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Office Hours: Thurs. 2-3

Contemporary Moral Issues (Phil 140)
Syllabus, Fall 2012
TuTh; 9:30-10:20; Skinner 0200

This course explores currently debated issues concerning life and death. It introduces you to philosophical reasoning on controversial topics including abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment. The course aims to help you to develop your ability to understand, evaluate, and construct arguments in the realm of applied ethics.

Course Documents:

All readings are available as PDF files on the ELMS (Blackboard) site for this course. There is no textbook. The syllabus and lecture outlines will also be posted on Blackboard, as will any changes in schedule or readings. Please consult Blackboard regularly.

Teaching Assistants:

	John Holliday	Sungwon Woo
Sections	0101, 0102, 0103	0104, 0105, 0106
Office	Skinner 1118A	Skinner 1110D
Email	jbh@umd.edu	swoo@umd.edu
Office Hours	TuTh: 12:00 - 1:00	TuTh 10:30 - 12:00, or by appt

Requirements:

Quizzes	6 during semester	15% of grade	4 best scores count
Exam 1	25 September	15% of grade	On Intro and 1
Paper 1	Due 19 October	15% of grade	Topics to be announced
Exam 2	30 October	15% of grade	On 2-3
Paper 2	Due 20 November	15% of grade	Topics to be announced
Final	14 December 8:00-9:10	25% of grade	On 4-7

Academic integrity:

The University of Maryland Honor Pledge reads: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination." The Pledge statement should be handwritten and signed on the front of your papers and exams. Students who fail to write and sign the Pledge will be asked to confer with the instructor. The Code of Academic Integrity identifies four types of academic dishonesty: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes dishonesty of these four types. Please consult the Code of Academic Integrity <http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/jii100a.html> or speak with the instructor if you would like any further clarification (e.g., on what constitutes plagiarism). Incidents of academic dishonesty will be taken very seriously. Any cases of it will be forwarded to the office of judicial programs.

Discussion sections:

They are an integral part of this course. You are expected to attend them. (Note that quizzes might be given in discussion sections.) If your teaching assistant judges that you have performed well in discussion and your grade is on a borderline, then your assistant may push it upward.

Grading:

Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class: A+: 98-100; A: 94-97; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63. Failure to complete an assignment will result in your receiving no points (a zero) for that assignment. There will be no opportunities for extra credit.

Policy on Electronic Devices

During class you may not use any phone, computer, or other electronic device, unless you have a documented disability that requires the use of such a device or the device is solely an e-reader.

Policy on Medically Necessitated Absence from Class

- We will accept as an excused absence a self-signed note from a student who has missed a single class session, attesting to the date of an injury/illness. The note must contain an acknowledgement by the student that the information is true and correct and that providing false information is prohibited under Code of Student Conduct.
- A student who experiences a prolonged absence, namely, either three or more class sessions consecutively, four or more sessions non-consecutively, or an injury/illness preventing attendance at a Major Scheduled Grading Event is required to provide written documentation of the illness from the Health Center or an outside health care provider, verifying the dates of treatment and the time period during which the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities.
- All papers and exams will count as Major Scheduled Grading Events.

Exams:

- Exams will test your comprehension of material presented in readings, lectures, and discussion sections. They may contain true/false or multiple choice questions, and they will contain essay questions. Please note that you will be expected to understand details from the readings even if these details are not covered specifically in lectures.
- If you have appropriate documentation of injury/illness, you may take a make-up. However, you must alert your teaching assistant (by email or phone) that you will be absent prior to the exam, unless unusual circumstances prevent you from doing so.

Papers

- Paper topics will be distributed approximately 5 days before the papers are due.
- Unless accompanied by appropriate written documentation of injury/illness, papers will be penalized one full grade for each school day they are late. For example, if your paper is due on Monday, you may turn it in on Tuesday, but then the highest grade you could receive on the paper would be a B+.
- Papers will not be accepted via email.

