PHIL1120 SOCIAL ETHICS

Instructor

Dr. Rachel Robison
rachel.robison@usu.edu
Office: Eccles Conference Center 102 B
Office Hours: M/W 10:30-11:20
Course Location and Times: Old Main 304 12:30-1:20 p.m.

Course Description

In this course, we study metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. We will first try to discover the grounding or foundation for ethical judgments and value judgments generally. We will then consider objective moral theories that attempt to provide a framework from which we can judge whether or not an action is moral. Finally, we will discuss contemporary moral issues such as the nature of our obligations to those suffering from lack of access to food, shelter and medical care, the extent of our obligations to non-human animals, ethical issues raised by developing technologies (self-driving cars, use of drones both in war time and at home, etc.), and our moral responsibilities to the environment.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
2. Develop a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values.
3. Gain a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity.

Course Resources

Textbook: *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* by James and Stuart Rachels. (7th through 9th editions are acceptable).
Course Requirements (1000 points are possible in this class)

1. 20% (200 points) Participation in weekly online discussions. Students must make at least one post AND must offer at least one reply to another person's post every week for the first ten weeks of the course.
2. 30% Ethics Bowl. (300 points) Students will engage in a project that culminates in a series of debates at the end of the semester. This assignment has several components: a) Scoring sheets (40 points, 10 each). Students are required to attend all debates and serve as judges. b) Response to debates (40 points, 10 each). Students are required to attend all debates and offer a response on Canvas to what they witnessed c) Online assignments on Canvas (120 points, 40 each) designed to help students prepare their cases and c) Participation in the Ethics Bowl debate itself (100 points).
3. 25% (250 points) Midterm. Multiple choice, True False, Short Answer.
4. 25% (250 points) Final. Multiple choice, True False, Short Answer.

Grade Scheme

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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Course Schedule/Outline (Subject to Change)
Week One
Monday, August 26th: Review of Syllabus and Introduction to Ethics.
Wednesday, August 28th: Introduction to Ethics.
Friday, August 30th: Metaethics: The Relationship between Religion and Ethics. 
Reading: The Elements of Moral Philosophy (EMP) Chapter 4: Does Morality Depend on Religion?
Due: Writing Assignment One.

Week Two
Monday, September 2nd: LABOR DAY, NO CLASS.
Wednesday, September 4th: No New Reading. Continued Discussion of EMP Chapter 4.
Friday, September 6th: Metaethics: Subjectivism.
Reading: EMP Chapter 3: Subjectivism in Ethics.
Due: Writing Assignment Two.

Week Three
Monday, September 9th: Metaethics: Cultural Ethical Realativism
Reading: EMP Chapter 2: The Challenge of Cultural Relativism.
Wednesday, September 11th: No New Reading. Continued Discussion of EMP Chapter 2.
Friday, September 13th: Introduction to Normative Ethical Theory.
Due: Writing Assignment Three.

Week Four
Monday, September 16th: Introduction to Normative Ethical Theory.
Wednesday, September 18th: Deontology.
Reading: EMP Chapter 10: Kant and Respect for Persons.
Friday, September 20th: No New Reading. Continued Discussion of EMP Chapter 10.
Due: Writing Assignment Four.
Week Five
Monday, September 23rd: Utilitarianism
Reading: EMP Chapter 7: The Utilitarian Approach.
Wednesday, September 25th: Utilitarianism.
Reading: EMP Chapter 8: The Debate Over Utilitarianism.
Friday, September 27th: NO CLASS, PROFESSOR AT CONFERENCE.
Due: Writing Assignment Five.

Week Six
Monday, September 30th: NO CLASS, PROFESSOR AT CONFERENCE.
Wednesday, October 2nd: Virtue Ethics.
Reading: EMP Chapter 12: Virtue Ethics.
Friday, October 4th: NO CLASS, PROFESSOR AT CONFERENCE.
Due: Writing Assignment Six.

Week Seven
Monday, October 7th: No New Reading. Continued Discussion of EMP Chapter 12.
Wednesday, October 9th: Care Ethics.
Reading: EMP Chapter 11: Feminism and the Ethics of Care.
Friday, October 11th: No New Reading. Continued Discussion of EMP Chapter 12.
Due: Writing Assignment Seven.

Week Eight
Monday, October 14th: Review
Wednesday, October 16th: EXAM ONE. Taken in the testing center NO CLASS.
Friday, October 18th: FALL BREAK, NO CLASS.

Contemporary Moral Issues
Unit One: Global Economic Justice

Week Nine: Ethics Bowl Cases 1. Batkid 2. Soylent Hunger

Monday, October 21st: Peter Singer *Famine, Affluence, and Morality* (On Canvas).
Wednesday, October 23rd: Garrett Hardin *Living on a Lifeboat*. (On Canvas).

Due: Writing Assignment Eight.

Unit Two: Ethics and Animals

Week Ten: Ethics Bowl Cases 1. Destroying Wildlife to Save It 2. Nonhuman Persons

Monday, October 28th: The Case Against Animal Rights by Carl Cohen (On Canvas).
Wednesday, October 30th: A Utilitarian Case for Animal Liberation by Peter Singer.
Friday, November 1st: Reading: The Radical Egalitarian Case for Animal Rights by Tom Regan.

