

Introduction to Philosophy: Ethics

Phil 13

Winter Quarter 2013

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30am to 10:50am
Center Hall 119

Instructor Information:

Theron Pummer

Office Hours: Friday noon-2:00pm (HSS 7093)

E-mail: tgpummer@gmail.com

Teaching Assistant Information:

Matthew Pead

Sections: Monday 10am-10:50am (CENTR 217A), Monday 3pm-3:50pm (CENTR 203)

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11am-noon (HSS 8029)

E-mail: mpead@ucsd.edu

Matthew Piper

Sections: Wednesday 10am-10:50am (CENTR 207), Wednesday 2pm-2:50pm (HSS 1305)

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11am-noon (HSS 8037)

E-mail: mpiper@ucsd.edu

Cory Davia

Sections: Friday 11am-11:50am (U413 1)

Office Hours: Thursday 11am-noon (HSS 8088)

E-mail: cdavia@ucsd.edu

Required Texts:

- *Death* by Shelly Kagan
- *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* by John Perry
- *Living High and Letting Die* by Peter Unger
- Other course readings are available on electronic reserves:
<http://reserves.ucsd.edu/eres/default.aspx> (go to Students, then select the Philosophy Department, then select Phil 13, password is **tp13**)

Course Content:

We will discuss the significance of death, and the ethics of killing and letting die. In particular, we will ask:

- (1) Is death a harm? If so, when? And for whom? How bad is it relative to other harms?
- (2) Is it wrong to allow distant needy persons to die? If so, what is the extent of our moral duty to prevent such deaths?
- (3) Is it morally worse to kill than to let die? Is it permissible to kill some people in order to prevent more people from dying? If so, when?

These are some of the most important and difficult questions that anyone could ask. I hope you are ready for an intellectual challenge, and to consider a variety of views, cases, arguments, and counterarguments. With any luck, this course will inspire you to contemplate seriously what matters in your life, and how it compares with what matters in the lives of others.

Class Format & Expectations:

A typical class will consist of a lecture on one or more of the assigned essays. One aim of the lectures is to work through the arguments offered in the readings in a careful and systematic way. Another aim is to raise objections to these arguments. Since the lectures will presuppose familiarity with the relevant readings, you are required to have completed the reading in advance of the lecture on it. Particularly in discussion sections, you are encouraged to raise questions, comments, and objections.

The authors of the papers we will read try to convince you that their view is correct. My goal as your instructor is different. I am more like a tour guide: I aim to help you see the rich and complex moral landscape, rather than persuade you of any particular doctrine. At any rate, you should primarily be concerned with figuring out which views are the most justified, rather than figuring out what I, the Teaching Assistants, or anybody else happens to believe. Many of the issues we will discuss are very provocative and controversial. You are bound at some point to disagree with what the authors, I, or your classmates say. Especially in the face of deep disagreement, I ask that you be respectful and charitable to others.

Grading and Assignments:

(1) Participation	... 10%
(2) Midterm exam	... 25%
(3) Adjudication paper	... 30%
(4) Final exam	... 35%

- **Important Dates.** On Thursday, January 31st you will take the midterm exam. The midterm will contain multiple choice questions, short responses, and short essays. It will cover lectures/readings 1 through 7 (see below). You will have 80 minutes to complete it. The adjudication paper will be 5-6 double-spaced pages (Times New Roman, 12 point font, 1 inch margins). You will receive the prompt for it upon completion of the midterm exam, and the paper will be due on Tuesday, February 19th in lecture. To receive credit for the paper, you must upload it to www.turnitin.com (I will provide instructions on how to do this). The format of the final exam will be identical to that of the midterm. The final will cover lectures/readings 9 through 20 (see below). The final exam is on Tuesday, March 19th from 8am to 10:59am.
- **Your participation grade** will be a function of your attendance and participation during section, as well as participation during office hours or over email (you are not required to participate in all of these ways to receive full credit for participation). Your TA may decide to give you surprise quizzes on the assigned readings, which would factor into your participation grade.
- There is no attendance policy for lecture, but your grade will likely suffer if you are absent. There are **absolutely no make-up exams**, unless you can prove (e.g., with sufficient medical documentation) that an emergency prevented you from attending class. You may not take an exam in advance of the dates here specified, unless you contact me during the first week of class, and offer a very good reason.

