

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
2022/23 2nd semester
PHIL5513 Applied Ethics and Moral Dilemmas
Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. Kwok Pak Nin, Samson
Time: Sat 14:30-17:30
Venue: WMY 303

Course overview:

A critical survey of some major moral debates that shows how philosophical thought can be brought to bear upon contemporary issues. This course will examine a range of moral problems confronting individuals in today's society. Students will learn to identify ethical principles and considerations relevant to these problems, to reflect critically on them, and to construct their own responses.

Learning outcomes:

1. Gain familiarity with the major issues and prominent positions in contemporary applied ethics.
2. Understand the key concepts used in philosophical discussions of those issues.
3. Critically discuss and evaluate the main arguments and positions on the issues discussed in the course.
4. Demonstrate the ability to clearly articulate one's own arguments and views on applied issues, both in oral discussion and in writing.

Learning activities and workload:

- 1. Lecture:** 3 hours each week.
- 2. Reading:** 2-3 hours per week. Student are required to read the reading material assigned.

Assessment:

Task nature	Description	Weight
Participation	Attendance and Participation in Class Discussion	10%
Presentation	Group Presentation	30%
Mid-term	Reading Report	20%
Exam	Take-Home Essay Questions	40%

Details of course website:

Lecture notes and information on assignments will be posted on the Blackboard Learn website.

Grade Descriptors:

http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

Course schedule:

Week	Date	Lecture	Reading	Remark
1	Jan 14	Introduction: The nature & method of ethics	Hugh LaFollette, "Theorizing about Ethics"	
2	Jan 21	<u>Lunar New Year Holiday</u>		
3	Jan 28	<u>No Class (Make up class on 29/4)</u>		
4	Feb 4	Meta-Ethics & Normative Ethics	James Rachels, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> , Ch 7&10.	
5	Feb 11	Abortion	Judith Jarvis Thomson, 'A Defense of Abortion'	Submit group member lists
6	Feb 18	Capital Punishment	Stephen Nathanson, <i>An Eye for an Eye?</i> , Ch 2, 4-6.	Brainstorming on presentation ideas
7	Feb 25	Human Enhancement	Michael Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection: What's Wrong with Designer Children, Bionic Athletes, and Genetic Engineering"	Submit presentation topics
8	Mar 4	Licensing Parent	Hugh LaFollette, "Licensing Parents"	Mid-term Questions announcement
9	Mar 11	Global Poverty	Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"	
10	Mar 18	The Moral Status of Animal	Peter Singer, <i>Animal Liberation</i> , Ch 1.	
11	Mar 25	Environmental Ethics	Ronald Sandler, "The Value of Nature"	Preliminary presentation outlines
12	Apr 1	Remaining Issues		
13	Apr 8	<u>Public Holiday</u>		Revised presentation outlines
14	Apr 15	Presentation Groups 1-2		
15	Apr 22	Presentation Groups 3-4		
16	Apr 29	Presentation Groups 5-6		Exam Questions announcement

Recommended learning resources:**General References:**

Cohen, Andrew I. & Wellman, Christopher Heath (eds.). (2013). *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, 2nd edition, Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell.

Frey, R. G. (ed.). (2005). *A Companion to Applied Ethics*, Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell.

LaFollette, Hugh (ed.). (2013). *Ethics in Practice: An Anthology*, 4th edition, Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell.

Glover, Jonathan. (1977). *Causing Death and Saving Lives*, Harmondsworth.

Lippert-Rasmussen, Kasper, Brownlee, Kimberlee, & Coady, David (eds.). (2017). *A Companion to Applied Philosophy*, Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Mappes, Thomas A. & Zembaty, Jane S (eds.). (2006). *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy*, 7th edition. McGraw Hill Higher Education.

Rachels, James. (2003). *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 4th edition. McGraw Hill Higher Education.

Singer, Peter. (2011). *Practical Ethics*, 3rd edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Olen, Jeffrey and Barry, Vincent (eds.). (2004). *Applying Ethics*, 8th Edition, Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing.

Reading list:

Topic-specific lists of references, required and suggested readings will be given in lecture notes and bibliographical notes (separate) for each topic.

Contact:

Lecturer	
Name:	Dr. Kwok Pak Nin, Samson
Office Location:	KHB 414
Consultation Hours	Monday 10:30-12:00
Telephone:	3943-1519
Email:	samsonkpn@cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Assistant	
Name:	Mr. Luk Ching Kit
Office Location:	KHB 404a
Telephone:	3943-7141
Email:	ckluk@cuhk.edu.hk

Feedback for evaluation:

1. Students are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the course via email or meetings with lecturer.
2. Students evaluate the course through a survey and written comments at the end of the term as well as via regular feedback between teacher and students. This information is highly valued and is used to revise teaching methods, tasks, and content.

Academic honesty and plagiarism:

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations.

Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> .

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed **declaration** that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.