

PHIL 213: Contemporary Moral Problems  
Summer II 2012 (online)  
Tristan Rogers

**Semester dates:** July 9<sup>th</sup> – August 9<sup>th</sup>

**Email:** [tristanrogers@email.arizona.edu](mailto:tristanrogers@email.arizona.edu)

**Course website:** <http://d2l.arizona.edu>

**Office hours:** Tuesday/Thursday, 12:00 to 1:00 PM (PST) (on Skype)

**Important Dates**

July 9<sup>th</sup> – Course begins

July 10<sup>th</sup> – First paper topics made available

July 13<sup>th</sup> – Quiz 1

July 20<sup>th</sup> – Quiz 2

July 22<sup>nd</sup> – Paper 1 due

July 23<sup>rd</sup> – Final paper topics made available

July 27<sup>th</sup> – Quiz 3

August 3<sup>rd</sup> – Quiz 4

August 9<sup>th</sup> (last day of 'class') – Quiz 5

August 12<sup>th</sup> – Final Paper due

**Course overview:** In this course you will learn how to think critically about ethical issues. You will do so by first learning, and then applying, enduring moral theories to a range of familiar moral problems we face in our contemporary world, including (but not limited to) drug use, abortion, sexism and racism, world poverty, and the ethical treatment of animals. Accordingly, we will begin by surveying some of the dominant moral theories we find in philosophy. For ease of presentation, I have divided the moral problems we will examine into four broad themes: our moral obligations to (1) ourselves, (2) others, (3) distant others, and (4) animals and the environment.

**Course format:** This is an online course. Everything we do will be coordinated through D2L. You are expected to check it daily, as I will post announcements about the course in the 'news' section. We have 5 weeks to cover the equivalent of a full semester's work, so we have our work cut out for us! The course will follow a Monday-Friday schedule. You are expected to carefully read one or two articles per day, view (short) lecture videos corresponding to the readings, and post your thoughts on the readings on the D2L discussion board. The lecture videos, as well as the corresponding lecture notes, will be posted on D2L the night before the scheduled readings. The aim of doing the readings and watching the lecture videos is first to understand the material, and second to think critically about it, both on your own and on the discussion board with your peers. Along the way, the two short papers you will write serve as a showcase of your progress.

**Virtual office hours:** I will hold regular office hours *online* via Skype. My Skype ID is 'ProfessorRogers' (original, huh?). If you are unfamiliar with Skype, please watch the following video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sodMDs7rEEk>. For those interested, and with the appropriate audio/video capability, I am happy to video chat. The more in-person the course seems the better, I think. But, for those without video/audio capability, or those not comfortable with face-to-face chat, I will also be available using the text-based chat feature in Skype. Office hours are not mandatory, but encouraged.

**Email policy:** Like most people these days, I am available more or less 24/7 by email. But, this does *not* mean I will/can respond to emails at all hours of the day. I will aim to respond within 24 hours. This syllabus contains everything you will need to know about the mechanics of the course. It is your responsibility to acquaint yourself with it. Except in unusual circumstances, I will not respond to email questions that could be easily answered by consulting the syllabus. It is also recommend to save substantive questions about the course material for office hours or the discussion board.

**Readings:** The majority of the readings for this course are drawn from our required text: Disputed Moral Issues (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), edited by Mark Timmons. **You are required to purchase this book.** There will also be some additional readings (pdfs) not from the textbook that I will post to D2L.

### **Assessment:**

20 points – Discussion board posts (i.e. 'participation'). You are **required** to make **one post** on the discussion board **each day of class** (Monday to Friday), by either asking your own question about the material, answering someone else's, or simply participating in an ongoing discussion. These posts have no required length, but try to be thorough. You are permitted to miss two days of posting, after which you will be penalized 2 points per missed day. The aim here is to get discussion going about the material and facilitate one another's learning. So don't feel like you have to say something profound.

40 points – Quizzes (five total, 10 points each, with your worst score dropped). At the end of each week there will be a quiz on the week's readings. These will be multiple choice and timed (on D2L). They will be primarily based on reading comprehension, but will also test your knowledge of fundamental concepts discussed in the readings.

20 points – Paper 1. A five page paper (double spaced) will be due on July 22<sup>nd</sup> at Midnight (PST). The paper topics will be made available on July 10th. I will provide a brief document on how to write a philosophy paper that will include info on how you will be graded. **Please submit papers via D2L. They will be checked for plagiarism through turnitin.com**

20 points – Paper 2 (in lieu of final exam). A five page paper (double spaced) will be due on August 12<sup>th</sup> at Midnight (PST). The paper topics will be made available the day after the first paper is due. Significant improvement on the second paper will help your overall grade. **Please submit papers via D2L. They will be checked for plagiarism through turnitin.com**

*There is no final exam for this course.*

**Missed or late quizzes, papers:** I do not accept late papers, and the D2L quizzes will expire after their completion deadline. If you must miss a quiz or cannot submit a paper on time due to an unavoidable scheduling conflict, illness, etc., where possible, you (or someone on your behalf) must provide appropriate documentation to me **3 days** in advance of the expected due date, so that an alternate time may be arranged. Only under extraordinary circumstances (emergency illness, death in the family, acts of God) is it permissible to fail to notify me in advance.

