

Department of Philosophy  
University of Toronto at St. George  
Summer 2015  
**PHL275H1: Introduction to Ethics**

Lecture Time: Mondays 12-3pm, Wednesdays 12-2pm  
Lecture Location: RW 110

Instructor: Parisa Moosavi  
Email: [parisa.moosavi@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:parisa.moosavi@mail.utoronto.ca)  
Office Hours: Thursdays 12-2pm  
Office Location: JH 422

Teaching Assistants: Mason Westfall, James Langlois  
Tutorials: Wednesdays 2pm or 3pm

Course Webpage: on Blackboard ( <https://portal.utoronto.ca> )

**Course Description:**

This course provides an introduction to the problems of *moral* philosophy. We will begin by examining certain skeptical questions that arise when we try to make moral judgments, most importantly the question whether there are objective answers to moral questions or morality is a matter of subjective personal or cultural opinion. Then we will consider three prominent theoretical approaches to morality that try to provide systematic answers to questions about right and wrong: utilitarianism, Kantianism, and Aristotelian virtue ethics. Finally, we will focus more concretely on a few important moral issues that arise in contemporary life, including issues concerning animal rights and abortion.

Our aim in this course is not necessarily to find the right or wrong answers to moral questions – as we progress, you might question whether the search for definitive answers is even the right sort of ethical quest. Instead, our aim will be to better understand what these questions are asking as well as to better understand how best to argue for and defend various conclusions intended to answer them.

**Required Text:**

*The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems* (3rd Ed.), edited by Russ Shafer-Landau. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

(The ebook version of this book is also available at the U of T book store. In order to make a purchase, you can go to the Philosophy text section and pick up a 'jumpbook card' from the shelf and take it to a cashier.)

Additional readings will be made available over the course's Blackboard page.

### **Evaluation:**

10%	Paper 1 (Argument Reconstruction)	300-400 words	Due July 10
15%	Paper 2 (Argument Assessment)	700-800 words	Due July 22
30%	Paper 3 (Comparative Essay)	1300-1500 words	Due August 7
25%	Final Exam		
20%	Attendance and Participation		

### **Requirements, Assignments, and Evaluation:**

- 1) **Argument Reconstruction Assignment:** Sometimes (often!) the structure of a writer's argument isn't immediately self-evident in the text—that is, it isn't laid-out step-by-step, and it doesn't just 'pop' out on a quick read. But, it's incumbent upon us to try to get clear about just what these writers are trying to convey and defend in their arguments. Setting out what you see to be the steps (premises and conclusion) of the argument is your job here.  
Due Date: Friday, July 10 by 5:00pm  
This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade
- 2) **Argument Assessment Assignment:** In your second assignment, in addition to reconstructing the writer's argument, you will be asked to briefly articulate and evaluate a challenge to the argument you have reconstructed.  
Due Date: Wednesday, July 22 by 5:00pm  
This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade
- 3) **Comparative Essay Assignment:** For this roughly 4-5 page paper (1500 words max), you will be asked to comparatively reconstruct and critically assess two opposing arguments on a topic or issue covered in our readings.  
Due Date: Wednesday, August 5 by 5:00pm  
This assignment is worth 30% of your final grade
- 4) **Final Exam:** There will be a 2-hour final examination for this course. It will cover all of the material covered in the course. The date and location of the exam will be announced once the University has set the date. The final exam will be worth 25% of your final grade.

- 5) **Attendance and Participation:** All students are required to register for and attend weekly tutorial sections, which will meet on Wednesdays, beginning on July 8 and continuing through August 5. Attendance for both these tutorials and the regular lectures is mandatory. In addition to attendance, your tutorial leaders will be assessing you on the basis of participation, which may include tutorial preparedness and discussion contributions. Your participation mark in the lectures will be based on completing occasional reading responses, which I will assign in lectures. Attendance and participation is worth 20% of your final grade.

### **Submitting Written Assignments:**

All three paper assignments will be turned in via Blackboard and Turnitin.com. Depending on your TA's policy, you may also be required to submit a hard copy of your paper to your TA.

