

PHILOSOPHY 150C: PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY

(online, accelerated)

FALL SEMESTER, 2017

Course description: In this course, we will address and examine some fundamental moral questions about society and its organization as well as some of the most pressing challenges that modern societies face. We will examine basic questions such as: What is the basis of morality? What is a just distribution of property in a society? What is the boundary between individual freedom and legitimate societal coercion? What are our obligations to our fellow human beings around the world, in particular, what obligations do individuals in richer societies have to those in poorer ones? What is the basis of the membership in a political society and what are our obligations towards non-members? How are we to understand our obligations towards future generations, non-human animals, and the environment? We will explore these issues through discussion and reading of some of the great works in the Western philosophical tradition as well as of contemporary philosophical essays and related readings. Besides the topics discussed attention will be given to the exact formulation of particular theses, arguments that support these, clarification of key concepts, and also critical evaluation of arguments.

Topics covered in the course include:

- Moral and Political Philosophy
- Justice
- Justice and distribution of goods
- Utilitarianism
- The notion of Global Ethics and its main challenges
- Affluence, famine and poverty
- Status justice, Membership and the Right to have rights
- Animal ethics
- Environmental ethics

Objectives and learning outcomes: The central aim of the course is to introduce you to contemporary moral and political philosophy in the context of challenges of modern society. Next, the course will introduce you to philosophical reasoning about the questions and subjects listed above. In line with this, we will pay special attention to definition and clarification of concepts, statement of key views and theses, arguments in support of these views and critical evaluation of them. After completing the course, you should be able to explain and apply competing theories and views regarding various issues and questions at the intersection of moral and political philosophy, in particular those related to main ethical challenges of the contemporary world, which you will face as a citizen of a modern democratic state. This course should help to get you to think philosophically about difficult moral questions. You will be able to critically assess and discuss these theories and views and write a well-structured argumentative essay. The course is also structured in a way that aims to promote the advancement of critical reasoning and argumentative skills in general.

Instructor: Vojko Strahovnik (visiting lecturer at UA; Assistant Professor and Research Associate at the University of Ljubljana).

Email: vstrahovnik@email.arizona.edu

Office hours: every Tuesday, from 4:00pm to 5:45pm, in Social Sciences, office 218. I am also available by email and I will try my best to reply to all emails within 48 hours. Feel free to email me

about anything related to the course, but please acquaint yourself carefully with the instructions and clarifications in this syllabus before asking questions related to the course structure or requirements.

Reading materials/required texts: all readings will be posted on the course D2L site.

Meeting time: This is an online course and will be conducted and coordinated through D2L. The course site can be found at: <https://d2l.arizona.edu/d2l/home/614754>. Some of the online lectures for the course are delivered by Professor Michael Gill, who developed an earlier version of the course. However, I am the primary instructor for the overall online course and should be contacted regarding anything in relation to the course. Please do not email Professor Gill.

Requirements and assignments:

The course is organized in 8 thematic modules with two units. Each module contains readings, lectures, discussions, and short quizzes.

Readings and lectures: you must complete the assigned readings and watch the lectures as you progress through the online course. The readings and lectures are the basis for quizzes, discussion activities and essays.

Quizzes: each unit (reading and lecture) is accompanied by a multiple-choice quiz based on material from the relevant reading(s) or lecture. The default time limit for each quiz will be 15 minutes and you cannot retake a quiz.

Discussions: each student is required to take part in the discussion on the topics included in the readings and lectures. This means that each student must post one discussion post and one reply/response post for each course unit. These posts have no required length, but should be intelligently constructed. Some of the questions for discussion are included in each lecture or reading, but your posts can include anything related to the topics covered in the reading or lecture. Quizzes and discussions will provide you an immediate feedback on your learning process and progress.

Essays: each student must write and submit two essays (one short essay (1200-1400 words) and a second, final essay (1500-2000 words)). More detailed instructions will be provided before each due date. Please submit all essays via the Assignment tab on D2L.

Due times/dates: The course is scheduled around a Tuesday/Thursday sessions week cycle, but each quiz and discussion assignment is due at 11:59 pm on Wednesday (for Tuesday sessions) and Sunday (for Thursday sessions, e.g. the deadline for October 12, Thursday session is Sunday, October 15, until 11:59 pm). All readings are continuously accessible on the course site (lectures will be added and presented as we progress through the course), but quizzes and discussion boards are available only one minute after the previous assignment of this type was due. Due dates for essays: Essay 1 (November 7, 11:59 pm), Final essay (December 4, 11:59 pm)

Late work policy: As a rule, late work will not be accepted except in cases of documented emergency or illness. You may petition me using e-mail for an exception, if you believe that you have a compelling reason for turning the assignment in late. Please do so before the deadline for turning it in. The interim schedule for the assignments is at the end of this syllabus.

Assessment and the structure of the grade

Your grade will be determined as follows:

- Quizzes: 20% (two of your lowest quiz grades will be dropped)
- Discussions: 20% (two of your lowest discussion grades will be dropped)

- Essays: 60% (Short essay 1 - 25%; Final essay - 35%)

Grading scale: A: 90 – 100%, B: 80 – 89%, C: 70 – 79 %, D: 60 – 69 %, E: > 60 %

Grading criteria: clear and precise reasoning; effective and persuasive writing; good understanding of concepts, arguments, theories, views discussed and readings; critical assessment of these; thoughtful, insightful and original discussion.

