

PHIL 27: Ethics and Society
M/W 10-10:50am, Warren Lecture Hall 2001
Prof. Manuel Vargas
Fall 2019

Overview

Welcome! This class concerns ethical and political questions that arise in the context of contemporary society. We will discuss a variety of topics, including but not limited to: personal ideals; cultural appropriation, immigration ethics; ethical considerations about dating; strategies for climate change mitigation; patriotism; and the ethics of affluence. The course goals are roughly as follows: (1) to get better at seeing ethical complexity, and (2) to get better at distinguishing better and worse answers to ethical puzzles.

Contact info

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Office: HSS 8089

Office hours: W 11-1pm

Teaching Assistants

Henry Argetsinger
hargetsi@ucsd.edu
A02 M 2pm-2:50pm
A06 W 12pm-12:50pm
OH: MW 11am-12pm HSS 7039

Joseph Martinez
jdm001@ucsd.edu
A07 F 9am-9:50am
A08 F 11am-11:50am
OH: W 11:15-1:15pm HSS 7043

Kathleen Connelly
kaconnel@ucsd.edu
A01 M 9am-9:50am
A05 W 9am-9:50am
OH: 12-2pm HSS 7054

Michael Pittman
mpittman@ucsd.edu
A03 M 3pm-3:50pm
A04 M 4pm-4:50pm
OH: M 1-3pm, Mandeville coffee cart

Evaluation

Please note that you are required to retain receipts of electronic submission of your assignments. No receipt = no appeal about whether you turned in the work.

1500-word essay due Friday, 10/18 at 10pm (24%)

2000-word word essay due Friday, 11/15 at 10pm (29%)

Old school in-class final exam (35%) (bring two unmarked blue books)

Discussion section grade (6% attendance* + 6% participation = 12%)

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

Readings

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

Because electronics are not permitted in this class, you may find it serves your purposes best to print out readings 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.

Week 1: Intro, Puzzles about responsibility

09/30 Introduction to ethics & philosophy; course structure and aims

10/02 Gregory, A. (2017) "The Sorrow and Shame of the Accidental Killer"
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/09/18/the-sorrow-and-the-shame-of-the-accidental-killer>

Week 2: Injustices

10/07 Young, I. (2003) "Political Responsibility and Structural Injustice"

10/09 Luck, M (2009) "The Gamer's Dilemma"
Paper writing project! Also, handout on writing papers:
<http://vargasphilosophy.com/Handouts/Howtowrite.pdf>

10/11 *Paper 1 topics are posted on Canvas*

Week 3: Cultural ownership

10/14 Taylor, P (2005) "Does Hip Hop Belong to Me?"

10/16 Nguyen and Strohl (2019) "Culture and the Intimacy of Groups"
No Vargas OH today

10/18 Papers due at 10pm [FRI]

Week 4: Immigration

10/21 Carens, J. (2009) "The Case for Amnesty"
<http://bostonreview.net/forum/case-amnesty-joseph-carens>

10/23 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>

10/27 *Paper 1 returned [9pm]*

Week 5: Consent

10/28-30 Dougherty, T (2013) "Sex, Lies, and Consent"

Week 6: Patriotism

11/4 Hickey et al (2016) "Population Engineering for Climate Change"

11/6 Macintyre, A. (1984) "Is Patriotism a Virtue?"

11/8 *Paper 2 topics are posted on Canvas*

Week 7: Population Engineering & Climate Change

11/11 VETERAN'S DAY (No class meeting)

11/13 Kukla (2016) "Whose Job is it to Fight Climate Change?"

11/15 Paper 2 due, 10pm [FRI]

Week 8: Racial fetishes

11/18-20 Zheng (2016) "Why Yellow Fever Isn't Flattering"

11/24 *Target date for returning Paper 2 [9pm]*

Week 9: Ethics and Affluence

11/25 Singer, P (1972) "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

11/27 Review day

11/28-29 Thanksgiving holiday

Week 10: The plurality of values

12/2 Riggle, N. (2016) "High Five!"
<https://aeon.co/essays/how-being-awesome-became-the-great-imperative-of-our-time>

12/4 Outro

12/13 Final exam 8-10:59am (in class; open notes; bring two unmarked blue books)

General Information

Office Hours

I've got office hours, and you should come by. If you can't make any of the regularly scheduled office hours, contact me about making an appointment.

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

Papers will be submitted electronically. Hard copies are not required. **Please note that it is your responsibility to secure a receipt for any online submission of work, and if you have not received a receipt for your assignment, it is not turned in.** You are thus responsible for (1) verifying that your assignment was successfully uploaded, and (2) retaining the receipt that proves that the file was uploaded. After the assignment deadline, if you claim to have submitted an assignment for which we lack a record, we will ask you if you have the receipt from the submission. **Without a receipt, we cannot consider appeals about whether you submitted your work.** Please note that screen shots, files with dates of work indicated, and so on, do not count as evidence that the work has been submitted. No receipt, no appeal.

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 regrading will occur without an initial face-to-face meeting. If the student and grader come to an agreement on the merit of the initial grade, or on an adjusted grade resulting from their meeting, no further student action is required. If the student still prefers a re-grade 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 re-grading.

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 grade, 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 points.

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 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

Electronics (including but not limited to cell phones, laptops, and tablets) are not ordinarily permitted in lecture or during exams. If you believe you have compelling grounds for being exempt, 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.

Recording lectures

Recording lectures introduces a number of complicated issues about consent and student participation in class. For that reason, students may not record (audio or video) in this class except in accordance with documented ADA accommodations. Any recordings made in connection with a disability accommodation are for the student's personal academic use only and may not be distributed in any manner to any other individual.

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.

I need help. Now what?

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 sometimes 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:

<http://vargasphilosophy.com/Handouts/PhilClassGuide.pdf>

How to Write Philosophy Papers:

<http://vargasphilosophy.com/Handouts/Howtowrite.pdf>