Reading and Lecture Responsibilities:

Both the required and the optional readings are available on electronic reserves. Optional readings are readings which I may talk about in lecture, in addition to the required readings. You are not required to read them, but reading them will probably help you better understand the relevant lecture. You are responsible for whatever is said in lecture, including what is said about the optional readings. You are also responsible for the required readings, including the parts of these readings which are not mentioned in lecture. (Each of the readings listed in the schedule below is required unless specified otherwise.)

Lecture and Reading Schedule:

1. January 8th (Tues)

Introduction to the course, logic, and arguments in ethics

- Syllabus
- Logic: premises, conclusions, validity, and soundness

- Arguments in ethics, the distinction between “is” and “ought”
- Jonathan Glover, “The Scope and Limits of Moral Argument,” Jeff McMahan, “Moral Intuition,” and David Brink, “The Autonomy of Ethics,” (all three are optional)

2. January 10th (Thurs)

Personal identity and death

- John Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*

3. January 15th (Tues)

The badness of death

- Thomas Nagel, “Death”

4. January 17th (Thurs)

The badness of death, continued

- Shelly Kagan, *Death* (chapter 10)

5. January 22th (Tues)

The goodness of life

- Derek Parfit, “What Makes Someone’s Life Go Best?”

6. January 24th (Thurs)

The shape of life

- David Velleman, “Well-being and time”

7. January 29th (Tues)

Suicide

- Shelly Kagan, *Death* (chapter 15)

8. January 31st (Thurs)

- **MIDTERM EXAM!**
- **Bring a blue book and pen**

9. February 5th (Tues)

Letting die: more or fewer

- John Taurek, “Should the Numbers Count?”
- Derek Parfit, “Innumerate Ethics” (optional)

10. February 7th (Thurs)

Comparing death with other harms

- Alastair Norcross, "Comparing Harms: Headaches and Human Lives" (optional)

11. February 12th (Tues)

Letting die: near and far

- Peter Unger, *Living High and Letting Die* (chapter 2 is required, chapter 1 is optional)
- *Giving What We Can*, "myths about aid" and "recommended charities"

12. February 14th (Thurs)

Stealing to save lives

- Peter Unger, *Living High and Letting Die* (chapter 3)

13. February 19th (Tues)

Killing and letting die

- James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"
- Philippa Foot, "Killing and Letting Die"
- **PAPER DUE! (Submit to turnitin.com and bring a hardcopy to lecture).**

14. February 21st (Thurs)

Killing to save lives

- Judith Thomson, "Turning the Trolley"

15. February 26th (Tues)

Killing to save lives, continued

- Peter Unger, *Living High and Letting Die* (chapter 4)

16. February 28th (Thurs)

The personal cost of saving lives

- Garrett Cullity, "Asking too much"

17. March 5th (Tues)

The personal cost of saving lives, continued

- Peter Unger, *Living High and Letting Die* (chapter 6)

18. March 7th (Thurs)

Morality and rationality

- Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints"

19. March 12th (Tues)

Morality and rationality, continued

- Peter Singer, "Why Act Morally?"

20. March 14th (Thurs)

Final lecture (no reading)

21. March 19th (Tues)

- **FINAL EXAM: 8am to 10:59am!**
- **Bring a blue book and pen**

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to do their own work as outlined in the UCSD Policy on Academic Integrity (<http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/policy.html>). Acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and any student who engages in suspicious conduct will be confronted and subjected to the disciplinary process. Confirmed academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the entire course, and it may result in expulsion from UCSD. The Office of Judicial Affairs and/or Student Conduct will be alerted in cases of suspected academic misconduct. Plagiarism often occurs when students are stressed about assignments and deadlines. If you think you will need to turn in an assignment late or incomplete, please talk to me. I would rather have you ask for an extension or turn in an incomplete assignment than engage in academic dishonesty.

Important Phone Numbers:

- 1) UCSD Campus Police 858-534-HELP / 858-534-4357
- 2) Campus Security Officers/Escort Program 858-534-WALK / 858-534-9255
- 3) Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): Central Office: 858-534-3755 (Galbraith Hall 190).