

Phil 329: Social Ethics

Fall 14, SDSU

Dr. Michael Tiboris

Introduction. This course confronts students with several contemporary social controversies, teaching them to apply philosophical reasoning issues in social ethics. The emphasis will be on clarifying the possible positions one might take on these issues and the costs of taking them, rather than on personally defending a particular dogmatic view about them. The course will be a success for a student if, by the end, he or she can rationally and effectively assess these and similar controversies.

Student Learning Objectives.

- Reflect and critically analyze personal intuitions about ethical controversies.
- Explore alternative views, and more importantly, about why others have come to believe them and how they defend them.
- Analyze some of the contributions to these debates made by professional philosophers.
- Examine and apply argumentative methodology and improve skills at reconstructing and writing novel arguments.

Text: Disputed Moral Issues: A Reader (3rd Edn.) Mark Timmons (ed.) New York: Oxford University Press. 2014. See the Blackboard page for links to purchase it at a discount.

Blackboard: The home base for the course will be the Blackboard page which includes information about the course, guided learning modules, assessments, and opportunities to interact with other students.

Course Manual: Contains a wealth of detailed information about all aspects of the course. Think of this like the instructions for a complicated video or board game. It's a good idea to look it over at the beginning and then treat it like a reference when you have questions.

Preparation for an online course.

The **minimum requirements** for taking the online course are the following:

1. **A computer (with speakers):** laptop or desktop. ***I cannot stress this enough: Do not use tablet or a phone to use ANY PART of the course.***
2. **A stable internet connection:** Blackboard and the University advise using a *wired* connection.
3. **Responsibility for technical problems:** You must be prepared to address technical problems before they arise and when they arise. The instructors cannot manage this for you as he's simply too busy and not enough of a tech expert to do it. *Please play it safe and make sure you are in a technically adequate position. Please do attempt to fix any technical problems via anticipation, preparation, and seeking appropriate help **before** going to the instructor.*

Modules. The course is broken down into multiple learning modules, each on a different ethical controversy. The modules (with the exception of the first "pre-module")

all share the same general structure. Each module begins with an exercise encouraging reflection on your intuition, which is followed by confronting new knowledge, tasks which test and apply this knowledge and integrate it into your own views. In order to pass on to the next part of the module (and to the following modules) you will need to progress through each part of the course sequentially. See the **Course Schedule** section below for details.

"Synchronous" Activities. Most parts of the course can be completed at your own pace ("asynchronously"), though there are some that can or must be completed in a more synchronized fashion. These include live lectures, discussions, and any collaborative student activities. The goal of these synchronic activities is one or more of the following:

1. To give you an opportunity to interact directly with the instructor.
2. To engage in philosophically valuable discussions with other students which offer an opportunity to practice argument and prepare for assignments.
3. To moderate the pace of the course.

Some will find these activities frustrating, but they are included for a good reason. Interaction, especially with other students, forces you to address perspectives, or ways of explaining perspectives, which you will not have thought of. Philosophy prepares us to give reasons *to others* and the format of an online course can be an obstacle to providing this essential element of philosophical instruction which is easy to come by in a traditional classroom. Secondly, but relatedly, progressing too quickly through the course does not give students adequate time to reflect on and internalize the arguments. Learning requires this kind of reflection time, and the synchronic activities are included to encourage it. *More information about all parts of the course can be found in the **course manual**.*

Assignments. These can be done, to an extent, at your own pace. This includes the exams, which you can take at any point after they are available. Details on the assignments are included below and in even more detail in the course manual.

Assessment.

This course consists of many short assignments, not all of them are graded, though effort and completion are noted for each assignment, as all of them are monitored and reviewed by the instructor. Whether an assignment is graded (and how it factors into your final grade) will be noted in the instructions for the assignment.

Non-graded activities

1. Reflections: At the beginning and end of each module you will be asked to reflect and record your intuitions on a topic. These are not graded, but they are reviewed by the instructor.
2. Quizzes: Several of the New Knowledge sections are followed by Comprehension Check quizzes, which are multiple choice tests you can take repeatedly in order to be sure you have understood the material adequately.

3. Surveys: Periodically I will ask you to complete surveys to track your perception of the time you're spending on the assignments, their difficulty, and so on.

