

PHIL 1200: Philosophy and Society

Spring 2013

section 004: MWF 1pm-1:50, HLMS 267

section 006: MWF 3pm-3:50, HLMS 141

Syllabus

Instructor

Chad Vance
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Office Hours: MW 11:00am-12:30pm
Buchanan's Coffee (on the hill)

What Is This Class About?

This is primarily an ethics class, designed to give you a basic understanding of the sorts of moral issues that affect human society. At the same time, the course should give you some of the tools that you will need in order to think critically, be rational, better argue for what you believe, and investigate the question of how to live morally. The course is divided into three units:

First Unit: Political Philosophy. No matter where we go, we are subject to certain rules and authorities. Our own government imposes a great deal of restrictions upon us, demands a portion of our income, etc. Is this practice legitimate? What legitimizes it? Is it fair? What is fairness, anyway? Are there any circumstances under which it is permissible to disobey the state? You're about to find out.

Second Unit: Moral Issues, Pt. 1. Here, we will examine the interface between morality and society, and ask whether or not it is permissible to kill enemy combatants, torture and kill criminals; and whether we ought to endorse affirmative action, require licenses for parenting, or ban same-sex marriage, drugs, human cloning, and euthanasia.

Third Unit: Moral Issues, Pt. 2. Here we will tackle several more social-ethical issues; but in this section we will move away from questions about how we ought to treat adult human beings to questions about how we ought to treat everything else. Namely, we will ask whether it is morally permissible to abort a fetus, eat an animal, ignore starving children, overpopulate the Earth, pollute it, or cause the extinction of a species.

Required Text

What's Wrong?: Applied Ethicists and Their Critics, edited by David Boonin and Graham Oddie. 2nd edition, 2009, Oxford University Press; ISBN: 9780195337808

Required readings not found in *What's Wrong?* (WW) will be posted under "Assigned Readings" as .pdf files on the course website, here:

<http://rintintin.colorado.edu/~vancecd/phil1200/phil1200.html>

Course Requirements

1. *Exams (40%)*. You will take a mid-term exam (15%) and a final exam (25%).
2. *Papers (30%)*. You will write two papers. The first (10%) will be a short diagnostic paper, 450-750 words (i.e., about 2 pages), and the second (20%) will be a longer paper, 900-1500 words in length (i.e., 3 - 5 pages). *Topics and more info: TBA.*
3. *Class Debate (10%)*. You will participate in an in-class debate. *More info: TBA.*
4. *Quizzes (10%)*. You will take a total of 11 short reading quizzes. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped; i.e., your 10 best scores will constitute your quiz grade (1% each).
5. *Participation (10%)*. A portion of your grade will depend on your ability to come to class (on time and prepared), participate in class discussion, and refrain from being disruptive, falling asleep, sending text messages, or surfing the internet.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). More information on the Honor Code can be found at: honorcode.colorado.edu/about-honor-code/definitions

NOTE: Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member (i.e., you will automatically receive an F for the course) as well as non-academic sanctions (e.g., academic probation, suspension, or expulsion).

Disability Services

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and colorado.edu/disabilityservices.

Religious Observances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. Please let me know well in advance about any such conflicts, so we can resolve them. For more information, see colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. See policies at colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html.

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policies on Discrimination and Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at colorado.edu/odh.

Below is a schedule of the topics that we will cover, along with which reading(s) you should complete for each class meeting. Readings found in our textbook are marked: (WW). Readings not found in the text are marked: (pdf). Please note the two **paper due dates**, three **debate days**, and the two **exam dates**.

Unit One	Political Philosophy	
Week 1	Introduction	
Mon 1/14	Intro/Syllabus/Logic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What's Wrong With Arguing?" section 1, section 3¹, and section 4.1 (WW: 1-12)
Wed 1/16	Irrationality and Bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huemer, "Why People Are Irrational About Politics" (pdf)
Fri 1/18	No new topics	No new readings
Week 2	Contract Theory	
Wed 1/23	Contract Theory – Hobbes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huemer, "The State" section 1 & sections 4.1-4.2 (pdf) • Dupré, "Leviathan" (pdf) • Hobbes, "Leviathan" (pdf) • Dupré, "The Prisoner's Dilemma" (pdf)
Fri 1/25	Contract Theory – Locke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locke, "Second Treatise" (pdf)
Week 3	Utilitarianism/Anarchy	
Mon 1/28	Utilitarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huemer, "The State" section 3, sections 4.3-4.6, & section 2 (pdf) • Hume, "On the Social Contract" (pdf)
Wed 1/30	No new topics	No new readings
Fri 2/1	Anarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nozick, "The Tale of the Slave" (pdf) • Huemer, "The State" sections 5 & 6 (pdf)
Week 4	Distributive Justice	
Mon 2/4	Distributive Justice – Rawls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dupré, "The Difference Principle" (pdf) • Rawls, "Justice As Fairness" (pdf)
Wed 2/6	Distributive Justice – Nozick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hale, "The Veil of Opulence" (online) http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/12/the-veil-of-opulence/ • "Nozick & His Critics" (WW: 580-581) • Nozick, "Distributive Justice"² (WW: 582-589)
Fri 2/8	No new topics	No new readings
Week 5	Civil Disobedience	
Mon 2/11	Civil Disobedience DEBATE DAY: Group 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plato, "Crito" • The Declaration of Independence (pdf) • King, "Letter from the Birmingham City Jail" (pdf)
Wed 2/13	Review: Unit One Exam	No new readings
Fri 2/15	EXAM: UNIT ONE	No new readings

¹ You may stop reading section 3 on page 7, at the end of the paragraph that ends, "...might be productively criticized." You may then skip the remainder of section 3.