### **Submitting Written Work via Turnitin.com:**

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. You can find the guide for student use here:

<http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching/academicintegrity/turnitin/guide-students.htm>

Submission work via Turnitin.com is voluntary. However, if you choose to opt-out of using Turnitin.com, you must notify the instructor or your tutorial leader of your decision prior to the due date of the assignment. You will then be required to submit hard copies of all notes, outlines, and rough drafts used in the writing of your paper to your tutorial leader. You will also be required to meet with the instructor to discuss the research methods you utilized in writing your paper. Should you opt-out of using Turnitin.com and should you fail to meet the above listed requirements, you will receive a zero mark on the assignment, without exception.

### **Paper Extension & Late Paper Submission Policy:**

You may be granted an extension of up to 3 days maximum on one written assignment, no questions asked, only if you email your tutorial leader requesting an extension of up to 3 days at least 48 hours before the due date of the assignment – the 48 hour cut-off will be strictly adhered to. Any other extension requests will require an official, university sanctioned written note. Late submission of any written assignment will be penalized 3 percentage points for each day that the assignment is late. If a paper is due online on Friday at 5:00 pm, it will be counted 1

day late if submitted between 5:01pm Friday and 5:00 pm Saturday (submissions between 5:01pm Saturday and 5:00 pm Sunday will count as 2 days late, and so on).

### **Missing the Final Exam:**

There are no extensions on the Final Exam. Should you miss the final exam, you will need to appeal to the registrar for the possibility of taking a make-up exam. This is under the jurisdiction of the registrar. If you miss the final exam and are not permitted a make-up, you will receive a zero for this requirement.

### **Source Materials:**

All source materials appealed to in your written assignments that do not come from assigned course texts, must be cleared with the instructor or your tutorial leader prior to the due date of the assignment. If you do not clear additional sources with the instructor or your tutorial leader prior to turning in your paper, you will be penalized (10% for each source not-cleared, only if the source is cited). None of the assignments for this class will require resources beyond the required readings.

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:**

Cheating on the final exam will result in, at least, a zero mark on the exam. The transgression will be reported to the administration as well, which may result in further penalties.

As for your writings, these are meant to reflect your own ideas, interpretations, reflections, and critiques. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Confirmed cases of plagiarism will result in a zero mark for the assignment, and may result in failure of the course. All cases of plagiarism will be referred for departmental review by the Philosophy Department, which will determine whether or not the case will need further referral to the University Tribunal.

The University of Toronto statement on Academic Honesty and Plagiarism can be found at the following address:

<http://life.utoronto.ca/get-smarter/academic-honesty/>

I know that the allure of internet-accessible materials is strong, but I implore you to resist the urge of turning to these sources. You're all quite talented and capable students; you will all do just fine on your assignments, if you put in the work! And, I'm always happy to discuss your work with you during office hours. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please don't hesitate to ask either me or your tutorial leader. You are all expected to read, understand, and commit to the University of Toronto Academic Honesty code, which is

available at the web address listed above. We will not accept any excuses based on the claim that you didn't know what you were doing amounted to plagiarism. We take this very seriously, and so should you.

### **Citation Conventions:**

It is essential that you cite your source material, when completing your written assignment for class. If you do not cite the assigned texts in your written assignment, your grade will not be higher than 70%. And, to be clear, citing your source material is not the same thing as offering a 'Works Cited' or 'Bibliography' page. You are required to cite your source material in the body of your text (or in footnotes or endnotes) whenever you quote or refer to an author's arguments or claims.

We are not particular about citation conventions (e.g. MLA, APA, or Chicago Style) as long as you cite material in a consistent way. The use of parenthetical in-text citations, including author and page number, with an appended works cited page, is fine—e.g. a proper parenthetical citation for a quote taken from the current page of this syllabus would look like this: (Moosavi, 5). And, again, please note that you must cite more than just quotations. Citations should be made whenever you are discussing any ideas or arguments from a text. Here are two links to sites that provide further links to various referencing conventions:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/students/referencing/conventions.html>

<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/>

### **Accessibility Needs:**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodation for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: [disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:disability.services@utoronto.ca) or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

### **Email Policy:**

Neither your tutorial leaders nor myself will be able to respond to in-depth, substantive questions about the readings or assignments over email. However, I am more than happy to discuss substantive questions of these sorts in office hours. So, please come and see me! Your tutorial leader and I will be happy to address short, logistical, non-substantive questions over email.

