

PHIL 27: ETHICS AND SOCIETY (SPRING 2016)
COPLEY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER 101, TUESDAY/THURSDAY 12:30-1:50

Dr. Amy Berg
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OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays 3-5

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

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Anncy Thresher (F 10 am, F 11 am)
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COURSE OVERVIEW

The theme of this course is "Ethics and the Family: Birth to Death." During this quarter, we will use philosophical tools to think about how our lives should go: about whether we should have children, about the meaning of our lives, about how those lives should end. We will go chronologically, from before birth to the moment of death, investigating some major moral and political theories along our way. The main areas we will look at include:

- **The ethics of birth:** We start before birth, looking at the questions surrounding reproduction. Is it ever okay to have children? If it is, should you adopt rather than having biological children? If it's permissible to have biological children, what about abortion or genetic enhancement of fetuses? In this section, we'll also discuss some influential moral theories.
- **Justice and the family:** Next, we talk about how the family should be organized. Once you have children, can you favor them over strangers? Should the state recognize marriages, and should issues of gender justice affect how we organize those marriages? Considering these questions will take us into work on political theories of justice.
- **The end of life:** Finally, we'll end the course by considering end-of-life issues. Should you be allowed to have the choice to end your own life? And when you look back on your life, will it have been meaningful?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

You will need:

- The readings. Purchase the course reader, which has all the readings, at Cal Copy (calcopy.net, 3251 Holiday Ct. # 103, behind the Mobil station on La Jolla Village Drive). I will also make a copy of the course reader available on reserve at the library. Complete all assigned readings before coming to class.
- An i>clicker. If you don't already have one, you can buy one at the Bookstore or on the internet. Register your clicker on the course TritonEd site before Tuesday of week 2.
- TritonEd access. I will post slides, assignments, the syllabus, and other information on TritonEd.

Assignments: There are three assignments due in this course. There are two take-home exams, due by the start of class on April 28 (Thursday of week 5) and on May 19 (Thursday of week 8). The third assignment is a 4-5 page final paper, due by 2:30 pm on June 6 (Monday of finals week). All assignments must be submitted **both** through TritonEd and in hard-copy form by the start of class. Your papers will be graded using Turnitin. All assignments will be graded anonymously; you should put your student ID, *not* your name, on them.

Participation: Your participation grade will be calculated in two ways:

- We will be using clickers and peer instruction in this course. You will get one point for each clicker question you answer (even if you get it wrong).
- You will be responsible for completing five in-class writing assignments in your sections. These will be scheduled randomly throughout the quarter. Each assignment is worth five points.

The grade breakdown is:

- **Take-home assignment 1:** 20%
- **Take-home assignment 2:** 30%
- **Final:** 40%
- **Participation:** 10%

The grade scale is:

A+: 98% or above and at my discretion	A: 93-100%	A-: 90-92%
B+: 87-89%	B: 83-86%	B-: 80-82%
C+: 77-79%	C: 73-76%	C-: 70-72%
D+: 67-69%	D: 63-66%	D-: 60-62%
F: below 60%		

Note: Warren College students must take this course for a letter grade in order to satisfy the Warren College general education requirement.

Lateness policy: Your paper must be turned in at the start of class on the day it is due. **There are no exceptions unless you make prior arrangements with me.** I will deduct one-third of a grade if the paper is turned in the day it's due any time after the start of class and one-third of a grade for each day after that that the paper is late (so, for example, a paper that would have gotten an A if it were turned in on time on Tuesday would get a B if turned in on Thursday).

On writing: Your success in this class depends on the ability to express yourself clearly. Here are some writing resources I recommend:

- **The UCSD Writing Center** (Mandeville 127; writingcenter.ucsd.edu) will talk through ideas, work through a draft with you, and generally give advice at all stages of the writing process.
- *Style*, by Joseph M. Williams (University of Chicago Press, 1990) is an excellent guide to clear and forceful writing. It's widely and cheaply available at bookstores and through Amazon.

Other policies

- **Electronic devices (laptops, tablets, phones, etc.) are not allowed in class**, except with written permission from, for example, the Office for Students with Disabilities.
- **You must observe UCSD's academic integrity policies.** If you violate the Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, you will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office, and I will

penalize you as severely as UCSD allows. If you're concerned you may be in violation of the Policy, you can visit the Academic Integrity Office's website (<http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/index.html>) or the Writing Center, or you can talk to your TAs or me about the assignment.

- **Your TAs are your first line of defense** if you have questions about the course. Please email them with any questions before emailing me (unless you're emailing to set up a meeting or about something confidential).
- If you need an accommodation for a disability or for religious reasons, please let me know during the first week of the course.
- You are welcome and encouraged to come to my office hours or make an appointment with me or your TAs whenever you want to talk about the course material, your assignments, or any other philosophy-related concerns you have.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1

Tuesday, March 28: Course introduction

Reading: None

Thursday, March 31: NO CLASS

Reading: None

Week 2

Tuesday, April 5: Should you have children?

Reading: Benatar, "Why It Is Better Never to Come into Existence"

Thursday, April 7: Should you have children?

Reading: Smilansky, "Is There a Moral Obligation to Have Children?"

Week 3: Take-home assignment 1 distributed on Thursday

Tuesday, April 12: Should you have (biological) children?

Reading: LaFollette, "Licensing Parents"

Thursday, April 14: Should you have (biological) children?

Reading: Rulli, "Preferring a Genetically-Related Child"

Week 4

Tuesday, April 19: Should you have an abortion?

Reading: Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral"

Thursday, April 21: Should you have an abortion?

Reading: Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

Week 5: Take-home assignment 1 due on Thursday

Tuesday, April 26: Should you genetically modify your children?

Reading: Sandel, "The Case against Perfection"

Thursday, April 28: Should you genetically modify your children?

Reading: Savulescu, "Procreative Beneficence: Why We Should Select the Best Children"

Week 6: Take-home assignment 2 distributed on Thursday

Tuesday, May 3: Should you favor your children over strangers?

Reading: MacFarquhar, "The Children of Strangers"

Thursday, May 5: Should you favor your children over strangers?

Reading: Rachels, "Morality, Parents, and Children"

Week 7

Tuesday, May 10: Should the state recognize your marriage?

Reading: Brake, "Is Divorce Promise-Breaking?"

Thursday, May 12: Should the state recognize your marriage?

Reading: Card, "Gay Divorce: Thoughts on the Legal Regulation of Marriage"

Week 8: Take-home assignment 2 due on Thursday

Tuesday, May 17: Should your marriage be gender-just?

Reading: Okin, "Justice and Gender"

Thursday, May 19: Should your marriage be gender-just?

Reading: Payette, "The Feminist Wife: Notes from a Political 'Engagement'"

Week 9: Final paper topics distributed on Tuesday

Tuesday, May 24: Should you commit assisted suicide?

Reading: Velleman, "Against the Right to Die"

Thursday, May 26: Should you commit assisted suicide?

Reading: Gawande, "Letting Go"

Week 10

Tuesday, May 31: When you look back on your life, will it have been meaningful?

Reading: Taylor, "The Meaning of Life"

Thursday, June 2: When you look back on your life, will it have been meaningful?

Reading: Wolf, "Moral Saints"

Week 11: Final paper due on Monday, June 6, by 2:30 pm