PHIL 3000
Ethics 倫理學

Course Outline

Lec：H 1:30pm-3:15pm	**Location: NAH 213**
Tut: TBA	**Location: TBA**

Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)

This course is designed for students to learn how to think about fundamental ethical problems, and how to articulate their thoughts. It also introduces them to some key texts in moral philosophy and helps them to analyze and evaluate the arguments presented therein. Topics to be discussed may include the good life, conceptions of happiness, rationality and morality, duties to others, duties to self.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)

1. Be familiar with some of the central issues in ethics, which might be issues in history of ethics or in contemporary ethics.

2. Be able to read analytically, such that they can identify distinct parts of an argument and grasp each part's role in the overall structure.

3. Be able to read critically, such that they can raise their own questions and form their own objections to the material.

4. Be able to discuss arguments critically and constructively.

5. Be able to defend their own position by giving reasons and explaining the force of those reasons.

Additional learning outcomes

6. Be familiar with major ethical theories (and some of the major historical texts developing these theories) and be able to evaluate them critically.

7. Be able to think through contemporary ethical issues and to draw on the resources of ethical theories in doing so.

Topics

This course will consist mostly of the following two subjects:

> **I. Ethical theories.** We shall explore and evaluate three major ethical theories – consequentialism, deontology, and virtue theory – through the lens of three of their most historically important proponents – Mill, Kant, and Aristotle, respectively.
>
> **II. Ethical problems.** We shall explore some specific ethical questions. What obligations do we have towards individuals suffering from hunger across the world? Is deceiving someone into sex always, in every circumstance, *nonconsensual* sex and, as such, *seriously* morally wrong? Is abortion morally wrong and, if so, why (and how, if at all, does this relate to why, in general, it's wrong to kill people)? In exploring these questions, we'll turn to the resources provided by the above-discussed ethical theories. At the same time, we'll reevaluate these theories in light of how they address these questions.

In addition, we will consider a couple *metaethical* issues. We will consider whether moral imperatives are *categorical* or *hypothetical*, and along with this we'll discuss what reasons – if any – we have to be moral. We'll also discuss whether, all things considered, it would be good to be a *moral saint*.

Learning activities

1. Lecture: one 2-hour session every week

2. Tutorials: one 2-hour session six times over the term (active participation will be expected)

3. Reading: about 30 pages per week on average

4. Assignments: a term paper along with an oral defense, a reading response, a presentation, and active participation

Assessment scheme

Task nature	***Description***	***Weight***
Overall participation	in person (tutorial and lecture)	10%
Tutorial presentation	in person (tutorial, weeks 7, 9, 10, & 13)	20%
Reading response	at home (700-1000 words in English; due 5 November before lecture, by email)	20%
Term paper and oral defense	at home (1800-2300 words in English; due 9 December by 5 pm, by email) and in person (to be scheduled individually)	50%

Remark on AI Use: The University categorizes different approaches to AI use in the classroom and on assignments. This course adopts the following approach: "**Approach 1 – Prohibit all use of AI tools.** Students are not allowed to use any AI tools in any kind of learning activity or assessment that will be counted towards students' final grade of the course, or used for evaluating students' attainment of the desired learning outcomes. Students are expected to produce their own work independently without any collaboration or use of AI tools." (from the University's "Guidelines on the Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessments") **Accordingly, the use of AI on any of the assignments (including both papers and the presentation) is strictly prohibited and will be considered plagiarism. Please note that this means, among other things, that AI cannot be used (nor can any other software be used) for translation.**

Remarks on Assessment Scheme and Assignments

Participation and attendance (10%). It is important to be a regular contributor to class discussion, especially in the tutorial sessions but also in the lecture. Bear in mind that participation will not be judged solely on quantity. Moreover, good participation can take many forms – asking clarificatory questions, asking questions that probe deeply into difficult issues, providing inciteful ideas, helping classmates to think through issues, contributing support or clarification to a classmate's idea, providing thoughtful (and respectful) critique, etc. (Since participation requires attendance, each unexcused absence in the tutorial will result in a three-percentage-point deduction to one's *overall* course score.)

Tutorial presentation (20%). Each student is expected to give (as part of a group) a presentation on the reading material in either the week 7, week 9, week 10, or week 13 tutorial session. The details of the presentation (e.g., group size) will be based on the total number of students in the tutorials and, accordingly, will be determined after drop/add.

