

INTRODUCTORY HANDOUT PHILOSOPHY 162 WINTER, 2005
CONTEMPORARY MORAL ISSUES

Professor: Richard Arneson. Teaching Assistant: Michael Tiboris.

Further information about the course will be posted at the course webpage

<http://philosophy.ucsd.edu/Courses>

then click on Winter 2005, scroll down to Philosophy 162, then click again

You should check this web page regularly for news about this course.

Lecture/discussion MWF 12:00-12:50 p.m. in Peterson Hall 104.

The final exam for this course will take place on Wednesday, March 16, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. If you enroll in this class, you must be free to take a regular final exam for this course at this time.

This course examines some current ethical controversies. Several of these issues involve the morality of killing. Under what circumstances (if any) is it morally permitted, or morally required, to cut short the life of another person either deliberately or as a side effect of what one does?

The first topic is just war theory. There are two questions here. One is, under what circumstances is it morally legitimate for one nation (or other political group) to wage war on another nation? The second question is, in waging a just war, what are the moral constraints on what it is permissible to do to enemy combatants and noncombatants? Do these constraints hold absolutely or do they give way in "supreme emergencies" or whenever the benefits of violating them are sufficiently great? Do these just warfare ideas developed many centuries ago make sense in modern times? To explore these questions, we look at a variety of issues including self-defense, terrorism, guerrilla warfare, reprisals, and nuclear weapons.

The next topic is suicide, euthanasia or mercy killing, and physician-assisted suicide. Most people think suicide is sometimes morally acceptable, but if so, when? What marks the difference between admirable and immoral suicide? Do we have a duty to stay alive except in exceptional circumstances, or is each person's choice to stay alive or not her own business and nobody else's? Is it sometimes morally acceptable to kill a person for her own good? Is it sometimes morally acceptable to kill a person against her will for her own good? Should medical doctors help people commit suicide or perform euthanasia? In considering these questions we explore both what people morally ought to do and what the law morally ought to be.

In weeks 6 through 9 we look at the issue of poverty and what, if anything, the nonpoor are morally obligated to do towards its relief. If some people are better off and some are worse off, and the worse off are below some minimum threshold of decent quality of life, under what circumstances, if any, are the better off morally required to give aid to the needy? What are the limits of such

obligations to aid the needy? Are there obligations to aid the needy that a morally legitimate state would enforce, or would such enforcement exceed the proper business of the state? We examine these questions first within the confines of a single nation state and then in a global context. One question that arises here is, to what extent we have obligations to those near and dear to us that take priority over duties to distant needy strangers.

In week 10 we switch gears again and examine a quite different topic. As we learn more about the genetic basis of personality and conduct, and as we come in the future to acquire greater ability to control and alter the genetic sources of who we are, questions arise about how to draw the line between morally desirable and undesirable genetic manipulations. Questions about what we owe to one another take on new shapes in a future world in which we have far greater power than at present to alter native talents and disabilities.

The issues to be discussed in class are ones that are seriously controversial (not only in philosophy classes).

In class we seek principles that explain and justify the responses each of us has to a wide range of cases after critical reflection. We examine readings that take sharply opposed stands on the issues under discussion.

The goals of the course are to improve our skills at interpreting philosophical texts and assessing their arguments, to understand a variety of approaches to controversial moral issues, and to gain a more reflective understanding of our own moral values.

COURSE TEXTS: Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (1999 edition); David Schmidtz and Robert Goodin, *Social Welfare and Individual Responsibility: For and Against*; Deen K. Chatterjee, ed., *The Ethics of Assistance: Morality and the Distant Needy*; and a class reader available at Cal Copy (3251 Holiday Court).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Students are expected to come to class having read the required readings for that day and prepared to talk about them. Talking through the issues in your own voice helps deepen your understanding. Classes will be about one-half lecture and one-half discussion. In addition, Michael Tiboris will organize a weekly discussion meeting, which will provide most enrolled students a valuable opportunity for focussed discussion.

Graded assignments: two short writing assignment, five to seven pages in length, topics to be assigned in class, and a regular comprehensive final examination. On your exams and the writing assignment you will be graded according to the clarity of your prose, the cogency of your arguments, and the soundness of the understanding of course materials that you exhibit. The final

examination will comprehend all course materials including required readings, lectures, and handouts distributed in class. (This means that merely recommended readings will **NOT** be covered on the final exam. They are listed in case you should want to explore the topic further, and as a resource if you write a paper on that topic.)

GRADING: If you are taking the course on a PASS/NOT PASS basis, you must get (1) a C- or better on the final examination as well as (2) an overall C- average on all course work in order to achieve a PASS grade, with one exception: If you have an A- or better average on the midterm exam, writing assignment, and adequate participation in class discussion and are enrolled on a PASS/NOT PASS basis, you need not take the final exam in order to earn a PASS grade.

Each of the two writing assignments will count for 30 percent and the final examination will count for 40 per cent of your overall course grade.

Only medical excuses certified by a note from your physician or a comparable certified excuse will be accepted for late submission of the writing assignments or to justify the assignment of an Incomplete course grade.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, DISCUSSIONS, AND READINGS

Week 1. January 3-9.

MON: Introduction. Reading: J. Glover, "The Scope and Limits of Moral Argument," in Cal Copy reader.

WED: Moral skepticism and moral relativism. Reading: M. Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, chapter 1.

