

PHIL 237: Contemporary Moral Issues

Instructor: Eric Wilkinson
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Class Timing: MTWR 11:05 – 13:25
Office Hours: Wednesday, 14:00-15:00

Course Description:

This course examines contemporary issues of moral, social, and political importance. In particular, we will discuss the nature and ethics of democracy, civil and uncivil disobedience, disinformation, free speech, and multiculturalism. The guiding theme of this course is democratic citizenship, and how we can ethically conduct ourselves and flourish as citizens within a liberal democratic society. After beginning with an introduction to ethical philosophy and philosophy as a discipline, we will question both the ethical foundations of our existing society and our duties as individuals. The aim of this course is to equip you to evaluate ethical matters and express your views in a reasoned way.

Assessment & Grading:

<i>Assignment:</i>	<i>Due Date:</i>	<i>Weight:</i>	<i>Description:</i>
Participation	Ongoing	10%	Attendance and participation are necessary at the synchronous lectures (see course schedule).
Short Essay #1	June 21 st , 2021	20%	A two-page argumentative essay, double spaced, in 12pt Times New Roman font.
Short Essay #2	June 28 th , 2021	30%	A two-page argumentative essay, double spaced, in 12pt Times New Roman font.
Final Essay	July 8 th , 2021	40%	A five-page argumentative essay, double spaced, in 12pt Times New Roman font.

Communication Policy: Before emailing, please consult the syllabus for an answer to your query. Also consider raising your questions during class, as other students might have the same questions. Substantive philosophical questions are better answered in class or at the instructor's office hours. When emailing, use your McGill email address, and allow at least 48 hours to receive a response.

Late Policy & Extensions: The penalty for late assignment submission is five percent (5%) a day. Extensions will be assessed individually and granted mainly for medical reasons or bereavement.

Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students should understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences.

Student Rights & Language Policy: In accordance with McGill University's *Charter of Students' Rights*, students have the right to submit in either French or English any work that is to be graded.

Course Schedule
June 7th, 2021 – July 8th, 2021

Date:	Lecture Topic:	Lecture Format:	Required Readings:	Supplemental Readings:
June 7 th , 2021	Introduction	Zoom Lecture	Course Syllabus	• <i>Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?</i> (Russ Shafer-Landau)
June 8 th , 2021	Philosophical Methodology	Pre-Recorded Video	Methodology Handout	
June 9 th , 2021	Ethical Theories	Pre-Recorded Video	• <i>Utilitarianism</i> (J.S. Mill)	• <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (Aristotle)
June 10 th , 2021		Zoom Lecture	• <i>The Metaphysics of Morals</i> (Immanuel Kant)	
June 14 th , 2021	Against Democracy	Pre-Recorded Video	• <i>Against Democracy</i> (Jason Brennan)	• <i>The Republic</i> (Plato)
June 15 th , 2021		Zoom Lecture		
June 16 th , 2021	For Democracy	Pre-Recorded Video	• <i>In Our Name: The Ethics of Democracy</i> (Eric Beerbohm)	• <i>Representative Government</i> (J.S. Mill)
June 17 th , 2021		Zoom Lecture		
June 21 st , 2021	Civil Disobedience	Pre-Recorded Video	• “The Justification of Civil Disobedience” (John Rawls)	• <i>Crises of the Republic</i> (Hannah Arendt)
June 22 nd , 2021		Zoom Lecture		
June 23 rd , 2021	Uncivil Disobedience	Pre-Recorded Video	• “Uncivil Disobedience” (Candice Delmas)	• <i>In Defense of Looting</i> (Vicky Osterweil)
June 24 th , 2021		Zoom Lecture		
June 28 th , 2021	Free Speech	Pre-Recorded Video	• <i>On Liberty</i> (J.S. Mill)	• “Oppressive Speech” (Mary Kate McGowan)
June 29 th , 2021		Zoom Lecture		
June 30 th , 2021	Media and Disinformation	Pre-Recorded Video	• “Media Literacy in an Era of Fake News and Alternative Facts” (Kirsten Kozolanka)	• “Philosophy and Conspiracy Theories” (Juha Räikkä & Juho Ritola)
July 1 st , 2021	Happy Canada Day!	No Lecture		

July 5 th , 2021	Multicultural Theory	Pre-Recorded Video	• <i>The Politics of Recognition</i> (Charles Taylor)	• <i>Multicultural Citizenship</i> (Will Kymlicka)
July 6 th , 2021		Zoom Lecture		
July 7 th , 2021	Criticism of Multiculturalism	Pre-Recorded Video	• <i>Red Skin, White Masks</i> (Glen Sean Coulthard)	• <i>Equal Recognition</i> (Alan Patten)
July 8 th , 2021		Zoom Lecture		

Course Readings: All course readings are available for viewing and download on MyCourses.

Office Hours: The instructor's office hours are held on Wednesdays from 14:00-15:00. They are accessible through the following Zoom link: <https://mcgill.zoom.us/j/84763263895>

Remote Delivery: Given the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the content of this course is delivered remotely. Consequently, the course combines both synchronous and asynchronous lecture formats. The asynchronous lectures are pre-recorded videos covering the topics and readings assigned each week. The synchronous lectures are conducted using a video conferencing program and expand on the themes developed during the pre-recorded lectures through questions, debate, and discussion. Both the asynchronous lectures and links to synchronous lectures will be uploaded to MyCourses.