### **Electronic Devices:**

Although you will be allowed to take notes on a laptop or tablet, you are not permitted to use your mobile phone in class. You are also not permitted to use any recording devices, without the consent of the instructor.

### **Marking Review:**

Your tutorial leader will be available to discuss and explain the grades and marks that you receive for particular assignments. If you wish to appeal your grade with the instructor, you will receive the new grade given by the instructor, even if it is worse than your initial grade.

### **Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

#### **NOTE:**

- 1) This schedule may change. Any changes to the schedule will be announced on Blackboard.
- 2) You are expected to have the readings completed **prior to the lecture**.
- 3) **EL** – refers to our required course text, *The Ethical Life*  
**BB** – refers to required readings posted on Blackboard

M: June 29	<b>Lecture 1</b>	<b>Course Introduction Arguments and How to Evaluate Them</b> (no reading)
W: July 1	(No Lecture)	Canada Day
M: July 6	<b>Lecture 2</b> <u>Paper 1</u> Assigned	<b>Moral Challenges - Psychological Egoism</b> <i>Plato</i> – Ring of Gyges <b>BB</b> <i>Joel Feinberg</i> – Psychological Egoism <b>BB 493-501</b>
W: July 8	<b>Lecture 3</b>	<b>Moral Challenges - Subjectivism and Relativism</b> <i>J. L. Mackie</i> – The Subjectivity of Values <b>EL 174-182</b> <i>Jesse Prinz</i> – Morality is a Culturally Conditioned Response <b>BB</b>

F: July 10	<u>Paper 1</u> Due	
M: July 13	<b>Lecture 4</b>	<b>Moral Challenges - Objectivism</b> <i>Harry Gensler</i> – Cultural Relativism <b>EL 183-191</b> <i>David Enoch</i> – Why I Am an Objectivist about Ethics (And Why You Are, Too) <b>EL 192-205</b>
W: July 15	<b>Lecture 5</b> <u>Paper 1</u> Returned <u>Paper 2</u> Assigned	<b>Moral Theories - Hedonism</b> <i>John Stuart Mill</i> – Hedonism <b>EL 17-26</b> <i>Robert Nozick</i> – The Experience Machine <b>EL 27-30</b>
M: July 20	<b>Lecture 6</b>	<b>Moral Theories - Utilitarianism</b> <i>John Stuart Mill</i> ‘Utilitarianism’ <b>BB</b> <i>R. M. Hare</i> – A Utilitarian Approach to Ethics <b>BB</b> <i>J. J. C. Smart</i> – Utilitarianism and Justice <b>BB</b>
W: July 22	<b>Lecture 7</b> <u>Paper 2</u> Due	<b>Moral Theories - Utilitarianism</b> <i>Bernard Williams</i> – A Critique of Utilitarianism <b>BB</b>
M: July 27	<b>Lecture 8</b> <u>Paper 3</u> Assigned	<b>Moral Theories - Kantianism</b> <i>Immanuel Kant</i> – The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative <b>EL 87-99</b>
W: July 29	<b>Lecture 9</b> <u>Paper 2</u> Returned	<b>Moral Theories - Kantianism</b> <i>Rae Langton</i> – Maria von Herbert’s Challenge to Kant <b>BB Essay Writing Workshop</b>
M: August 3	(No Lecture)	Civic Holiday
W: August 5	<b>Lecture 10</b>	<b>Moral Issues - Abortion</b> <i>Don Marquis</i> – Why Abortion is Immoral <b>EL 361-371</b> <i>Judith Jarvis Thomson</i> – A Defence of Abortion <b>EL 348-360</b>
F: August 7	<u>Paper 3</u> Due	
M: August 10	<b>Lecture 11</b>	<b>Moral Issues - Moral Status of Animals</b> <i>Alastair Norcross</i> – Puppies, Pigs and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases <b>EL 285-300</b> <i>R. G. Frey</i> – Moral Standing, the Value of Life, and speciesism <b>EL 301-318</b>