FRI: The morality of war and warfare. Reading: Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, chapters 2-3.

Week 2. January 10-16.

MON: Walzer on just war. Reading: Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, chapter 4.

WED: Preventive war, pre-emptive strikes, and interventions. Reading: Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, chapters 5-6. Recommended reading: David Luban, "Preventive War, in Cal Copy reader.

FRI: Just warfare; the doctrine of noncombatant immunity. Reading: Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, chapters 8-9; also E. Anscombe, "War and Murder," in Cal Copy reader.

Week 3. January 17-23.

MON: HOLIDAY. NO CLASS.

WED: Sieges, blockades, and guerrilla war. Reading: Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, chapters 10-11.

FRI: Terrorism and Reprisals. Reading: Walzer: *Just and Unjust Wars*, chapters 12 and 13.

Week 4. January 24-30.

MON: Terrorism and responses to terrorism. Reading: R. Fullinwider, "Terrorism, Innocence, and War"; also D. Luban, "The War on Terrorism and the End of Human Rights", both available through course web page. Recommended: Paul Kahn: "The Paradox of Riskless Warfare," also available through course web page.

WED: Supreme emergency. Reading: Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 228-232 of chapter 14, also chapters 16 and 17. Recommended reading: Walzer, pp. 242-250 of chapter 15.

FRI: Utilitarianism and rules of war. Reading: R. Brandt, "Utilitarianism and the Rules of War," available through course web page; also R. Hare, "Loyalty and Obedience," in Cal Copy reader. Recommended reading: Thomas Nagel, "War and Massacre," available through course web site.

Week 5. January 31-February 6

MON: Just war theory revisionism. Reading: J. McMahan, "The Ethics of Killing in War," available through course web page. Recommended: R. Arneson, "Just Warfare Theory and Noncombatant Immunity," available through course web page.

WED: Suicide, euthanasia, and physician-assisted suicide. Reading: L. Kass, "Neither for Love nor Money: Why Doctors Must Not Kill"; also D. Callahan, "When Self-Determination Runs Amok," both in Cal Copy reader.

FRI: D. Brock, "Voluntary Active Euthanasia," in Cal Copy reader; also F. Kamm, "Physician-Assisted Suicide, the Doctrine of Double Effect, and the Ground of Value," available through course web page.

Week 6. February 7-13.

MON: Reading: D. Velleman, "A Right of Self-Termination?," available through course web page; also. J. Hardwig, "Is There a Duty to Die?," in Cal Copy reader.

WED: The welfare state, pro and con. Reading: D. Schmidtz, *Social Welfare and Individual Responsibility*, "Taking Responsibility," pp. 1-43.

FRI: Schmidtz against the welfare state. Reading: Schmidtz, *Social Welfare and Individual Responsibility*, pp. 44-97

Week 7. February 14-20.

MON: Protecting the vulnerable. Reading: R. Goodin, *Social Welfare and Individual Responsibility*, "Social Welfare as a Collective Social Responsibility," pp. 97-154.

WED: The same topic continued. Reading: Goodin, *Social Responsibility and Individual Responsibility*, pp. 155-195. Recommended reading: R. Arneson, "Egalitarianism and the Undeserving Poor," available through course web page.

FRI: Duties to distant strangers. Reading: P. Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," accessible through course web page; also Singer, "Outsiders: Our

Obligations to Those beyond Our Borders," in D. Chatterjee, ed., *The Ethics of Assistance*. pp. 11-32.

Week 8. February 21-27.

MON: HOLIDAY. NO CLASS.

WED: Limits on duties to strangers. Reading: L. Murphy, "The Demands of Beneficence," available through course web site; also J. Hampton, "Selflessness and the Loss of Self," in Cal Copy reader. Recommended: R. Arneson, "Moral Limits on the Demands of Beneficence?," in *The Ethics of Assistance*.

FRI: Special duties to compatriots. Reading: R. Miller, "Cosmopolitan Respect and Patriotic Concern," available through course web page; also R. Miller, "Moral Closeness and World Community," in *The Ethics of Assistance*, pp. 101-122. Recommended: R. Arneson, "Do Patriotic Ties Limit Global Justice Duties?," available through course web page.

Week 9. February 28-March 6.

MON: The moral significance of nations. Reading: D. Miller, "National Responsibility and International Justice," in *The Ethics of Assistance*.

WED: Cosmopolitanism. Reading: M. Nussbaum, "Women and Theories of Global Justice: Our Need for New Paradigms," in *The Ethics of Assistance*.

FRI: The negative duty not to harm and global justice. Reading: T. Pogge, "'Assisting' the Global Poor," in *The Ethics of Assistance*.

Week 10. March 7-13.

MON: The morality of genetic intervention. Reading: A. Buchanan, D. Brock, N. Daniels, and D. Wikler, "Genetic Intervention and the Morality of Inclusion" (excerpt from book), in Cal Copy reader.

WED: Genetic enhancement. Reading: A. Buchanan, D. Brock, N. Daniels, and D. Wikler, "Why Not the Best?" (excerpt from book), in Cal Copy reader.

FRI: Disability and fairness. J. McMahan, "Cognitive Disability, Misfortune, and Justice," available through course web page; and D. Brock, "Health Care Resource Prioritization and Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities," in Cal Copy reader.

Arneson's office hours: Tuesdays 2-3 and Thursdays 12-2 in HSS 8057. Office phone 534 6810. Email rarneson@ucsd.edu