

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

Dr. Dennis Hudecki  
Fall, 2018

Room 19

Brescia University College  
Philosophy 2700F

Mon: 4:30-5:20

Wed: 3:30-5:20

Introduction to Ethics and Value Theory

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to fundamental issues in moral philosophy. We will critically examine classical and modern moral theories. We will also examine various philosophical issues regarding the nature of morality. Selections will be taken from the writings of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Mill, Kant, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and others. Among the issues addressed in this course are the following:

- 1) Why be moral? Why not be immoral?
- 2) What is happiness? Is happiness the highest good?
- 3) Is morality relative to the individual or to one's culture?
- 4) What makes an act moral or immoral?
- 5) Is morality grounded in universal human nature or is it the result of a "social contract"? If neither of these, then what is the basis of morality?
- 6) Does morality depend on religion? What is the true relationship between morality and religion?
- 7) Are there any moral absolutes?
- 8) Is everyone selfish, all of the time, even when it appears otherwise?
- 9) How can the prevailing mood of moral scepticism be explained?

Course Requirements:

Participation	10%
Essays	25%
Term Test	30%
Final Examination	35%

Each class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Students are urged to think critically and to participate actively in class discussions. Regular attendance is mandatory since tests will be based primarily on class materials. The participation mark is based entirely on attendance. Late papers will be penalized 2% a day unless an extension is granted.

### Required Texts:

Eds. Louis P. Pojman and Peter Tramel, Moral Philosophy: A Reader, Fourth Edition, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2009)

(Note: You must have the fourth edition.)

All other course materials will be photocopied and made available to the students.

### Office Hours:

The easiest way for you to contact me is right after every class, in the classroom. I make myself available at that time for as long as needed. Furthermore, I will especially try to be in my office at Brescia on Thursdays and Fridays, 4:00 to 5:30. Still, to make sure, you should phone ahead to make sure I am there. My office is in Ursuline Hall, 335B. Please feel free to drop into my office anytime, or by appointment at a mutually acceptable time. You can also communicate with me by phone or voice-mail (tel: 519-432-8353, ext. 28245), or you can reach me via email at: <dhudecki@uwo.ca>. Please put something like "Philosophy 2700F" in the subject heading of any email you send me. Otherwise I may inadvertently delete it without reading it. (Please be warned that, because of the number of students I have, I may be slow in answering your e-mail.) Please do not hesitate to come in and see me regarding course matters or other matters. Feel free to visit if you want to philosophize about any issue--course-related or not! Regardless of why you are there, it will be my duty and my pleasure to try to help.

### Course Objectives:

At the end of the course, students will

- have become acquainted with the major ethical theories that have been developed in philosophy, including the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of each of these theories;
- have thought more deeply about what ought to be the basis on which they should make their ethical choices, and their overall life choices;
- have been presented with and encouraged to think about the most important philosophical issues that an individual human being must face over the course of their life;
- be better able to find within themselves and give expression to (a) the ethical questions and (b) the overall philosophical questions, that are most personally important to them;
- have an understanding of the central role that logical, rational arguments, (based on reasoning and evidence) play in the search for truth and goodness;
- be better able to distinguish good arguments from bad ones;
- be able to identify an argument's assumptions, premises and conclusions;
- be better able to articulate and defend their philosophical views in both written and spoken form;
- have a better appreciation of the discipline of philosophy.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **LECTURE TOPICS**

#### **Introduction**

What is morality? What is “the moral” or “the ethical”?

Do we have an inner sense of “oughtness”?

Where do situational circumstances and intentions figure into ethical judgements?

Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development

Kierkegaard’s concept of “ethics” and why morality is so hard to define

#### **Three Challenges to the study of ethics:**

(1) Moral relativism: (Rachels) (handout)

Subjectivism: (Rachels) (handout)

(2) Who is to say what is right or wrong? Does anyone know the ultimate truth? If not, how can one inquire into what is right or wrong? (Brief lecture on Plato’s Apology) (handout)

(3) Is there a conflict between religion and reason-based ethics? (Euthyphro, in text)

**Plato:** A Defence of the Moral Life

**Aristotle:** Virtue Ethics

A brief look at **Augustine and Aquinas**

**Hobbes:** Is Morality the Result of a Social Contract?

**Hume:** Scepticism towards the idea that morality has a rational foundation

**Kant:** Deontological Ethics

**John Stuart Mill:** How Mill revised Bentham’s theory of **Utilitarianism**

**Nietzsche:** Why Nietzsche thinks we must get “Beyond good and evil” (optional)

**Some Contemporary Disputes**

**Review**

(Please note that, due to time considerations, some topics may not get covered.)

**Essay**

Essay (25%) is due in class: December 7

### Tests

- (1) Mid-term test: October 31 (30%)
- (2) 3-hour final exam, covering the whole year: (35%): December Exam Period

### Participation

The 10% participation mark is determined solely by attendance. (Approximately a half-mark is deducted for every missed hour.)

### Some Other Important Dates:

Our first class: Sept. 10  
Thanksgiving Holiday: Oct. 8  
Fall Reading Week: Oct.9-12  
Our last class: Dec. 7  
December Exam period: December 10-21

## **2018-19 BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS**

### **1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES**

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation.

Academic accommodation for illness will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Minor ailments typically treated by over-the-counter medications will not normally be accommodated.

Students must submit their documentation along with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities. In cases where there might be an extended absence or serious issue, students should submit their documentation promptly and consult their Academic Advisor for advice during their recovery period. Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office/Academic Advisor in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty

Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are **not** grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded from:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf) . The student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the

student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill” is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation.

The full policy on requesting accommodation due to illness can be viewed at:

[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_12](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12)

## **2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS**

If you feel that you have a medical or personal challenge that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds are not normally considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website,

<http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/> or the list of official sessional dates in the Academic Calendar, see the Sessional Dates tab at

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/index.cfm?SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=> ). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

## **3. ABSENCES**

**Short Absences:** If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

**Extended Absences:** If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate and warranted.

It is important to note that the Academic Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory

([http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryId=5&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading\\_68](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryId=5&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_68) ).

#### **4. SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at:

[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryId=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_20](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryId=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_20) .

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students in the Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Academic Dean's Office, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

#### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

#### **Computer-marked Tests/exams:**

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

#### **5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS**

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal is to be sent to the School Chair. If the response of the Chair is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a written appeal to the Office of the Dean. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Dean, she may appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA), if there are sufficient grounds for the appeal. For information on academic appeals you can consult your Academic Advisor or see the Student Academic Appeals – Undergraduate in the

Academic Calendar

[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_14](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_14).

Note that final course marks are not official until the Academic Dean has reviewed and signed the final grade report for the course. If course marks deviate from acceptable and appropriate standards, the Academic Dean may require grades to be adjusted to align them with accepted grading practices.

## **6. PREREQUISITES**

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from the Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisite(s).

## **7. SUPPORT**

### **Support Services**

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/>. The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>.

### **Mental Health and Wellness**

Students may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to your learning, such as increased anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, feeling down or lost, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. Services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about mental health and wellness at Brescia at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/mental-health-wellness/>. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness at Western, [http://uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/index.html](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html), for information about how to obtain help for yourself or others.

### **Sexual Violence**

All members of the Brescia University College community have a right to work and study in an environment that is free from any form of sexual violence. Brescia University College recognizes that the prevention of, and response to, Sexual Violence is of particular importance in the university environment. Sexual Violence is strictly prohibited and unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Brescia is committed to preventing Sexual Violence and creating a safe space for anyone in the Brescia community who has experienced Sexual Violence.

If you or someone you know has experienced any form of Sexual Violence, you may access resources at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/sexual-violence/>.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.