

University at Buffalo Department of Philosophy

Winter Session: January 5 to 23, 2015

Course Descriptions

<http://www.buffalo.edu/cas/philosophy/courses.html>

<http://www.buffalo.edu/cas/philosophy/undergrad-study/ug-courses/winter-session.html>

PHI 107 TA5 (LEC)

Ethics

Brian Donohue

On-line only # 10273

Ethics, or moral philosophy, is concerned with right and wrong conduct, duties, obligations, values, virtues, moral principles, moral deliberation, moral dilemmas, how one should live, and what sort of world one should promote. In this course, we will survey the three major areas of ethical thought: normative ethics, applied ethics, and metaethics. Normative ethics is concerned with providing a systematic account of general ethical principles. It seeks answers to questions such as: What are my duties? Which general principles or rules of conduct should I adopt? Do the ends justify the means? Applied ethics, as its name suggests, is the application of ethical principles and intuitions to concrete issues and cases. It seeks answers to questions such as: Is abortion permissible? Is it okay to eat meat? Do we owe foreign aid, and if so, how much? Metaethics is concerned with the status of ethics and ethical discourse. It seeks answers to questions such as: Are moral judgments merely expressions of emotional states? Is morality a social construct? Do moral considerations have "binding force"?

We will be surveying these issues and theories through study of the writings of significant historical and contemporary philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Kant, Mill, Nietzsche, Moore, Anscombe, Mackie, Thompson, Singer, and others). One textbook is required. Coursework will consist of regular reading responses, three exams, and participation in an online discussion forum.

PHI 107 TA3 (LEC)

Ethics

Brendan Cline

On-line only # 10218

Our sophisticated minds enable us humans to ask fundamental questions about our existence: How should I live? What is the best life for beings like us? Is pleasure the only thing worth striving for, or does living well involve more than that? What do we humans owe to each other? Is morality a matter of opinion, or does it deal with

objective facts? Is there a God, and how would the answer to this question affect our moral responsibilities?

In this course we will survey these and other related questions, studying some of the most influential answers that have been put forward by philosophers. Students will develop their ability to think critically about their values and engage in constructive philosophical argument about ethical matters.

*This course is conducted entirely on-line (including any exams the course might include).
At no time will this course require students to be on campus.*

PHI 115 TA4 (LEC)

Critical Thinking

Patrick Kelly

On-line only #10060

This course teaches techniques in argumentation and argument analysis. Students will learn how to spot good arguments from bad ones as well as provide counter-arguments. Students will engage in argumentative debate on a variety of topical issues meant to hone their skills. Taking this course will strengthen writing and reading comprehension skills, allowing students to better absorb information, analyze it, and express themselves. They will learn invaluable skills that can be applied to all majors, especially those requiring students to write argumentative essays.

Skills learned in this course will be invaluable for students who plan on taking any standardized tests such as the GRE or LSAT.

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At no time will this course require students to be on campus.*

PHI 237 TA1 (LEC)

Social and Ethical Values in Medicine

Yuichi Minemura

On-line only #10061

Through the course work, students will become familiar with the leading arguments on contemporary bioethical issues (e.g., abortion, informed consent, organ procurement, etc.) The goal is that students develop the ability to critically examine the pros and cons of each topic of bioethics and to defend their views with a comprehensive understanding of the arguments and sufficient reasoning.

Upon completion of the course, students will be well-prepared for an advanced course in philosophy, dentistry, nursing, or medicine, fulfilling the course requirements. No

prerequisites or experience in philosophy and biology is required. Lecture outlines, notes, and PowerPoint slides will be provided every week.

*This course is conducted entirely on-line (including any exams the course might include).
At no time will this course require students to be on campus.*

PHI 237 TA2 (LEC) Social and Ethical Values in Medicine Clint Dowland
On-line only #10217

We will begin this course by discussing the issue of killing versus letting die, specifically in the form of active versus passive euthanasia. In relation to euthanasia we will also address topics such as advance directives and definitions of death. Along with the standard definitions death we will also look at other views about when we go out existence and what we are. These issues are also important in relation to the topic of abortion, another major issue in medical ethics.

*This course is conducted entirely on-line (including any exams the course might include).
At no time will this course require students to be on campus.*

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