Graded activities

1. Quizzes: When a quiz is graded you will only be allowed to take it once, though it will not be timed. There are 5 graded quizzes total.
2. Written Assignments: These are generally short answer (~2 paragraph) responses to a prompt. You should answer the questions asked as directly and clearly as possible. There are 5 written assignments total. **For a detailed rubric see §7.1.1 of the Course Manual.**
3. Exams: Exams have two parts, a multiple choice section and a short essay section. **The exams will be available for a defined time period only. They cannot be re-taken once *begun* or completed.** Please be ready to take the exam when you begin it. Please be sure your internet connection is stable and reliable. **I will NOT be providing study sheets before the mid-term exams, you'll have to prepare for those on your own. I WILL provide one for the final exam.**
4. Participation: this is evaluated holistically and in a number of ways, drawn from the quality of your effort in the non-graded sections of the course, participation in the live lectures, and helpful contributions to the discussion boards.

Graded activities points breakdown

7 Quizzes:	4pts. each	28pts.
7 Short Answer Assignments:	10pts. each	70pts.
3 Mid-Term Exams:	20pts. each	60pts.
1 Final Exam	32pts.	32pts.
Participation:	10pts.	<u>10pts.</u>
		200pts.

Below you will find a breakdown of the course tasks and modules.

The modules will be released on the following schedule. The stepped release is useful to me as an instructor so that I can more easily keep tabs on everyone and adjust to the needs of students.

Modules 1 and 2, available starting: 8/25

Module 3 available starting: 9/22

Exam 1 available: 10/8-10/10

Modules 4 & 5 available starting: 10/13

Exam 2 available 11/12-11/14

Modules 6 & 7 available starting: 11/17

Exam 3 available 12/8-12/10

Final Exam (cumulative) available 12/15-12/16

Course Schedule

Here is a schematic breakdown of the course. Graded tasks are in red.

Module	Tasks	Detailed Module Tasks
<p style="text-align: center;">1: ABORTION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(SUMMARIZING ARGUMENTS)</p>	<p>Readings from Text:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral" (468) 2. Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion" (431) 3. Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" (438) <p>Viewing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation on Marquis 2. (Live) Lecture on Thomson (9/3; 10-11:30AM) 3. Handout on "Summarizing Arguments" <p>Writing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflection on intuitions 1.1 2. Writing assignment 1.1 3. Reflection on intuitions 1.2 <p>Quizzes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Comprehension check 1.1 5. Comprehension check 1.2 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction: to Module 1 2. Reflection: on Intuitions 1.1 3. View Presentation: New Knowledge 1.1 (Marquis) 4. Quiz: Comprehension Check 1.1 5. Live Lecture/Discussion: New Knowledge 1.2 (Thomson) 6. Handout: New Knowledge 1.3: Summarizing Arguments 7. Read Article: New Knowledge 1.4 (Warren) 8. Quiz: Comprehension Check 1.2 9. Writing: Writing Assignment 1.1 (Warren) 10. Reflection: on intuitions 1.2 11. Time Survey
<p style="text-align: center;">2: EUTHANASIA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(RECONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS)</p>	<p>Readings from Text:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia" (346) 2. Philippa Foot, "Killing and Letting Die" (350) 3. Michael B. Gill, "A Moral Defense of Oregon's Physician-Assisted Suicide Law" (365) <p>Viewing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Handout on "Euthanasia: An Ethical Framework" 2. Presentation on Rachels 3. (Live) Lecture on Foot (9/17; 10-11:30AM) 4. Handout on "Reconstruction" <p>Writing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflection on intuitions 2.1 2. Writing assignment 2.1 3. Reflection on intuitions 2.2 <p>Quizzes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Comprehension check 2.1 5. Comprehension check 2.2 6. Comprehension check 2.3 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction: to Module 2 2. Reflection: on Intuitions 2.1 3. Handout: New Knowledge 2.1: "Euthanasia: An Ethical Framework" 4. Quiz: Comprehension Check 2.1 5. View Presentation: New Knowledge 2.2 (Rachels) 6. Quiz: Comprehension Check 2.2 7. Live Lecture/Discussion: New Knowledge 2.3 (Foot) 8. Handout: New Knowledge 2.4: Reconstruction 9. Read Article: New Knowledge 2.5 (Gill) 10. Quiz: Comprehension Check 2.3 11. Writing: Writing Assignment 2.1 (Gill) 12. Reflection: on intuitions 2.2

