UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
Department of Philosophy

PHIL 449 Lec 01
Contemporary Meta-Ethics
Winter 2021

COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor: John A. Baker
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 When emailing me please put "PHIL 449" in the subject line of the email.

Course Delivery

Synchronous: Classes to be delivered by Zoom Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:45pm.

Office Hours:

By Zoom for the 30 minutes before and after class. Other times can also be arranged by email.

Prerequisites

Philosophy 249 or 397 and 3 units in a course labelled Philosophy at the 300 level or above.

Philosophy 249 is described as follows: "An introduction to philosophy through discussion of morality, virtue and the role of morality in society".

Philosophy 397 is described as follows: "An intensive study of selected topics in value theory".

Course Information

Questions to be investigated will include: (a) whether there *are* or indeed *could be* procedures for figuring out what moral rights, duties, obligations we and others have in various situations; (b) whether such procedures, if they can be found, could appropriately be counted rational and sound; (c) what exactly is being claimed when moral rights, duties, obligations, and values are claimed to exist; (d) what has to be the case if such claims are to be counted valid. We will examine the various approaches in the literature to the task of providing systematic answers to the above metaethical questions.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students
- should be aware of what issues are currently viewed as being fundamental to the discipline *Metaethics* as described above and should be able to state and critically engage with the arguments for and against the central theses of the various systematic approaches to the metaethical questions outlined above;
- should be familiar with and be aware of the limitations of the investigative tools currently being used in such metaethical inquiries;
- should have developed and refined their ability (i) to formulate explicit and precise analyses of the reasoning in academic papers in the field, such analyses setting out the *direction* of the reasoning, the steps in the reasoning, and the unstated but critical background assumptions of the reasoning in such papers, (ii) clearly and concisely to frame and state arguments both for and against philosophical theses, and (iii) to gain the kinds of skills in analysis, argumentation, and research that would be of value in law, government and business policy development and implementation.

Required and Recommended Readings:

The basic structuring of the course will be provided by selections from my *Lectures in Metaethics*. As we go along, these selections will be posted in the Content section of D2L.

The other readings for the course will consist of copyrighted class handouts, journal articles and book chapters: all will be available on the Content section of D2L.

In addition, several articles in The *Stanford Online Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [https://plato.stanford.edu/] may be useful at various points in the course.

Assignments, due dates, and grading

Assignments:

1. Weekly reading assignments will be set and announced ahead of time on D2L.
2. Two essays (about 1000 words maximum, excluding footnotes and bibliography) will be set. Details of what is wanted will be posted in the Content section of D2L.
3. A term paper (about 1300 words maximum, excluding footnotes and bibliography). Details of what is wanted will be posted in the Content section of D2L.
4. Readings for the essays and for the term paper will significantly overlap with the readings mentioned in 1 and will for the most part have been discussed in class beforehand.
5. There will be no registrar-scheduled final examination.
6. Assignments are to be uploaded *as MS-Word files* to the Dropbox in D2L.

Due-dates:

- Essay 1: February 12.
- Essay 2: March 12.
- Term Paper: April 23.

Grading

1. *Ceteris paribus,* the essays will be worth 25% and 35% respectively of the final grade.
2. *Ceteris paribus,* the term paper will be worth 40%.
3. Later virtue will be allowed to redeem earlier sin.
4. Except in very exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the instructor, a passing grade in the course will be received only if each of the essays and the term paper is submitted.
5. If an essay is submitted after the stated deadline, then it will receive at most a B+ and then only if submitted by 4pm of the day after the due date: it will receive at most a C+ if submitted by 4pm of the day after that, and so on.
6. Percentages will be computed using the numbers set by the University as equivalent to the letter grades.

IMPORTANT DEPARTMENTAL, FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

Academic Accommodations
It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures. The student accommodation policy can be found at ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf. Students needing an Accommodation in relation to their coursework or to

fulfil requirements for a graduate degree, based on a protected ground other than disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their instructor.

Absence or Missed Course Assessments
Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.

Student Support and Resources
Full details and information about the following resources can be found at
ucalgary.ca/Registrar/registration/course-outlines
- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

Academic Advising
If you are a student in the Faculty of Arts, you can speak to an academic advisor in the Arts Students' Centre about course planning, course selection, registration, program progression and more. Visit the Faculty of Arts website at arts.ucalgary.ca/advising for contact details and information regarding common academic concerns.

For questions specific to the philosophy program, please visit phil.ucalgary.ca. Further academic guidance is available by contacting David Dick (Undergraduate Program Director dgdick@ucalgary.ca) or Jeremy Fantl (Honours Advisor jfantl@ucalgary.ca). If you have questions regarding registration, please email Rebecca Lesser (Undergraduate Program Administrator phildept@ucalgary.ca).

Writing Assessment and Support
The assessment of all written assignments—and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses—is based in part on writing skills. This includes correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.), as well as general clarity and organization. Research papers must include a thorough and accurate citation of sources. Students are also encouraged to use Writing Support Services for assistance. For more information, and other services offered by the Student Success Centre, please visit ucalgary.ca/ssc.

Required Technology
In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:
- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Webcam (built-in or external);
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;

- • Broadband internet connection.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone.

Responsible Use of D2L
Important information and communication about this course will be posted on D2L (Desire2Learn), UCalgary's online learning management system. Visit ucalgary.service-now.com/it for how-to information and technical assistance.

All users of D2L are bound by the guidelines on the responsible use of D2L posted here: https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/commitment-to-the-responsible-use-of-d2l/. The instructor may establish additional specific course policies for D2L, Zoom, and any other technologies used to support remote learning. Instructional materials, including audio or video recordings of lectures, may not be posted outside of the course D2L site. Students violating this policy are subject to discipline under the University of Calgary's Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

Media Recording
Please refer to the following statement on media recording of students: https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf

Academic Misconduct/Honesty
Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is as an extremely serious academic offense, the penalty for which will be an F on the assignment or an F in the course, and possibly a disciplinary sanction such as probation, suspension, or expulsion. For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html.

Intellectual honesty requires that your work include adequate referencing to sources. Plagiarism occurs when you do not acknowledge or correctly reference your sources. If you have questions about referencing, please consult your instructor.

University Policies
The Instructor Intellectual Property Policy is available at ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/Intellectual%20Property%20Policy.pdf

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial ` of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act, as outlined at ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip. The instructor (or TA) must return graded assignments *directly* to the student UNLESS written permission to do otherwise has been provided.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html).