

SYLLABUS

Killing is wrong. The generic prohibition against killing, while seemingly univocal, is perplexing. Most people agree that taking human life is wrong, yet there are clearly cases where killing is justified. Morality demands that we not kill others, yet we generally agree that considerations of self-defense override this demand. Acts of terrorism strike us as deplorable, yet similar destructive acts in the midst of war seem permissible. Millions of animals are killed in the United States each year for culinary purposes, yet the lives of similarly cognitively deficient humans are seen as inviolable. While all people agree that killing infants is wrong, many believe that killing humans in the initial stages of gestation is permissible. How should we reconcile these apparently conflicting condemnations and approvals? What makes killings immoral, when they are? This course will explore a cluster of such questions, all related to issues of life and death, in the service of addressing the central question of this course: *What makes killing wrong?*

Instructors:

Lecturer

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OFFICE HOURS | TTH 10–11am

Textbook:

Various articles posted online on ELMS (<http://elms.umd.edu>)

Assessment:

Each student's success in learning the material for this course will be evaluated based on their performance on two(2) Exams, two(2) Writing Assignments, and in-class pop Quizzes:

Assignment	Due Date	Weight	Subject
Exam One	Oct. 1st	25% of grade	<i>Part I</i>
Exam Two	Nov. 5th	25% of grade	<i>Part II</i>
Writing Assignment #1	Oct. 20th	10% of grade	<i>Part II</i>
Writing Assignment #2	Dec. 10th	30% of grade	<i>Part III</i>
Quizzes	Various	10% of grade	

Quizzes will be administered during any class session in which a student uses an electronic device, as indicated below (see: '*In-Class Participation*'). Quizzes can only be made up if the student has a university-approved reason for missing class (see: '*Missed Classes*').

Grading and Evaluation

Assignments and exam questions will (generally) be graded on a ten (10) point scale, with grades assigned as following:

Fail: <2; 'D': 2-3.99; 'C': 4-5.99; 'B': 6-7.99; 'A': 8-10

with a third of each grade range devoted to +/- grading (e.g. 'B-': 6-6.66). In order to pass the course, each student must complete all assignments and exams.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due on the dates indicated in the *Course Schedule*. Late assignments will NOT be accepted. A student's late assignment will only be accepted if the student demonstrates that the circumstances that caused the assignment to be late were both unexpected and unduly burdensome, which will be determined by the course instructor.

Couse Conduct:

Academic Honesty

Each student is responsible for their own work. While students are encouraged to discuss course material both inside and outside class, each assignment/exam should be the product of the student's own thinking. Any apparent improper use of the intellectual work of others will be submitted to the Student Honor Council. Students are encouraged to review the university's Code of Academic Integrity (<http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii100a.html>), as the policies stipulated in that code will be exceptionlessly adhered to during this course.

In-Class Participation

Students are expected to read the course material prior to coming to each class session, and are also expected to contribute to discussion during lectures. This participation should be conducted with civility and respect for course instructors and fellow students. In this vein, any in-class use of wireless-network-enabled electronic devices is prohibited during this course. These devices invariably lead to distracting and disrespectful behavior during class sessions, even for students not tempted by the allure of these devices. **Thus, any use of laptop computers, tablet computers, smart phones, mobile phones, two-way messaging devices, pagers, or any other electronic communication device during class sessions is prohibited. Violation of this prohibition will be immediately followed by a Quiz administered to the class.**

Participation in class discussion is expected, though not explicitly evaluated. However, the degree and quality of a student's participation in class discussion can bear positively on a student's final course grade.

Missed Classes

-Due to Illness

Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the course material. However, in the event that a class must be missed due to an illness, the policy in this class, in conformity with the University's Attendance Policy (<http://president.umd.edu/policies/v100g.html>) is as follows:

For every medically necessary absence from class, a reasonable effort should be made by the student to notify the instructor prior to class. When returning to class, students should bring a note identifying the reason for the absence in order to inform their instructor that the absence was due to illness (as opposed to, say, laziness).

If a student is absent for any 'Grading Event' (i.e., any class day with an exam, quiz, or in which an assignment is due) they are required to notify the instructor of their absence as soon as possible (preferably in advance of their absence), and upon returning to class, the student must bring documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional. Failure to do so will result in a considerably lower grade on the relevant exam or assignment.

-Due to Religious Observance

Students will not be penalized for missing class sessions due to religious observances. The *Course*

Schedule is designed to minimize possible conflicts between students' academic and religious commitments. However, all students should review the *Course Schedule* within the first two(2) weeks of the term and determine any potential conflicts between their religious commitments and their responsibilities for this course. They should then inform their instructors of any such conflicts. Arrangements should be made between the student and their instructor to enable the student to satisfy their course responsibilities without undermining their religious commitments.