Quizzes

- The two lowest of your six quiz scores will be dropped from your final grade. Only written documentation of injury/illness from the Health Center or an outside health care provider, verifying the dates of treatment and the time period during which you

were unable to meet academic responsibilities will enable you to make up a missed quiz.

- If you wish to make up a missed quiz, you must inform your teaching assistant no more than one week after the date the quiz was given, unless extraordinary circumstances, e.g., extended illness, prevent you from doing so. It is your responsibility to determine whether a quiz was given during a session you did not attend.
- Quizzes, which last approximately 5 minutes, focus on details of the reading for the day of the quiz or prior readings in the part of the course with which we are concerned on the day of the quiz. Suppose, for example, that we are on Part 3 of the course, namely Abortion. On one session during our study of this topic, we might have a quiz. That session might be a Friday discussion. The quiz will focus either on the reading for this session (if there is any) or some prior reading regarding abortion. You are responsible for doing the readings assigned for a particular day before coming to class. The dates for quizzes will not be announced in advance.
- Quizzes will often be given at the very beginning of class (including at the beginning of discussion sections). If you arrive late and miss all or part of a quiz, you will not be permitted to make it up.

Religious Observances:

You will not be penalized for any absence that results from religious observance. However, it is your responsibility to inform your teaching assistant *in advance* of any intended absences for religious observance.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities should inform the instructor of their needs as soon as possible so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

Schedule:

(Readings might be altered as the course progresses. If there are any changes, they will be announced.)

	Author:	Reading or Theme
Introduction		
30 Aug.	None	Introduction
4 Sept.	None	Arguments
1: Animal Rights		
6 Sept.	Singer	"All Animals are Equal"
11 Sept.	Cohen	"The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research"
13 Sept.	Benedict	"Anthropology and the Abnormal"
18 Sept.	Rachels	"The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"
20 Sept.: NO CLASS		
Sept. 25 Exam 1		
2: Abortion		
27 Sept.	Warren	"On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion" 302-307 (i.e., II and the "Postscript on Infanticide")
2 Oct.	Marquis	"Why Abortion is Immoral"
4 Oct.	Marquis	"Why Abortion is Immoral" continued
9 Oct.	Thomson	"A Defense of Abortion"
11 Oct.	Thomson	"A Defense of Abortion" continued
3: Euthanasia		
16 Oct.	Rachels	"Active and Passive Euthanasia"
18 Oct.	Brock	"Voluntary Active Euthanasia"
19 Oct. Paper 1 Due in Discussion Sections		

23 Oct.	Kass	"Is There a Right to Die?"
25 Oct.		"The Oregon Law on the Right to Die" State of Oregon Physician-Assisted Suicide Website: http://public.health.oregon.gov/ProviderPartnerResources/Evaluationresearch/deathwithdignityact/Pages/index.aspx
30 Oct. Exam 2		
4: Capital Punishment		
1 Nov.	Kant	Selection from the <i>Metaphysics of Morals</i> . Also read "Woman Blinded by Spurned Man Invokes Islamic Retribution"
6 Nov.	Reiman	"Justice, Civilization, and the Death Penalty"
8 Nov.	Reiman	"Justice, Civilization, and the Death Penalty" continued
5: World Hunger		
13 Nov.	Singer	"Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
15 Nov.	Otteson	"Limits on Our Obligation to Give" [Skip Section III]
6: Allocation of Health Resources		
20 Nov. Paper 2 Due	Alexander	"They Decide Who Lives, Who Dies"; "Measuring Effectiveness and Cost Effectiveness: the QALY"
Thanksgiving Break		
27 Nov.	NICE; Harris	"QALYfying the Value of Life"
29 Nov.	Daniels	"Four Unsolved Rationing Problems: A Challenge"
7: Enhancement		
4 Dec.	Savulescu	"Procreative Beneficence: Why We Should Select the Best Children"
6 Dec.	Sandel	"The Case Against Perfection"
11 Dec.	Kamm	"Is There a Problem with Enhancement?" (You will not be tested on section II of this essay. Skip reading this section if you like.)
14 Dec. Final Exam 8-9:10		