**Academic dishonesty:** You are expected to be familiar with the University's code of academic integrity, which can be found here: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity>. If you are unsure about something, please ask me. Pleading ignorance is not an acceptable excuse, and I have a zero-tolerance policy toward plagiarism.

**Academic freedom:** Feel free to express your views to the fullest extent you feel comfortable with. It is not my job to teach you what I think. You will be assessed in accordance with how *well* you argue your view, not in accordance with whether I agree with you.

**Code of conduct:** Since this is an online class, the usual disclaimer about in-class conduct does not apply. However, you are still expected to be respectful toward your fellow students and myself in any interactions that take place (on the discussion board, in office hours, etc.) The issues we will discuss are controversial, which is part of the fun, but do not lose sight of the goal of reasoned (and respectful) discussion. Laptops are, *of course*, permissible!

**Accommodations:** Those who require accommodations related to disabilities are instructed to first register with Disability Resources (520-621-3268; drc.arizona.edu). Please also notify me in advance, so that we can make arrangements to help you better participate in the course.

**Schedule of readings & activities (from our primary textbook unless otherwise noted):**  
**NB: Subject to revision, if necessary**

### **UNIT ONE: Moral Theory**

Monday, July 9<sup>th</sup>. “What Is a Moral Theory?” & “Six Essential Moral Theories”, pgs. 1-29.

Tuesday, July 10<sup>th</sup>. “Coping with Many Moral Theories” & “Appendix” Ethics by Authority?”, pgs. 29-37.

Wednesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>. Selection from Bentham, pgs. 38-42, selection from Kant, pgs. 47-54.

Thursday, July 12<sup>th</sup>. Selection from Aquinas, pgs. 43-46, selection from Locke, pgs. 55-57.

Friday, July 13<sup>th</sup>. Selection from Aristotle, pgs. 58-66, selection from Ross, pgs. 67-70.

**Take unit 1 quiz.**

### **UNIT TWO: Ourselves**

Monday, July 16<sup>th</sup>. James Q. Wilson “Against the Legalization of Drugs” (on D2L).

Tuesday, July 17<sup>th</sup>. David Boaz “Drug-Free America or Free America?”, pgs. 182-187.

Wednesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>. Judith Thomson “A Defense of Abortion”, pgs. 391-399.

Thursday, July 19<sup>th</sup>. Don Marquis “Why Abortion is Immoral”, pgs. 400-404.

Friday, July 20<sup>th</sup>. Rosalind Hursthouse “Virtue Theory and Abortion”, pgs. 411-420.

**Take unit 2 quiz.**

Sunday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>. **First Paper Due at midnight (PST).**

### **UNIT THREE: Others**

Monday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Marilyn Frye “Sexism”, pgs. 236-241.

Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup>. Anita M. Superson “Sexual Harassment” (on D2L)

Wednesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>. J.L.A. Garcia “Racism as a Model for Understanding Sexism”, pgs. 242-251.

Thursday, July 26<sup>th</sup>. Louis P. Pojman “Why Affirmative Action is Immoral”, pgs. 274-282.

Friday, July 27<sup>th</sup>. Thomas E. Hill Jr. “The Message of Affirmative Action”, pgs. 283-291.

**Take unit 3 quiz.**

### **UNIT FOUR: Distant Others**

Monday, July 30<sup>th</sup>. Haig Khatchadourian “Terrorism and Morality”, pgs. 516-523.

Tuesday, July 31<sup>th</sup>. Michael Walzer “After 9/11: Five Questions about Terrorism”, pgs. 524-529.

Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. Garrett Hardin “Lifeboat Ethics”, pgs. 565-570.

Thursday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Peter Singer “The Life You Can Save”, pgs. 571-584.

Friday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Onora O’Neill “A Kantian Approach to World Hunger”, pgs. 600-605.

**Take unit 4 quiz.**

### **UNIT FIVE: Animals and the Environment**

Monday, August 6<sup>th</sup>. Tom Regan “The Case for Animal Rights” (on D2L)

Tuesday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. Jan Narveson “[against] Animal Rights” (on D2L)

Wednesday, August 8<sup>th</sup>. William F. Baxter “People or Penguins? The Case for Optimal Pollution”, pgs. 614-618.

Thursday, August 9<sup>th</sup>. Aldo Leopold “The Land Ethic” (last day of class), pgs. 619-623.

**Take unit 5 quiz.**

Sunday, August 12<sup>th</sup>. **Final Paper Due at midnight (PST).**