Correspondence with Instructors

Electronic mail has become the chief medium for out-of-class communication between university instructors and students. Because of the impersonal nature of this medium, email correspondence between students and instructors should be clear and respectful. A respectful email includes a salutation, the full name of the correspondent, and abides by English grammar rules. Correspondence that is not respectful, in this sense, will likely be ignored by instructors.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

The University is committed to the accessibility of higher education. In light of this commitment, any student with a disability should contact the course instructor so that any needed accommodations can be made to establish an equitable learning environment. Also, any student with a disability is encouraged to contact Disability Support Services (<http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>) to learn about the resources available to them.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following indicates the timeline for reading the articles found on ELMS (<http://elms.umd.edu>), and the release/due dates for assignments/exams (📅). Each student is expected to have read the relevant article by the dates indicated below.

PART I: PHILOSOPHY, MORAL REASONING AND SAVING LIVES

9/1 WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

9/3 CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS AND LOGIC
Hare, R.M. "What is Life?" (pp. 5–6)
Priest, G. (2000). *Logic: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: OUP. Ch.1, (pp. 1–6).

9/8..... MORAL THEORY
Timmons, M. "A Moral Theory Primer"
§1: (pp. 501–5), §3: (pp. 523–6) & Appendix: (pp. 526–8)

9/10..... **Obligations to Aid**
Singer, P. "Famine, Affluence and Morality" (pp. 74–83)

9/15..... RIGHTS v. DESERT
Arthur, J. (1981). "World Hunger and Moral Obligations: The Case Against Singer"

9/17..... OVERPOPULATION
Hardin, G. (1974). "Living on a Lifeboat"
Patton, M. (2005). "Game Preserve Ethics"

9/22..... SCOPE OF OBLIGATION
Cullity, G. (2003). "Asking Too Much"

9/24..... **Organ Markets**
Mill, J.S. *On Liberty* (Ch. 1)
Radcliffe-Richards, J; et. al. (1998) "The Case for Allowing Kidney Sales"

9/29 HARM PRINCIPLE
Matas, A. J. (2004) "The Case for Living Kidney Sales: Rationale, Objections and Concerns"

10/1..... EXAM I 📅

PART II: MORAL STATUS AND THE VALUE OF LIFE

10/6 **Non-human Animal Rights**
Singer, P. (1975). *Animal Liberation*, Ch. 1.
DUE DATE: 10/20 IN CLASS | Writing Assignment #1 📅

10/8..... WHAT MATTERS?
Singer, P. "All Animals are Equal" (pp. 264–73)

10/13	WHAT MATTERS? Cohen, C. (1986). "The Case for the Use of Animals"
10/15	WHAT MATTERS? Carruthers, P. "Against the Moral Standing of Animals" (pp. 274–84)
10/20.....	<i>On Our Own Terms: A Death of One's Own</i> , PBS Writing Assignment #1 DUE
10/22.....	<i>On Our Own Terms: A Death of One's Own</i> , PBS
10/27	Euthanasia John Paul II. "The Tragedy of Euthanasia" (pp. 312–15) Rachels, J. "Active and Passive Euthanasia" (pp. 315–27)
10/29.....	LIMITS OF AUTONOMY Callahan, D. (1992). "When Self-Determination Runs Amok"
11/3	VALUE OF AUTONOMY Brock, D. (1992). "Voluntary Active Euthanasia: An Overview and Defense"
11/5.....	EXAM II ✎
PART III: ABORTION	
11/10	Abortion John Paul II. "The Unspeakable Crime of Abortion" (pp. 381–385)
11/12.....	WHAT IS A FETUS? Warren, M.A. "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion" (pp. 397–402)
11/17	VALUE OF LIFE Marquis, D. "Why Abortion is Immoral" (pp. 403–15)
11/19.....	RIGHTS OF FETUSES Thomson, J.J. "A Defense of Abortion" (pp. 386–96)
11/24.....	RIGHTS OF FETUSES Thomson, J.J. "A Defense of Abortion" (pp. 386–96) DUE DATE: 12/10 IN CLASS Writing Assignment #2 ✎
11/26.....	NO CLASS! THANKSGIVING! 🦃🦃🦃
12/1	UNCERTAINTY AND MORAL REASONING Moller, D. (2011). "Abortion and Moral Risk"
12/3	KILLING & WAR Truman, H. "Address to the American People" (p. 112) Rawls, J. "Fifty Years After Hiroshima" (pp. 113–18)
12/8.....	TERRORISM & WAR Walzer, M. "Supreme Emergency" (pp. 131–41)
12/10	CLOSING THOUGHTS Writing Assignment #2 DUE