Reading response (20%). Each student is expected to write an original reading response in which they accomplish two main tasks. The first task is to present a single argument, objection, problem, or proposed solution to a problem discussed in one of the **weeks 1 – 9** readings. This should not be a summary of the reading as a whole. (The chosen reading can be either a lecture reading or a tutorial reading, *as long as it is not the tutorial reading on which you present*.) The second task is to provide a response to that argument, objection, etc. This should take the form of a single critical claim (a claim in which the writer states whether they agree or disagree, poses an objection or major worry, observes a surprising implication, etc.) followed by a short defense of that critical claim (an argument). The claim in question should not be sociological or exegetical. (The reading response should also begin with a very short introductory paragraph in which the writer says what they'll focus on and what their critical claim will be.) The reading response should be **700 – 1000 words** in English (inclusive of footnotes), and it should be emailed (as a Word document, with English-language font) ***to your tutorial leader*** **before lecture time on 5 November**. (Title the subject of your email "PHIL3000 reading response", and please title the attached term paper file "[YOUR SURNAME, your given name] PHIL3000 reading response".) Please adhere to the deadline and to the word count requirement. **The penalties for lateness and for failing to meet the word count requirement are the same as for the term paper (as written below).** Veriguide reports must be

submitted with the assignment.

Term paper and oral defense (50%). Each student is expected to write an original paper in which they state and defend a substantial philosophical thesis on a topic related to the issues discussed in this course. (The claim should be either a first-order normative ethical claim or a metaethical claim. Accordingly, it should not be sociological or exegetical.) As part of this assignment, each student also must submit a term paper topic proposal and must participate in a brief oral defense of their term paper after its completion.

- The term paper topic proposal should be submitted over email by **1:30 pm on 19 November**. The proposal itself will not be graded. However, if the proposal is late or if what is submitted clearly fails to meet the requirements of the assignment, there will be a **1/3rd of a letter grade penalty** to your term paper grade. In addition, there will be a **1/3rd of a letter grade penalty** to the term paper grade if the topic is not officially approved before our last lecture on 3 December.
- The paper should be **1800 – 2300 words** in English (inclusive of footnotes but not the bibliography) and should be emailed (as a Word document, with English-language font) ***to Professor Rimell (nicholaskrimell@cuhk.edu.hk)*** by 5 p.m. on **9 December (Wednesday)**. (Title the subject of your email "PHIL3000 term paper", and please title the attached term paper file "[YOUR SURNAME, your given name] PHIL3000 term paper".) Please adhere to the deadline and to the word count requirement. If the paper is late, **an initial penalty of 1/3rd of a letter grade** will be applied; an a**dditional penalty of 1/3rd of a letter grade will then be applied for each additional 24-hour period before the paper is submitted**. Similarly, **for every 100 words over or under the word count, a penalty of 1/3rd of a letter grade** will be applied. Veriguide reports must be submitted with the assignment.
- The oral defense will take place shortly after the submission of the paper. It will be brief (about 15 minutes). We will schedule these individually to avoid time conflicts. (The *tentative* dates are **10 – 15/16 December, not including Sunday, 13 December**. This will be solidified after drop/add, when the exact class size is known.) Performance on the oral defense will be included as part of the overall grade for the term paper. If your performance on the oral defense reveals a lack of understanding of the content of your paper, this will significantly impact the evaluation of your paper as a whole. Please note that successful completion of the oral defense is necessary in order to receive credit on the term paper; **failure to attend the oral defense (at your scheduled time) will result in a 0 on your term paper and, consequently, your failing the course.** Please note also that, due to the large number of students in the course, **once your specific oral defense has been scheduled, rescheduling will not be possible except for in cases involving emergencies.**

Grade Descriptor

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

Classroom Policies and Related Notes

Come prepared. Active reading and engagement with the text must be done prior to meetings (lectures and tutorials). You should come to each meeting either with a good understanding of the material presented in the assigned reading or with questions that will help you to gain such an understanding. You should also bring both the current week's and the previous week's reading material (as well as any handouts) to the meeting, either in hard copy or on a tablet/e-reader (or, in special circumstances, on a laptop computer – see below).