Other relevant information, policies and rules

Student Code of Academic Integrity, Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent intellectual efforts unless otherwise instructed. Plagiarism is the attempt to present someone else's ideas or writing as one's own. Examples include submitting someone else's paper or a professional article for a grade, copying phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from a book, article, or online source and incorporating them into one's paper without quotation marks and proper attribution, using someone else's ideas or arguments without attributing them to that person, quoting a source without using quotation marks, even if the source is attributed to its author. These cases vary in degree of seriousness and university penalties vary, but academic dishonesty of any form will be cause for failure and will be reported. All submitted assignments will be checked for plagiarism with the anti-plagiarism *TurnItIn*® software.

UA's Code of Academic Integrity

- <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity>

Student Code of Conduct

- <https://public.azregents.edu/Policy%20Manual/5-308-Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>

Grading policy

- <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/grades-and-grading-system>

Attendance policy:

- <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/class-attendance-participation-and-administrative-drop>

UA Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment policy

- <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy> (other policies: <http://policy.arizona.edu/>)

As part of this course you are expected to be respectful toward your fellow students and toward myself. This course covers some controversial and emotionally charged issues. If you are not comfortable rationally discussing them in a thoughtful and respectful way and be ready to possibly have some of your views be subject to critical examination, you should consider not taking the course.

If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know and we can discuss the available options so that all accommodations can be made. You can also contact UA Disability Resources (520 621 3268; drc-info@email.arizona.edu) or visit <http://drc.arizona.edu> for further information.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS WITH DUE DATES

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO MORAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY		
October 12 (Thu)	Timmons: <i>Moral Theory</i> - Introduction Lecture 1.1	Quiz 1 Discussion 1
October 17 (Tue)	Miller: <i>Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction</i> - Introduction Simon: <i>Introduction to Political Philosophy</i> - Social and Political Philosophy/Sorting Out the Issues **Knowles: <i>Political Philosophy</i> - Introduction Lecture 1.2	Quiz 2 Discussion 2
MODULE 2: JUSTICE AND UTILITY: MILL AND UTILITARIANISM		
October 19 (Thu)	Mill: <i>Utilitarianism</i> - Chapter 2 Lecture 2.1	Quiz 3 Discussion 3
October 24 (Tue)	Williams: Against Utilitarianism Carritt: Criticism of Utilitarianism Crisp: Taking Stock of Utilitarianism Lecture 2.2	Quiz 4 Discussion 4
MODULE 3: DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE: RAWLS vs NOZICK		
October 26 (Thu)	Rawls - <i>A Theory of Justice</i> Lecture 3.1	Quiz 5 Discussion 5
October 31 (Tue)	Nozick - <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> Lecture 3.2	Quiz 6 Discussion 6
MODULE 4: GLOBAL JUSTICE I: GENERAL ISSUES		
November 2 (Thu)	Singer: <i>One World - A Changing World</i> Nagel: The Problem of Global Justice Lecture 4.1	Quiz 7 Discussion 7
November 7 (Tue)	O'Neill: The Dark Side of Human Rights O'Neill: Agents of Justice Lecture 4.2 Essay 1 due date	Quiz 8 Discussion 8 Essay 1
MODULE 5: GLOBAL JUSTICE II: AFFLUENCE, FAMINE, AND POVERTY		
November 9 (Thu)	Singer: The Life You Can Save **Singer: <i>Famine, Affluence, and Morality</i> Unger: <i>Living High and Letting Die/ A Puzzle About Behavior</i> Toward People in Great Need Lecture 5.1	Quiz 9 Discussion 9
November 14 (Tue)	Hardin: Living on a Lifeboat & Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor Hooker: Sacrificing for the Good of Strangers-Repeatedly Pogge: Take and Give Feldman: Comments on Living High and Letting Die Lecture 5.2	Quiz 10 Discussion 10
MODULE 6: STATUS JUSTICE: MEMBERSHIP AND IMMIGRATION		
November 16 (Thu)	Arendt: <i>The Origins of Totalitarianism/ The Decline of the Nation- State and the End of the Rights of Man</i> Benhabib: <i>The Rights of Others. Aliens, Citizens and Residents/ "The right to have rights: Hannah Arendt on the Contradictions of the Nation-State</i> Lecture 6.1	Quiz 11 Discussion 11
November 21 (Tue)	Risse: On the Morality of Immigration Pevnick, Carroffaro & Risse: Discussions on Immigration Lecture 6.2	Quiz 12 Discussion 12

MODULE 7: SPECIES JUSTICE: JUSTICE FOR NON-HUMAN ANIMALS		
November 28 (Tue)	Coetzee: <i>The Lives of Animals</i> (Tanner Lecture 1997) Engel: The Immorality of Eating Meat Singer: All Animals Are Equal Lecture 7.1	Quiz 13 Discussion 13
November 30 (Thu)	Bruckner: Strict Vegetarianism Is Immoral Bost, etc.: Give Thanks for Meat and other essays Levy: Vegetarianism Lecture 7.2	Quiz 14 Discussion 14
MODULE 8: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE		
December 5 (Tue)	Baxter: People or Penguins - The Case for Optimal Pollution Lecture 8.1 Sylvan: Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic? Devall and Session: Deep Ecology **Singer: <i>One World: One Atmosphere</i> Lecture 8.2	Quiz 15 Discussion 15 Quiz 16 Discussion 16
December 6 (Wed)	Final essay due date	Final essay
December 7 (Thu)	<i>End of the course</i>	

** optional readings

* **Notice:** Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, if deemed appropriate by the instructor.