading: Liam Murphy, "The Demands of Beneficence."

Week 8. November 19-25

MON: Case 3, Aiding distant needy strangers. Reading: Garrett Cullity, "Asking Too Much." Merely recommended reading: Richard Arneson, "Moral Limits on the Demands of Beneficence?"; also Samuel Scheffler, "Relationships and Responsibilities."

WED: Giving effectively. Reading: Theron Pummer, "Whether and Where to Give."

Week 9. November 26-December 2.

MON: **Second writing assignment due in class.** Blameworthiness and moral responsibility. Reading: J. J. C. Smart, "Free-will, Praise and Blame."

WED: Blameworthiness and moral responsibility. Reading: Gideon Rosen. "Skepticism about Moral Responsibility."

Week 10. December 3-9.

MON: Blameworthiness and moral responsibility." Reading: Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck.

WED: Blameworthiness and moral responsibility. Reading: Nomy Arpaly, "Moral worth."