

St. Jerome's in the University of Waterloo
Department of Philosophy
PHIL 218J section 041
Fundamental Ethics
Course outline
Fall 2020

Course Information:

Lecture-meeting time: There will be one recording of one to two hours, posted on Learn before noon each Tuesday. There will be one synchronous live one-hour session on Thursdays at noon. (The time for the live sessions may change, depending on my understanding of the availability of students.)

Professor: Stephanie Gregoire

Email address: gregoire@uwaterloo.ca

Office hours: I will not hold specific office hours. Whenever you need help and want to connect, send me an email. I will schedule a phone appointment or a zoom meeting at our mutual convenience. Do not hesitate to contact me, I am happy to help, and it is always better to take action earlier than later.

Course Description/Learning Objectives:

One way of describing the matter of ethics or moral philosophy is to say it bears on voluntary human actions and how they function as good and efficient or bad and inefficient means to reach a ultimate final goal. Historically, there have been at least four approaches. In this course, we will become acquainted with the fundamental ideas of three approaches. We will compare them, and thus try to clarify our own perspective on how we should lead our lives.

Recorded lectures (Tuesdays) will consist in a presentation of the material by the professor on the issues to be considered, some reading and commenting of key passages, and discussions of study questions. Some videos might also be shown. You will be notified in advance of the topics to be discussed, and you will be responsible for doing the reading assignments prior to the session. The synchronous hour is meant for exchanges between students and the professor, discussions, questions, clarifications, comments, etc.

Intellectual Property

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor, TA, and/or St. Jerome's University. Intellectual property includes items such as:

- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
- Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor, TA, and/or St. Jerome's University for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository). Permission from an instructor, TA, or the University is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

Content:

Introduction (approximately 2x weeks)

Division of philosophy and nature of ethics

Nature of philosophy, method

Division of the history of philosophy

Traditional division of approaches to ethics

Parts of the course and order

PART ONE Happiness-through-Virtue Ethics: Aristotle (approximately 4 weeks)

Nature of human reason, theory of knowledge

Ethics

The Goal, meaning of life: spiritual good and happiness

The Means: virtue

Political corollaries: natural law, human law, disobedience

PART TWO Utilitarianism: Jeremy Bentham-John Stuart Mill (approximately 3 weeks)

Nature of human reason, theory of knowledge
Ethics
The Goal, meaning of life: sensible good and pleasure
The Means: utility
Political corollaries: positive law, disobedience

PART THREE Deontology: Kant (approximately 3 weeks)

The critical problem and the rescue of the science about phenomena
Ethics
The Goal, meaning of life: duty and obligation
The Means: categorical imperative
Political corollaries: disobedience

Course Requirements and Marking Scheme:

Examinations will consist of short-answer questions and essay questions. There will be three open-book, take-home tests posted on Learn after the posting of the lecture on Tuesday (September 22 10%; October 27 25%; November 24 35%). Each is due on the Thursday following the posting at 5pm the latest. There will also be one final, conclusive reflective, paper to be posted on the last day of the synchronous session (December 3 30%) to be handed in on December 15th. All tests should be left in the Dropbox. I will not be accepting any scanning of hand-written documents; you must type all of your answers. I will mark them and post my comments in time for the live session of the following week, during which the answers and performance will be discussed.

Attendance Policy and Missed Tests:

I emphasize that listening and understanding the lectures is critical for good performance in this course. Late tests will be penalized at a rate of 8% of the total possible grade for the test, per day late, unless you are prevented from writing a test because of sickness. Then, a medical certificate must be presented and must provide all of the information requested by the “University of Waterloo Verification of Illness” form or it will not be accepted. It is better for all parties involved that you take good note of this at the beginning of the term.

Required Text and Readings:

You will be provided on UW LEARN with documents entitled ‘Guidelines for Study’, which are more or less detailed lists of the main points raised in the lectures and of the readings to be done. These are to help you to take and to structure your course notes and to keep up with the readings. You will also be provided with a number of handouts. All the rest of the readings are available to you through the electronic reserve of the UW

library, or links on Learn. They consist in excerpts from digital, copyright-free editions of *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle); *Practical Philosophy, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, Critique of Practical Reason, The Metaphysics of Morals, Lectures on Ethics, Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant); *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Bentham); *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. Some copies of Aristotle's texts are available for purchase at the University bookstore, if you prefer that format, which I strongly encourage.

Important Information:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term, www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/.