

Philosophy 197: Ethics, Law, and Society

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This course concerns how moral and political philosophy relate to questions of public importance. We begin by exploring several views about how governance by elected representatives could be legitimate and how possible tensions between the role of representatives and the values of democracy might be resolved. Then we will turn to an ethical evaluation of the conduct of corporations and their place in a just society and world order.

Next, we will consider possible responses to injustice. How should individuals, groups, and states respond to their own wrongdoing? What do wrongdoers owe to their victims? In response, is forgiveness appropriate? How might people today best respond to historical injustice?

Finally, we will consider the ethical implications of human conduct vis-à-vis animals, the natural world, and future generations. Of particular concern will be whether human conduct harmful to animals, the environment, and future persons also has a bearing on social and global inequalities between living persons. We will end the course with some reflections on the meaning of life and death.

Political Representation and State Legitimacy

- 9/8 Bernard Manin, "The Principle of Distinction"
Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, 10-11, 63, 68
- 9/13 Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, Chs. 6-8
- 9/15 Joshua Cohen, "Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy"
- 9/20 Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 149-64, 167-82

Justice and Corporate Responsibility

- 9/22 Milton Friedman, "The Distribution of Income," and "The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase its Profits"
- 9/27 Thomas Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice"
- 9/29 Joshua Cohen and Charles Sabel, "Extra Rempublicum Nulla Justicia?"
- 10/4 Debra Satz, "Markets in Women's Sexual Labor," and "Child Labor: A Normative Perspective"
- 10/6 no class; **first paper due (6-7 pages)**
- 10/11 Jeffrey Moriarty, "Do CEOs Get Paid Too Much?"

Restorative Justice

- 10/13 Margaret Urban Walker, *Moral Repair*, Ch. 6
- 10/18 Charles Griswold, *Forgiveness*, Ch. 4, pp. 134-163
- 10/20 Lucy Allais, "Elective Forgiveness"
- 10/25 Lionel K. McPherson, "Half-hearted Reconciliation"
- 10/27 Erin Kelly, "Restorative Justice"

Animal Justice

- 11/1 Dale Jameson, "Against Zoos," and "Zoos Revisited"
- 11/3 Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal..."
Christine Korsgaard, "Facing the Animal You See in the Mirror"
- 11/8 Friday schedule, no class; **second paper due (6-7 pages)**

Environmental Justice and Future Generations

- 11/10 Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic"
Ramachandra Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique"
- 11/15 Ramachandra Guha, "How Much Should a Person Consume?"
- 11/17 Juliet Schor, "Do Americans Shop Too Much?"
- 11/22 Derek Parfit, "The Non-Identity Problem"
- 11/24 no class, Thanksgiving holiday
- 11/29 Elizabeth Harman, "Can We Harm and Benefit in Creating?"

The Meaning of Life and Death

- 12/1 Thomas Nagel, "Death"
- 12/6 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Chs. 1-3
- 12/8 Jeff McMahan, *The Ethics of Killing*, Ch. 5, pp. 473-493
- 12/15 **Final paper due (9-10 pages)**

Course Requirements

Participation and attendance	10%
2 short papers (6-7 pages)	25% each
Final paper (9-10 pages)	40%

You will be responsible for bringing discussion questions twice during the semester.

Course Policies

Late papers will be marked down if the lateness is unexcused.

Incompletes will only be granted under special circumstances and provided that you speak with the professor before the semester ends.

Ethics, Law and Society Certificate Option

Those students who wish to earn a certificate in “Ethics, Law, and Society” should plan to continue work on their final paper as an independent study for the first six weeks of the spring semester. We will advise you on how to extend your project. Requirements for the certificate include six courses and the research project. The certificate program is in addition to a student’s concentration (or major) and no more than half of the courses used to fulfill the certificate requirements may be used to fulfill concentration requirements.

Learning Objectives

Students completing this course will have learned:

1. How to think abstractly and concretely not only about matters that preoccupy philosophers but also about fundamental issues in other disciplines and practices.
2. How to produce a cogent argument and how to express it with maximum perspicuity, both in writing and orally.
3. How to identify the substance and structure of an argument and evaluate it for soundness and validity.
4. How to anticipate and even welcome objections to one’s views, how to apply the principle of charity to others’ opinions, and how to address objections and competing views effectively and respectfully in one’s writing.
5. How to read, analyze, and articulate arguments and viewpoints in primary philosophical texts, both historical and contemporary.
6. How to develop and defend one’s own position with respect to problems that have occupied both historical and contemporary philosophers.