

PHIL 27: Ethics and Society
Fall 2017, T/Th 3:30-4:50, Center 101
Prof. Manuel Vargas

Overview

Welcome! This class concerns ethical and political questions that arise in the context of contemporary society. This term we will discuss a variety of topics, including but not limited to dating ethics, the value of animal lives, the significance of disability, ethical issues in video games, immigration, abortion, and the ethics of taxation. Our aspiration is to sort the better arguments from the worse, and in doing so, to make some headway in better understanding ethics and society.

Contact info

mrvargas@ucsd.edu

Office: HSS 8089

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:10-3pm

Teaching Assistants

Dallas Amico
damico@ucsd.edu
W: 11-11:50 (910120)
W: 4-4:50 (910121)
OH: Th 11-1pm, HSS 7039

Bas Tonissen
btonisse@ucsd.edu
M 1-1:50p (910116)
W 10-10:50 (910119)
OH: T/Th 10-11am + appts, HSS 7093

Brian Tracz
rtracz@ucsd.edu
M: 2-2:50 (910117)
M: 3-3:50 (910118)
OH: 1:30-3:30pm, HSS 7055

Aaron Finley
afinley@ucsd.edu
F: 11-11:50 (910122)
F: 12-12:50 (910123)
OH: T 1:30-3:30pm, HSS 7055

Evaluation

1,500-word essay due 5:00 pm Monday, 10/23 at 5pm (20%)

2000-word word essay due Monday, 11/20 at 5pm (25%)

Random in-class quizzes (15%)

Final exam (30%)

Discussion section grade (5% attendance* + 5% participation = 10%)

*More than two unexcused absences in section will result in an attendance grade of zero.

Readings

All readings are available via pdf at <TritonEd.ucsd.edu> or via links from this syllabus.

Because electronics are not permitted in this class, it isn't unreasonable to print them out in advance.

Provisional Schedule

Subject to change, but if so, there will be advance warning.

Read the articles *prior* to the date of the class meeting.

- 9/28 Intro. What is philosophy? What are we doing?
- 10/3 Thomson (1971) "A Defense of Abortion"
- 10/5 Singer, P (1972) "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" [*Tracz lectures*]
- 10/10 Nozick (1974) "Distributive Justice and Taxes"
- 10/12 Kittay, E (2009) "The Personal is Philosophical is Political"
- 10/17 Luck, M (2009) "The Gamer's Dilemma"
- 10/19 Dougherty, T (2013) "Sex, Lies, and Consent"
- 10/23 (MON) Paper 1 Due, 5pm.**
- 10/24 Hickey et al (2016) "Population Engineering for Climate Change"
- 10/26 Marquis, D (1989) "Why Abortion is Immoral" [*Finley lectures*]
- 10/31 Bernstein, M (2004) Neo-speciesism
- 11/2 *Readings on taxation and disability*
<https://aeon.co/essays/if-your-pay-is-not-yours-to-keep-then-neither-is-the-tax>
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/16/magazine/unspeakable-conversations.html?mcubz=1>
- 11/7 Carens, J. (2009) "The Case for Amnesty"
<http://bostonreview.net/forum/case-amnesty-joseph-carens>
- 11/9 Reply by Eamonn Callan
<http://bostonreview.net/forum/case-amnesty/we-might-have-choose-between-competing-evils-eamonn-callan>
Reply by Carol Swain
<http://bostonreview.net/forum/case-amnesty/apply-compassion-offered-illegal-immigrants-most-vulnerable-citizens-carol-swain>
Reply by Peter Schuck
<http://bostonreview.net/forum/case-amnesty/moral-argument-details-matter-peter-schuck>
- 11/14 Satz, D (2009) "Voluntary Slavery & the Limits of the Market"
- 11/16 Sittler-Adamczewski (2016) "Consistent Vegetarianism . . ." [*Amico lectures*]
- 11/20 (MON) Paper 2 Due, 5pm**
- 11/21 Goerger, M (2017) Value, Violence, and the Ethics of Gaming"
- 11/23 **Thanksgiving** (Like your professor, you have . . . *no class.*)
- 11/28 Zheng (2016) "Why Yellow Fever Isn't Flattering"

11/30	Kukla (2016) “Whose Job is it to Fight Climate Change?” Levy (2017) “Nudges in a Post-Truth World”
12/5 12/7	Timpe, K (draft) “Disability, Virtue, and Happiness” Outro
12/11	Final exam: M 3-5:59pm

General Information

Office Hours

I keep office hours. I am sometimes available immediately after class or by appointment. I am always happy to discuss any aspect of this course with you.