Module	Tasks	Detailed Module Tasks
<p>3: CLIMATE CHANGE</p> <p>(IDENTIFYING ASSUMPTIONS)</p>	<p>Readings from Text:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, "It's Not My Fault: Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations" (722) 2. Bjorn Lomborg, "Let's Keep Our Cool About Global Warming" (738) <p>Viewing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation on Sinnott-Armstrong 2. (Live) Lecture on Lomborg (10/1; 10:00 - 11:30AM) 3. Handout on "Identifying Assumptions" <p>Writing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 Reflections on intuitions 2. Writing assignment 3.1 <p>Quizzes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Comprehension check 3.1 4. Comprehension check 3.2 5. Comprehension check 3.3 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction: to Module 3 2. Reflection: on intuitions 3.1 3. View Presentation: New Knowledge 3.1 (Sinnott-Armstrong) 4. Quiz: Comprehension Check 3.1 5. Live Lecture/Discussion: New Knowledge 3.2 (Lomborg) 6. Quiz: Comprehension Check 3.2 7. Handout: New Knowledge 3.3: Identifying Assumptions 8. Quiz: Comprehension Check 3.3 9. Writing: Writing Assignment 3.1 (Lomborg) 10. Reflection: on intuitions 3.2
<p>EXAM 1 AVAILABLE: 10/8-10/10</p>	<p>8 multiple choice or fill-in (1pt ea) 2 essay questions (6pts ea)</p>	<p>This exam covers all the material included in modules 1-3 and checks your ability to apply the lessons on argument to your answers.</p>
<p>4: ANIMAL RIGHTS</p> <p>(PRESENTING YOUR OWN VIEW)</p>	<p>Readings from Text:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gaverick Matheny, "Utilitarianism and Animals" (383) 2. Carl Cohen, "Do Animals Have Rights?" (398) 3. Mary Anne Warren, "Human and Animal Rights Compared" (406) <p>Viewing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation on Matheny 2. (Live) Lecture on Cohen and Warren (10/22; 10:00 - 11:30 AM) 3. Handout on "Presenting Your Own View" <p>Writing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 Reflections on intuitions 2. Writing assignment 4.1 <p>Quizzes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Comprehension check 4.1 4. Comprehension check 4.2 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction: to Module 4 2. Reflection: on Intuitions 4.1 3. View Presentation: New Knowledge 4.1 (Matheny) 4. Quiz: Comprehension Check 4.1 5. Live Lecture/Discussion: New Knowledge 4.2 (Cohen) 6. Handout: New Knowledge 4.3: Presenting Your Own View 7. Read Article: New Knowledge 4.4 (Warren) 8. Quiz: Comprehension Check 4.2 9. Writing: Writing Assignment 4.1 (Animal Rights) 10. Reflection: on intuitions 4.2 11. Time Survey

Module	Tasks	Detailed Module Tasks
<p style="text-align: center;">5: TERRORISM (CONSTRUCTING A THESIS)</p>	<p>Readings from Text:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Michael Walzer, "Terrorism: A Critique of Excuses" (598) 2. Marcia Baron, "The Ticking Bomb Hypothetical" (639) 3. Andrew Valls, "Can Terrorism Be Justified?" (606) <p>Viewing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation on Walzer 2. (Live) Lecture on Baron (11/5; 10:00 - 11:30 AM) 3. Handout on "Constructing a Thesis" <p>Writing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 Reflections on intuitions 2. Writing assignment 5.1 <p>Quizzes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehension Check 5.1 2. Comprehension Check 5.2 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction: to Module 5 2. Reflection: on Intuitions 5.1 3. View Presentation: New Knowledge 5.1 (Walzer) 4. Quiz: Comprehension Check 5.1 5. Live Lecture/Discussion: New Knowledge 5.2 (Baron) 6. Handout: New Knowledge 5.3: Constructing a Thesis 7. Quiz: Comprehension Check 5.2 8. Read Article: New Knowledge 5.4 (Valls) 9. Writing: Writing Assignment 5.1 (Ticking Bombs) 10. Reflection: on intuitions 5.2 11. Time Survey
<p style="text-align: center;">EXAM 2 AVAILABLE 11/12-11/14</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8 multiple choice or fill-in (1pt ea) 2 essay questions (6pts ea)</p>	<p>This exam covers all the material included in modules 4-5 and checks your ability to apply the lessons on argument to your answers.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">6: IMMIGRATION (PRESENTING EVIDENCE)</p>	<p>Readings from Text:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stephen Macedo, "The Moral Dilemma of US Immigration Policy: Open Borders versus Social Justice" (282) 2. Joseph H. Carens "Migration and Morality: A Liberal Egalitarian Perspective" (294) 3. Christopher Heath Wellman, "Immigration and Freedom of Association" (309) <p>Viewing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation on Macedo 2. (Live) Lecture on Carens (11/19; 10:00 - 11:30 AM) 3. Handout on "Presenting Evidence" <p>Writing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 Reflections on intuitions 2. Writing assignment 6.1 <p>Quizzes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehension Check 6.1 2. Comprehension Check 6.2 3. Comprehension Check 6.3 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction: to Module 6 2. Reflection: on Intuitions 6.1 3. View Presentation: New Knowledge 6.1 (Macedo) 4. Quiz: Comprehension Check 6.1 5. Live Lecture/Discussion: New Knowledge 6.2 (Carens) 6. Quiz: Comprehension Check 6.2 7. Handout: New Knowledge 6.3: Presenting Evidence 8. Read Article: New Knowledge 6.4 (Wellman) 9. Quiz: Comprehension Check 6.3 10. Writing: Writing Assignment 6.1 (Ticking Bombs) 11. Reflection: on intuitions 6.2

