

**Philosophy 27/Political Science 27: ETHICS AND SOCIETY**  
Fall 2009

*Professor:* Sam Rickless

*Office:* HSS 8009

*Office Hours:* T 12pm-1pm (in HSS 8009), T 1pm-2pm (in Solis 105), or by appointment

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**Teaching Assistants and Sections**

Nanhee Byrnes

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Kyle Sereda

*Section Location:* WLH 2206

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David Selby

*Section Location:* WLH 2208

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*Office Hours:* W 3pm-5pm

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Dan Schwartz

*Section Location:* WLH 2206

*Section Time:* M 4pm

*Office:* HSS 8073

*Office Hours:* M 1:30pm-3:30pm

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Mike Tiboris

*Section Location:* WLH 2206

*Section Time:* F 4pm

*Office:* HSS 2334

*Office Hours:* T 9am-11am

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**Course Website:** I may occasionally post handouts, announcements, study questions, and other material on the following webpage:

<http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rickless/Rickless/Courses.html>

I will let you know in lecture whenever something is posted, but it is a good idea to check the page regularly.

**Course Description:** In this course we will explore several pressing ethical issues, all of which involve decisions that can make the difference between life and death: euthanasia, abortion, war, and aid to the needy. We will consider whether death can ever be good for a human being, whether killing a human being for her own good is ever morally permissible, whether there is a morally significant difference between killing and letting die (and, more generally, between doing harm and allowing it to occur), whether human fetuses are moral persons, whether abortion is never,

sometimes, or always morally permissible, whether killing noncombatants in a just war is ever morally permissible, whether there is a morally significant difference between intending harm and merely foreseeing harm, and whether each of us has a moral obligation to help those in desperate need. The immediate aim of the course is to help you understand *and* evaluate arguments for and against various answers that might be provided to these questions. The ultimate aim of the course is to help you arrive at your own reasoned, justified, and well-informed position on the relevant issues.

**Discussion Sections:** Discussion sections meet once a week. Sections are designed to give you an opportunity to meet in small groups, to ask questions and have them answered by your TA, and to discuss the course material in greater depth than is possible in lecture. Attendance and participation contribute to 10% of your course grade.

**Course Schedule and Readings:** All course readings except for one are available through electronic course reserves at <http://reserves.ucsd.edu>. One item, which consists of selections for Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars*, is available on regular (hardcopy) course reserve at Geisel Library. Items on electronic reserve include both articles and links to newspaper articles, legal decisions, and policy statements. Please find a list of readings below. Additional readings (e.g., up-to-the minute newspaper articles) may be added throughout the course to the online reserves. I will let you know in advance of any new reading assignments. I strongly recommend downloading and printing (and, in the case of the Walzer selections, photocopying) as many articles as you can at the beginning of the course.

**9/28 Introduction**

**9/30 Euthanasia I: A Good Death**

Readings: Nagel, "Death"  
Foot, "Euthanasia," pp. 85-96

**10/5 Euthanasia II: Utility**

Readings: AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, "Decisions at the End of Life: Euthanasia"  
Hooker, "Rule-Utilitarianism and Euthanasia"

**10/7 Euthanasia III: The Doctrine of Doing and Allowing**

Readings: Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia"  
Tooley, "An Irrelevant Consideration: Killing Versus Letting Die"

**10/12 Euthanasia IV: The Doctrine of Doing and Allowing Revisited**

Readings: Foot, "Euthanasia," pp. 96-112

**10/14 Abortion I: Against**

Readings: Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral"  
Sinnott-Armstrong, "You Can't Lose What You Ain't Never Had: A Reply to Marquis on Abortion"

**10/19 Abortion II: For**

Readings: Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

**10/21 Abortion III: Moral Status**

Readings: Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"

**10/26 Abortion IV: Law**

Readings: *Roe v. Wade, Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (excerpts)

**10/28 MID-TERM EXAMINATION**

**11/2 War I: For Noncombatant Immunity**

Readings: Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 41-47, 138-159, 251-268

**11/4 War II: Against Noncombatant Immunity**

Readings: Arneson, "Just Warfare Theory and Noncombatant Immunity"

**11/9 War III: The Doctrine of Double Effect**

Readings: Foot, "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect"  
Quinn, "Actions, Intentions, and Consequences: The Doctrine of Double Effect"

**11/11 NO LECTURE: VETERANS' DAY**

**11/16 War IV: The Doctrine of Double Effect Revisited**

Readings: Fitzpatrick, "The Intend/Foresee Distinction and the Problem of 'Closeness'"

**11/18 Aid to the Needy I: The Singer Challenge**

Readings: Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

**11/23 PAPER DUE**

**Aid to the Needy II: The Fairness Response**

Readings: Murphy, "The Demands of Beneficence"  
Arneson, "Moral Limits on the Demands of Beneficence?" pp. 1-10

**11/25 Aid to the Needy III: The Aggregation Response**

Readings: Cullity, "The Life-Saving Analogy"

**11/30 Aid to the Needy IV: Moral Responsibility**

Readings: Pogge, "Eradicating Systemic Poverty: A Brief for a Global Resources Dividend"

**12/2 Conclusion: Rights v. Utility**

**12/8 FINAL EXAMINATION (11:30am-2:30pm)**

### **Requirements:**

- 1 Surprise Quiz 5%
- 1 midterm exam (October 28) 20%
- 1 paper (due November 23) 20%
- 1 final exam (December 8: 11:30am-2:30pm) 45%
- Section participation 10%

### **Grading Policies:**

- Make-up examinations and paper extensions will only be given to those who present evidence indicative of a valid excuse in a timely manner. If at any time you believe you have a legitimate claim to an extension or make-up, bring it to my attention as soon as possible. Unexcused late papers and unexcused missed examinations will receive a grade of 'F'.
- Grading will be done primarily by your TA, in consultation with me and the other TAs for the course. If you have any questions or disagreements about the grading of your work, please see your TA *first* to discuss the matter. The likelihood is that you will come to a mutual understanding with your TA; but if, for some reason, you are unable to do so, then you should feel free to see me.
- A hard copy of your paper (due November 23) must be turned in to your TA and an electronic copy uploaded to turnitin.com. It is very easy to upload your papers, and instructions will be included in your assignment.

### **Additional Notes**

- If accommodations are needed for a disability or for religious reasons, please discuss the matter with me as soon as possible.
- The academic honor code must be observed in this course. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an automatic F in the course and will be referred to the Council of Deans for the heaviest possible penalty.
- The policies, readings, and schedule described above are subject to minor change.