

PHIL 100: Philosophical Methods

Fall 2019

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12-2pm

Course Description:

The primary aim of this course is to develop your philosophical reading and writing skills. Each week in class we will discuss and analyze some philosophical texts. There will then be an assignment each week based on these texts. You will be assigned a GSI, with whom you'll meet each week to discuss your work.

The course will cover a variety of topics in ethics. In the first half of the semester we'll look at ethical issues concerning artificial intelligence and other future technologies. In the second half of the semester we'll turn to meta-ethical issues about the status of ethical questions, e.g. whether they have objective answers. See the reading schedule below for details.

Course Requirements:

- 1. Carefully read each week's assigned reading before coming to class.** This is essential. I will assume everyone has read the readings before class. If you find the readings difficult, that's fine—indeed this is expected! But make sure you complete the reading before class begins. Try to formulate what you don't understand as a succinct question. We will discuss the readings in class and there will be opportunities to ask questions.
- 2. Come to class each week with a copy of the assigned reading, ready to participate in class discussions and exercises.** *Attendance is expected each week.* If for some reason you cannot attend one week, please let me know in advance. We will be doing group exercises in class on laptops, so please bring a laptop to class if possible. (If you can't, you can share with others in your group.)
- 3. Submit a written assignment each week.** Each week you will submit a written assignment. The assignment is due by 11:59pm on Sunday of that week. Most weeks, your assignment will be drawn from the levels system; see the "Levels System Description" document for details. For three weeks in the second half of the semester, your assignment will involve working towards your final paper; see "Final Paper Assignment" document for details. (Note that you will have at least two weeks off from these assignments, and you may choose which weeks to take off depending on your schedule.)
- 4. Meet with your GSI each week.** You will meet with your GSI each week for 30 minutes to discuss your work and the course material. We'll set up times during the first week.
- 5. Write a final paper.** In the second half of the semester you will start working on a final paper, on a topic of your choice. Three of the weekly assignments will involve planning your paper and drafting it.

Materials:

- No books required! All readings will be made available on the bCourses course site.

- You will need access to argument mapping software by Rationale. Go to <https://www.rationaleonline.com>, create an account with your Berkeley email address, and purchase an “Education Basic” or “Education Extra” subscription. PHIL 100 students receive a discounted rate of \$19 for Basic and \$25 for Extra. You will receive an email from me with the code for this discount.

Grading:

- Levels System: 50%
- Final paper: 35%
- Class participation: 15%

Academic Integrity:

- Plagiarism is not tolerated and will be taken extremely seriously. “Turnitin” software will be used to check all assignments for possible plagiarism.
- That said, I strongly encourage you to discuss the material in this class with other students. It is fine to get feedback from other students on drafts of papers or argument maps. However, your finished work should then be your own work. This means that having talked about your draft with friends, you should sit down and revise your work yourself. The other student should not re-write anything for you.
- Please see the UC Berkeley statement on academic integrity: <http://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity>.

Classroom climate:

Discussion is an essential part of productive philosophical inquiry. All discussion in this class must be conducted in a collegial and respectful manner. This includes discussions in class, in tutorials, and online. Discussions can take many forms — you can propose your own idea, add support to someone else’s idea, clarify it, distinguish it from related ideas, and so on. Sometimes you may wish to disagree with someone else’s idea. That’s fine—indeed, constructive disagreement sharpens thinking, deepens understanding, and reveals novel insights, so it is not only encouraged but expected. Still, all discussions, including disagreements, must be conducted with respect and civility. This is not always easy. There may be times when someone expresses an idea that strikes you as immoral, repugnant, or deeply offensive. If you wish to challenge the idea, be sure to target the idea itself rather than the person who expressed it. It is never appropriate to demean or denigrate fellow students and instructors.

In addition, all students are expected to comply with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://sa.berkeley.edu/code-of-conduct>

Policy on Sexual Violence and Harassment:

Sexual violence and sexual harassment have no place in a learning environment. Therefore, in alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, it is the policy of the University of California to prohibit sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking. The UC Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy requires that the University immediately implement interim remedies and permanent support measures, when necessary, for victims/survivors. If you or someone you know experiences sexual violence or harassment, there are options, rights, and resources, including assistance with academics, reporting, and medical care. Visit survivorsupport.berkeley.edu or call the 24/7 Care Line at [510-643-2005](tel:510-643-2005).

Reading schedule:

Here is the weekly schedule of readings, though note that this is subject to change!

Topic 1: The ethics of artificial intelligence and future technology

- Tues 3 Sept**
Class 1
- Introduction to argument mapping**
- Dasgupta, “A Brief Guide to Argument Mapping”.
- Tues 10 Sept**
Class 2
- Human enhancement**
- Savulescu, “Genetic Interventions and the Ethics of Enhancement of Human Beings”, pp. 1-7.
 - Bostrom, “In Defense of Posthuman Dignity”, pp. 6-11.
- Tues 17 Sept**
Class 3
- Human impairment**
- Levy, “Deafness, Culture, and Choice”
 - Anstey, “Are Attempts to Have Impaired Children Justifiable?”
 - Cullen, Dasgupta, and Levi, “A Puzzle About Impairment”
- Tues 24 Sept**
Class 4
- Eliminating Death**
- Bostrom, “The Fable of the Dragon”
 - Kagan, “The Badness of Death”
- Tues 1 Oct**
Class 5
- Living with artificial intelligence**
- Chalmers, “The Singularity”, pp. 1-15, 22-33.
 - Bostrom and Yudkowsky, “The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence”, pp. 1-3, 14-18.
 - Harari, “Universal Basic Income is Neither Universal Nor Basic”
- Tues 8 Oct**
Class 6
- The ethical status of artificial intelligences**
- Bostrom and Yudkowsky, “The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence”, pp. 6-9.
 - Schwitzgebel and Garza, “A Defense of the Rights of Artificial Intelligences”, pp. 98-103; pp. 107-111.
- Tues 15 Oct**
Class 7
- Mind Uploading**
- Chalmers, “The Singularity”, pp. 33-40.
 - Kagan, “The Value of Life”.

Topic 2: Meta-ethics

- Tues 22 Oct** **Are there objective moral values? I**

- Class 8
- Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, chapter 1: “The Subjectivity of Values”
- Tues 29 Oct**
Class 19
- Are there objective moral values? II**
- Street, “A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value”, pp. 109-135.
- Tues 5 Nov**
Class 10
- Are there objective moral values? III**
- Smith, *The Moral Problem*, chapter 2: “The Expressivists Dilemma”
- Tues 12 Nov**
Class 11
- Living without objective moral values I: Hypothetical imperatives**
- Foot, “Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives”
- Tues 19 Nov**
Class 12
- Living without objective moral values II: Constructivism**
- Street, “What is Constructivism in Ethics and Metaethics?”
 - Street, “A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value”, pp. 152-154.
- Tues 26 Nov**
Class 13
- Living without objective moral values III: Pragmatism**
- Anderson, “Social Movements, Experiments in Living, and Moral Progress: Case Studies from Britain’s Abolition of Slavery”
- Tues 3 Dec**
Class 14
- TBA**