Appropriate screen presence. I am committed to creating an environment in our classroom that is conducive to good discussion. To this end, please use technology in the classroom only for purposes specifically related to the current class activity (e.g., consulting the text, taking notes). I ask that you use a laptop *only if* (a) its use is critical to your optimizing your learning experience and (b) you are willing to sit somewhere that will ensure that the laptop isn't distracting to others (i.e., to the side or in the back). **Do not use cell phones (or leave them out on your desk) in class. (Cell phone use in class will result in an automatic deduction of two points, each time, from your participation grade for the term.)** If you have a special reason why you need to use a cell phone in class, please discuss this with me individually beforehand.

Maintain a welcoming and supportive environment. It is important that we maintain a welcoming and supportive environment. Abrasive comments, derogatory language, etc., will not be tolerated.

Accommodations. I have designed this course with the goal that everyone in it can succeed. I also

appreciate that there are multiple ways to learn. I would welcome students to discuss with me their learning styles and how we can try to accommodate them in this course.

My email and meeting policy. I am happy to answer short questions over email, and I am also happy to discuss more involved questions in person. But please email me **at least two business days in advance** of when you would like an email response, and if you wish to meet with me in person please email me **at least four business days in advance** of when, at the latest, you'd like to meet.

Required Reading

All required reading (as indicated in the course schedule below) will be posted to Blackboard.

Recommended learning resources

Shafer-Landau, Russ (2003). *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shafer-Landau, Russ (2017). *The Fundamentals of Ethics*, 4th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (https://iep.utm.edu/)

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (https://plato.stanford.edu/)

Additional recommended readings (indicated in the course schedule) will be available on Blackboard.

Course schedule

Week	***Topics***	***Required reading***	***Tutorials***
1: 10 Sep	Consequentialism: Introduction	Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. 1 **Recommended:** Shafer-Landau, *Fundamentals*, ch. 9	
2: 17 Sep	Consequentialism: Elaboration and Challenges	Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. 2	
3: 24 Sep	Consequentialism: More Challenges	Selection from Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism" Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk away from Omelas" Nozick, "The Experience Machine" **Recommended:** Shafer-Landau, *Fundamentals*, ch. 10	
4: 1 Oct	**No class**		
5: 8 Oct	Deontology: Introduction	Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, §1 **Recommended:** Shafer-Landau, *Fundamentals*, chapters 11-12	Tutorial 1
6: 15 Oct	Deontology: Elaboration and Challenges	Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, §2 (4:406-4:430 only, i.e. §2 through the first half of Bennett, p. 30)	
7: 22 Oct	Virtue Ethics: Introduction	Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, chapters 1, 4, 5, & 7 **Recommended:** Shafer-Landau, *Fundamentals*, ch. 17 (pp. 256-265 only)	Tutorial 2: Singer, "Equality for Animals?" (from *Practical Ethics*)

8: 29 Oct	Virtue Ethics: Elaboration and Challenges	Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, chapters 1 & 4-9 **Recommended:** Shafer-Landau, *Fundamentals*, ch. 17 (pp. 266-275 only)	
9: 5 Nov	Why Be Moral? ***Reading response due by email before lecture.***	Foot, "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives" **Recommended:** Shafer-Landau, *Fundamentals*, ch. 19, and Williams, "Internal and External Reasons"	Tutorial 3: Wolf, "Moral Saints"
10: 12 Nov	World Hunger	Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" **Recommended:** O'Neill, "Ending World Hunger"	Tutorial 4: Lin, "Why Ethics Matters for Autonomous Cars"
11: 19 Nov	Deception and Consent ***Term paper topics due by email before lecture.***	Dougherty, "Sex, Lies, and Consent" **Recommended:** McGregor, "Force, Consent, and the Reasonable Woman"	
12: 26 Nov	Abortion Ethics	Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"	Tutorial 5: Term paper workshop
13: 3 Dec	Abortion Ethics (cont.)	Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral"	Tutorial 6: Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

9 Dec (Wednesday): Term paper due by email by 5 p.m.

10 – 15/16 Dec (not including Sunday, 13 Dec): *tentative* dates of oral examinations (to be solidified after drop/add)

Details of course website

Reading materials, assignments, and lecture notes will be posted to Blackboard.

Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

Teacher	
Name:	RIMELL, Nicholas
Office location:	Room 416, Fung King Hey Building
Email:	nicholaskrimell@cuhk.edu.hk

TA	
Name:	TBA
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

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.