

# Philosophy and Social Ethics: PHIL-1104 (SSS Summer: ONLINE)

M-W-Tu-W-Th-F : 1:00-2:40

Eric D Berg

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 11:30 – 12:30

Office Hours Location: WebEx room: <https://uconn-cmr.webex.com/meet/erb19006>

Class Location (BB Collaborate room)

<https://us.bbcollab.com/collab/ui/session/join/586152340d724e2daba1d422f1e9d334>

## Course Description:

In an age of social unrest there are two questions that are exceptionally important:

- What are citizens of a community **owed by** that community?
- What do citizens of a community **owe to** each other?

This course will explore different answers to these questions, look at the tools that philosophy offers in attempting to create a better society and the “good life” for the citizens, and how the role of “expert citizens” such as business leaders and engineers fit into this goal. We will cover the three major ethical theories that you encounter within philosophy departments (Utilitarianism, Deontology, and Virtue Ethics), as well as social theory that will be very relevant to current cultural debates occurring within the USA.

There will be weekly quizzes taken on HuskyCT (every Friday) on the key concepts that each week will cover. For two of the Readings you must do a longer reflection (600-800 words) that engages with the material. The final will be a paper (1500-2000 words) that locates an answer to the framing questions for the course (I will provide more detail on what this means throughout the course).

## Text:

***A Concise Introduction to Ethics***, Russ Shafer-Landau.

Available in ebook format at: [RedShelf](#)

Other texts will be provided on HuskyCT.

## Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- Become familiar with the “big three” ethical systems
- Identify ethical arguments in a wide variety of settings
- Apply ethical theory to current events (politics, news stories, etc.)
- Critically analyze ethical claims

## **Course Calendar:**

Social ethics is a topic that requires discussion and debate to demonstrate and increase understanding of the core ideas. This class will have readings, and the discussion will be based around the readings for that day. However, philosophy is built up overtime, meaning the earlier readings will be just as important to understanding later readings as the later readings themselves. **It is very important to do all the readings and/or watching the short videos throughout this course.**

### **Week One – What is Morality/What is Philosophy**

Monday (8/6) – What is Philosophy?

Discussion: Opinions of Fact (OOF) vs. Opinions of Taste (OOT)

Tuesday (8/7) – Chapter One: What is Morality (pp. 1-16),

Discussion: Trolley Problems and Emergency Room Case

Wednesday (8/8) – Anarchist Morality – Pëtr Kropotkin (total: 23 pp.)

Discussion: Internal motivations vs External motivations

Thursday (8/9) – Chapter Two: Moral Reasoning (pp. 17 – 33)

Discussion: How not to argue: Fallacies!

(QUIZ) Friday (8/10) – Logos, Pathos, Ethos: Letter from Birmingham Jail

Discussion: Emotion, Logic, and argumentation

### **Week Two – The Social Contract and Consent (Suggested: Reflection 1 by Sunday)**

Monday (8/13) – Chapter Eight: Social Contract Theory

Discussion: 'State of Nature' and Climate Change

Tuesday (8/14) – *The Social Contract*, Rousseau (Bk I - ch. 6 & 7, Bk 2 - ch. 1-4) (total: 13 pp.)

WATCH: Trevor Noah, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4amCfVbA\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4amCfVbA_c)

Discussion: Private Morality v Public Morality

Wednesday (8/15) – *Statelessness and Contemporary Enslavement*, Jane Gordon

(Ch. 3 – On Consent (total 21 pp.))

Discussion: Event v Process understandings of political consent

Thursday (8/26) – Jane Gordon cont.

Discussion: The Divided Self (internal, external, public, private)

(QUIZ) Friday (8/17) – Intersectionality – Kimberé Crenshaw TEDTalk

WATCH: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akOe5-UsQ2o>

READ: Recent Supreme Court Decision on LGBTQ workers: [NPR Article](#)

Discussion: Complexity of Representation for Social Contract

### **Week Three – Consequentialism / Utilitarianism**

Monday (8/20) – Chapter Six: Consequentialism (pp. 92-108)

Discussion: The Ford Pinto and Torture

Tuesday (8/21) – On Liberty, J.S. Mill (Ch 4 “Of The limits to the Authority...” (total: 17 pp.))

Discussion: Can everything be quantified?

Wednesday (8/22) – TEDTalk by Chika Ezeany-Esiobu

WATCH: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28sa2zGgmwE>

Discussion: Uniformity and Individualism

Thursday (8/23) – What is Property? P.J Proudhon (Ch 5 total: 19 pp.)