Due: Writing Assignment Nine.

Unit Three: Environmental Ethics

Week Eleven

Monday, November 4th: Reading TBA
Wednesday, November 6th: Reading TBA

Due: Ethics Bowl Prompt One.

Friday, November 8th: Reading TBA

Due: Writing Assignment Ten.

Unit Four: Ethics and Technology

Week Twelve

Monday, November 11th: Reading TBA
Wednesday, November 13th: Reading TBA

Due: Ethics Bowl Prompt Two.
Friday, November 15th: Reading TBA

Week Thirteen: Ethics and Technology
Monday, November 18th: REVIEW
Wednesday, November 20th: EXAM TWO IN TESTING CENTER.  
Due: Ethics Bowl Prompt Three.
Friday, November 22nd: Ethics Bowl One.

Week Fourteen:
Monday, November 25th: Ethics Bowl Two
Wednesday, November 27th: THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS.
Friday, November 29th: THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS.

Week Fifteen:
Monday, December 2nd: Ethics Bowl Three
Wednesday, December 4th: Ethics Bowl Four
Friday, December 6th: Ethics Bowl Five.

Other Course Policies

Classroom Civility.

Utah State University supports the principle of freedom of expression for both faculty and students. The University respects the rights of faculty to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede the learning process. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Read Student Code Article V Section V-3 (Links to an external site.) for more information.

Nonattendance Policy

Students May Be Dropped For Nonattendance
If a student does not attend a class during the first week of the term or by the second class meeting, whichever comes first, the instructor may submit a request to have the student dropped from the course. *(This does not remove responsibility from the student to drop courses which he or she does not plan to attend.)* This option is typically used for classes that are full and the instructor is trying to make a seat available for another student, but may be considered for other courses. Requests must be made during the first 20 percent of the course and will be considered on an individual student basis. Students who are dropped from courses will be notified by the Registrar's Office through their preferred e-mail account (see 2018-2019 General Catalog *(Links to an external site.)*).

Assumption of Risk

All classes, programs, and extracurricular activities within the University involve some risk, and certain ones involve travel. The University provides opportunities to participate in these programs on a voluntary basis. Therefore, students should not participate in them if they do not care to assume the risks. Students can ask the respective program leaders/sponsors about the possible risks a program may generate, and if students are not willing to assume the risks, they should not select that program. By voluntarily participating in classes, programs, and extracurricular activities, a student does so at his or her own risk. General information about University Risk Management policies, insurance coverage, vehicle use policies, and risk management forms can be found at: [http://www.usu.edu/riskmgt/](http://www.usu.edu/riskmgt/) *(Links to an external site.)*

Library Services

All USU students attending classes in Logan, at our Regional Campuses, or online can access all databases, e-journals, and e-books regardless of location. Additionally, the library will mail printed books to students, at no charge to them. Students can also borrow books from any Utah academic library. Take advantage of all library services and learn more at [libguides.usu.edu/rc.](http://libguides.usu.edu/rc.) *(Links to an external site.)*

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University Policies & Procedures

**Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities**
Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. Faculty Code Policy #403 further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity." A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Academic Dishonesty

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University’s Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating**: using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
  - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done “individually;”
  - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
  - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
  - Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
  - Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
  - Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- **Falsification**: altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
Plagiarism: representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

For additional information go to: ARTICLE VI. University Regulations Regarding Academic Integrity (Links to an external site.)

Sexual Harassment/Title IX
Utah State University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free from acts of sexual misconduct and discrimination and to fostering respect and dignity for all members of the USU community. Title IX and USU Policy 339 (Links to an external site.) address sexual harassment in the workplace and academic setting. The university responds promptly upon learning of any form of possible discrimination or sexual misconduct. Any individual may contact USU’s Office of Equity (Links to an external site.) for available options and resources or clarification. The university has established a complaint procedure to handle all types of discrimination complaints, including sexual harassment (USU Policy 305 (Links to an external site.)), and has designated the Office of Equity Director/Title IX Coordinator as the official responsible for receiving and investigating complaints of sexual harassment.

Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy
Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Students with Disabilities
USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) (Links to an external site.) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, (435) 797-2444, drc@usu.edu). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

Diversity Statement
Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:
Division of Student Affairs: https://studentaffairs.usu.edu (Links to an external site.), (435) 797-1712, studentservices@usu.edu, TSC 220
Student Legal Services: https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services (Links to an external site.), (435) 797-2912, TSC 326,
Access and Diversity: http://accesscenter.usu.edu (Links to an external site.), (435) 797-1728, access@usu.edu; TSC 315
Multicultural Programs: http://accesscenter.usu.edu/multiculture (Links to an external site.), (435) 797-1728, TSC 315
LGBTQA Programs: http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa (Links to an external site.), (435) 797-1728, TSC 3145
Provost's Office Diversity Resources: https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity (Links to an external site.), (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:
The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University: https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode (Links to an external site.)

Grievance Process
Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: Article VII (Links to an external site.).

Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:
- Student Conduct (Links to an external site.)
- Student Code (Links to an external site.)
- Academic Integrity (Links to an external site.)
- USU Selected Academic Policies and Procedures (Links to an external site.)
- USU Academic Policies and Procedures (Links to an external site.)
- Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy (Links to an external site.)

Emergency Procedures
In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.

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