Module	Tasks	Detailed Module Tasks
7: POVERTY AND OBLIGATIONS TO OTHERS (THINKING ABOUT OBJECTIONS)	Readings from Text: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Peter Singer, "The Life You Can Save" (651) John Arthur, "World Hunger and Moral Obligation" (665) Amartya Sen, "Property and Hunger" (674) Viewing: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation on Singer (Live) Lecture on Arthur (12/5; 10:00 - 11:30 AM) Handout on "Objections" Writing: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Reflections on intuitions Writing assignment 7.1 Quizzes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehension Check 7.1 Comprehension Check 7.2 Comprehension Check 7.3 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction: to Module 7 Reflection: on Intuitions 7.1 View Presentation: New Knowledge 7.1 (Singer) Quiz: Comprehension Check 7.1 Live Lecture/Discussion: New Knowledge 7.2 (Arthur) Quiz: Comprehension Check 7.2 Handout: New Knowledge 7.3: Objections Read Article: New Knowledge 7.4 (Sen) Quiz: Comprehension Check 7.3 Writing: Writing Assignment 7.1 (Poverty) Reflection: on intuitions 7.2 Time Survey
EXAM 3	8 multiple choice or fill-in (1pt ea) 2 short essay questions (6pts ea)	This exam covers all the material included in modules 1-3 and checks your ability to apply the lessons on argument (NK 4.3, 5.3, 6.3) to your answers.
FINAL EXAM	8 multiple choice or fill-in (1pt ea) 4 essay questions (6pts ea)	This exam is cumulative and covers all the material in the course, the essays will all be on articles for which you have NOT already been assigned graded Writing Assignments.

OTHER INFORMATION FOR WHICH YOU ARE ACCOUNTABLE

Office hours. There are no scheduled office hours for this course, but I check the forums regularly (daily, usually), so it is a great place to ask questions. If your question is a personal matter then feel free to contact me over email. I am available to make in person appointments at SDSU upon request. If I get the sense that enough students would like it, I may schedule some online office hours at a later date.

Cheating and Plagiarism. You will be beholden to the University's code of conduct, definitions, and consequences outlined here: <http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/cheating-plagiarism.html>. But much more importantly, from my perspective, is that you do your own work honestly and with earnest effort because anything else is a waste of our time. Think about the kind of person you want to be and then act accordingly.

Disabilities and Other Special Accommodations. If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability

Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated. you have any concerns here please see me as soon as possible about them so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Late Assignments. Most of the assignments in this class are not due at a specific time. The exams are an exception, of course (see above). If any assignment is due at a particular time, my policy on late ones is that I don't accept them if you have not made prior arrangements with me to hand them in late. "Prior" here means at least 48 hours in advance, and it means real contact with me about it (i.e. You can't just fire off an email to me and say "sorry I'm not turning it in," the matter must be settled between us 48 hours in advance). That said, I'm usually willing to be flexible if the reasons are sensible. Emergencies will be handled on a case-by-case basis and may require documentation.