Discussion: Social nature v Private nature (dialectics, what is society?)

(QUIZ) Friday (8/24) – P.J. Proudhon cont.

Discussion: Mutualism

### **Week Four – Deontology / Duty ethics (Suggested: Reflection 2 by Sunday)**

Monday (8/27) – Chapter 7: Kantian Ethics

Discussion: Plagiarism and “Hooking Up”

Tuesday (8/28) – READ: *Threshold* by Ieva Jusionyte

(Ch 1, “Tactical Infrastructure” (total: 16 pp.))

WATCH: TEDTalk by Liz Ogbu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0MnGZ1gB4k>

Discussion: Expertise and Citizens and conflicting duties

Wednesday (8/29) – *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon

(ch 5, “The Fact of Blackness” (total 27 pp.))

Discussion: The Other (Sartre, Race, Power, and Recognition)

Thursday (8/30) – Frantz Fanon cont.

Discussion: Duty and Humanity

(QUIZ) Friday (8/31) – “Disavowing Hate: Group Egoism from Westboro to the Klan”,

Tracy Llanera

WATCH: TEDTalk by Chimamanda Ngozi “The Danger of a Single Story”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>

Discussion: Care, Humanity, and Changing Minds

### **Week Five – Virtue Ethics / Ethics of Care**

Monday (8/3) – Chapter Ten: Virtue Ethics

Chapter Eleven : Feminist Ethics and the Ethics of Care

Discussion: Whistleblowing and The Heinz Dilemma

Tuesday (8/4) – “These are the Times that Grow our Souls”, Grace Lee Boggs  
“Reimagine Everything”, Grace Lee Boggs  
“Ur – Fascism”, Umberto Eco

[https://www.pegc.us/archive/Articles/eco\\_ur-fascism.pdf](https://www.pegc.us/archive/Articles/eco_ur-fascism.pdf)

Discussion: Change and The Future

**Wednesday (8/5) – FINAL PAPER!!!**

More detail will be given on the final paper throughout the course. The idea is that you will try and locate within one of the readings (or a select few of the readings) an answer to the questions posed at the beginning of the course:

- What are citizens of a community **owed by** that community?
- What do citizens of a community **owe to** each other?

Details about citations, references, and what a paper like this might look like will be explained closer to the deadline.

**Class Policy & Grading:**

- Participation – 10%
- Friday Quizzes – 40%
- 2x Reflections – 30% (15% each)
- Final Paper – 20%

**Letter grade cut-offs:**

A 93%	C 73%
A– 90%	C– 70%
B+ 87%	D+ 67%
B 83%	D 63%
B– 80%	D– 60%
C+ 77%	F below 60%

These are cut-off points:  
decimals will not be rounded up.

**Attendance policy:**

Attendance within the SSS summer program is mandatory and is a large part of the course structure. Philosophy is a complicated subject that builds on a base of knowledge, and learning occurs mainly through discussion and debate. If during this program there is an issue that causes a missed class, please email myself and/or your mentor and/or counselor so that we can make a plan.

**Academic Conduct:**

From the student handbook: Students must adhere to the highest ethical standards as it relates to their academic coursework (i.e. complete their own assignments, quizzes, exams and any other academic work, etc.). Academic misconduct may result in

an "F" for the course, suspension, or expulsion from the program. Students should familiarize themselves with the definition of academic misconduct as it appears in the University of Connecticut Student Code of Conduct booklet:

"Academic misconduct is dishonest or unethical academic behavior that includes, but is not limited to, misrepresenting mastery in an academic area (e.g., cheating), failing to properly credit information, research, or ideas to their rightful originators or representing such information, research, or ideas as your own (e.g., plagiarism)."

### **Resources:**

College is hard, but you don't have to do it alone. The SSS has many resources for those in need of assistance. Please avail yourself of all the services that will help your mental, emotional, and physical well-being. I am willing to listen to your needs, but please note that **I am not a confidential source of counseling**. I will **not** make public anything you tell me, but I may need to bring in others like counselors, deans, or administrators depending on the sensitivity of the info.

**Copyright:** My lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression and I've recorded them prior or during my lecture in order to ensure that I obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in my class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. I will inform you as to whether you are authorized to record my lectures at the beginning of each semester. If you are so authorized to record my lectures, you may not copy this recording or any other material, provide copies of either to anyone else, or make a commercial use of them without prior permission from me (just ask!).