² Do not read the last 2 sections of this article (i.e., do not read the sections, "Locke's Theory of Acquisition" and "The Proviso").

Unit Two		Moral Issues, Part 1
Week 6	Punishment	
Mon 2/18	Punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Barnett & His Critics" (WW: 537-539) • Barnett, "Restitution: A New Paradigm of Criminal Justice" (WW: 540-552)
Wed 2/20	Capital Punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pojman, "A Defense of the Death Penalty" (pdf)
Fri 2/22	No new topics	No new readings
Week 7	War	
Mon 2/25	Killing in War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Fullinwider & His Critics" (WW: 33-35) • Fullinwider, "War and Innocence" (WW: 36-39)
Wed 2/27	Torture as Interrogation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Dershowitz & His Critics" (WW: 560-561) • Dershowitz, "Tortured Reasoning" (WW: 564-571)
Fri 3/1	No new topics	No new readings
Week 8	Discrimination	
Mon 3/4	Affirmative Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Himma & His Critics" (WW: 374-375) • Himma, "Discrimination and Disidentification" (WW: 376-385)
Wed 3/6	Same-Sex Marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Jordan & His Critics" (WW: 297-298) • Jordan, "Is it Wrong to Discriminate on the Basis of Sexuality?" (WW: 299-306)
Fri 3/8	No new topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boonin, "Same Sex Marriage & the Argument From Disagreement" (WW: 307-310) • Sullivan, "Virtually Normal" (WW: 311)
Week 9	Sex and Drugs	
Mon 3/11	Parent Licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "LaFollette & His Critics" (WW: 312-313) • LaFollette, "Licensing Parents" (WW: 314-321)
Wed 3/13	Drug Legalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huemer, "America's Unjust Drug War" (pdf)
Fri 3/15	No new topics DEBATE DAY: Group 2	No new readings
Week 10	Artificial Life and Death	
Mon 3/18	Human Cloning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The President's Council on Bioethics & Its Critics" (WW: 475-477) • President's Council, "Human Cloning and Human Dignity" (WW: 477-490)
Wed 3/20	Euthanasia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Rachels & His Critics"³ (WW: 44-45) • Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia" (WW: 46-50)
Fri 3/22	No new topics DUE: PAPER #1	No new readings
Fall Break		
3/25 – 3/29	Fall Break	No new readings

³ Introductory remarks on Rachels' article are mandatory. The remarks on his critics are optional.

Unit Three		Moral Issues, Part 2
Week 11	Abortion	
Mon 4/1	Abortion (against)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Marquis & His Critics" (WW: 58-60)³ • Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral" (WW: 61-69)
Wed 4/3	Abortion (for)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Thomson & Her Critics"³ (WW: 85-87) • Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" (WW: 89-98)
Fri 4/5	No new topics	No new readings
Week 12	Animal Rights	
Mon 4/8	CLASS CANCELLED	No new readings
Wed 4/10	Animal Rights (against)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohen, "The Case for the Use of Animals" (pdf)
Fri 4/12	Animal Rights (for)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People" (pdf)
Week 13	Famine Relief	
Mon 4/15	No new topics	No new readings
Wed 4/17	Famine Relief DEBATE DAY: Group 3	No new readings
Fri 4/19	Famine Relief (against)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics" (pdf) • Patton, "Game Preserve Ethics" (pdf)
Week 14	Future Generations	
Mon 4/22	Famine Relief (for)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Singer & His Critics" (WW: 131-133) • Singer, "Famine, Affluence & Morality" (WW: 135-142)
Wed 4/24	No new topics	No new readings
Fri 4/26	Overpopulation DUE: PAPER #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Parfit & His Critics" (WW: 348-350) • Parfit, "Overpopulation and the Quality of Life" (WW: 351-356)
Week 15	Environmentalism	
Mon 4/29	Environmentalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Why Save Endangered Species?" (pdf) • Sober, "Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism"⁴ (pdf)
Wed 5/1	No new topics	No new readings
Fri 5/3	Review: Final Exam	No new readings
Sat 5/4	FINAL EXAM: 3pm class	Section 006: 4:30pm – 7:00pm
Wed 5/8	FINAL EXAM: 1pm class	Section 004: 7:30pm – 10:00pm

⁴ Read only sections I, II, III, and VII.