Email Policy

I am happy to reply to emails sent from UCSD email addresses. I do not reply to emails from non-UCSD addresses. Please note that there are two subjects I do not discuss by email, even if they are sent from a UCSD account. These are:

- a) Requests for information about the exam that arrive in the 24-hour period immediately preceding the exam.
- b) Requests to adjust your final class grade. If you have an issue with your grade please make an appointment to discuss it during my office hour next quarter.

Paper submissions

Essays will be submitted electronically. Hard copies are not required. Any and all submitted work may be run through turnitin.com.

One-time Discretionary TA Extensions

Teaching assistants can grant each student one extension of up to 48 hours without requiring a medical certificate or other documentation. In order to grant such an extension your TA needs to receive your request before noon on the day the assessment in question is due. Email is fine, but please note that UCSD’s email servers sometimes go down, and students are advised not to leave their requests to the last minute. Requests received after noon on the due date will require documentation, as will requests for extensions longer than 48 hours. Please note that if you receive an extension your paper may be returned a few days after those that were completed on time.

Note that each student is entitled to only one discretionary TA extension. So if you receive one for your first essay, any extension for the second essay will require documentation.

Late Work

Late work without an extension is automatically subject to a grade penalty of a third of a grade for every 24 hours period after the due date (that is, approximately, 3.3% of the value of the assignment per 24 hour period after the assignment was due). After a week, the assignment becomes an automatic 'F', but it must be submitted because (a) all assignments must be turned in to pass the class and (b) a 59% F is better than a 0% F. Note also that assignments that are handed in late without an extension will be graded and returned after those that were completed on time and will not receive comments.

Re-grading

Students unhappy with their grade for a class essay can apply to have it re-graded. Students first need to arrange a face-to-face meeting with their grader to discuss the basis for the original grade. Please note that email or other electronic forms of communication are not an acceptable substitute and no remarking will occur without an initial face-to-face meeting. If the student and grader come to an agreement on the merit of the initial mark, or on an adjusted mark resulting from their meeting, no further student action is required. If the student still prefers a remark he or she should email me a clean copy of the original essay, without the original grader's grade or comments. The essay will then go to a second grader unfamiliar with the original grade for remarking.

In order for a re-grade to occur I need to receive the clean copy within two weeks of the original essay grade being released, or before the exam, whichever is sooner. Whatever grade the second grader gives the essay will be the final mark, even if it is lower than the original grader's grade. The professor reserves the right to review and decide any re-grade cases.

Note that there is no option to regrade exams or complete assignments for bonus marks.

Disabilities

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 Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. Contact the OSD for further information: 858.534.4382 (phone), osd@ucsd.edu (email), disabilities.ucsd.edu (web)

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. Plagiarism in this course is ordinarily grounds for failing this course.

For more information about UCSD's policy on academic integrity go to:

<http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/appendices/2>

Slides, handouts, etc.

Any handouts, slides, or the like that are used in class will be made available online.

Technology in da classroom

Laptops and tablets are not ordinarily permitted in lecture or during exams. If you believe you have compelling grounds for an exception, talk to the professor in advance.

The second violation of this policy will trigger a 0% for the participation grade.

Your TA will let you know what the policy is in discussion group.

Waitlist

Students will be admitted to this class according to their place on the waitlist.

Exams

By enrolling in this class, you agree to take the final at its scheduled day and time, unless registered with OSD. Failure to take the exam at that time constitutes failure to pass the course. Plan your end of term travel accordingly.

Where can I get help?

Philosophy can be a challenging subject matter. We've got a couple of handouts for you with lots of advice about how to do well in a philosophy class and how to write excellent papers despite the fact that they involve fairly radical departures from what your writing teachers have thus far told you to do. Also, we strongly encourage you to make use of your TAs and professor, because we'd love for you to succeed in this course.

[How to Survive Your First Philosophy Class](#)

[How to Write Philosophy Papers](#)