

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

**CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL THEORIES  
PHIL 451 LEC 01  
FALL 2009**

**Lecture:** MWF 9:00

**Instructor:** Dennis McKerlie

**Office:** SS 1236

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday 2-3, Wednesday 2-3, at other times by appointment.

The course will be concerned with understanding and critically assessing three substantive first-order moral theories: consequentialism, the deontological or duty-based view, and egalitarianism. All three views are deeply appealing, but they face problems that have persuaded some to reject them. We will aim at appreciating the strengths and weaknesses of the views, rather than attempting to decide which one gives the best account of what makes actions right or wrong. The readings consist of articles by contemporary writers who have tried to defend or criticize these views. Comments and questions in class are welcome.

**Required Texts:** Shelly Kagan *Normative Ethics*

**Course Requirements:** Two essays (recommended length, 10 pp.), each worth 50% of the final grade. The due dates for the essays will be Friday, Oct. 23 and Monday, November 30. There will be a penalty for late assignments unless an extension was arranged in advance (the penalty will be a 5 point reduction out of a grade of 100 for each day that the assignment is late). The system for converting number grades to letter grades will be: A+ 95-100, A 85-94, A- 80-84, B+ 75-79, B 70-74, B- 65-69, C+ 60-64, C 55-59, C- 50-54, D+ 45-49, D 40-44, F 0-39.

Students with disabilities who have registered with the Students Resources Centre should identify themselves to me so that we can discuss special accommodations that may be needed.

## **INTELLECTUAL HONESTY**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. As a result, cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offence, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. The University Calendar states that plagiarism exists when:

- *the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test;*
- *parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;*
- *the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source; and/or*
- *a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.*

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

## **STUDENTS' UNION REPRESENTATIVE**

The Humanities Representative is Britney Luimes, MSC 251, [humanitiesrep@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:humanitiesrep@su.ucalgary.ca) or 220-3913.