PHIX242
Practical Ethics
S1 OUA 2017
Dept of Philosophy

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Disclaimer
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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Convenor
Jane Johnson
jane.johnson@mq.edu.au
By arrangement

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit focuses on a range of topics in applied ethics, starting with ethics in the personal sphere and expanding the sphere of moral concern outwards to include those with whom we are not in a personal relationship and also non-human animals and the environment. We consider ethical questions to do with abortion, marriage, children's rights, suicide and euthanasia; questions of what we owe to those less well off than ourselves (e.g. those in poverty, refugees and asylum seekers); and ethical issues in the breakdown of moral relations (e.g. war, terrorism, torture and punishment). Discussion of the different topics is structured around key concepts, themes and questions including personhood, harm, and justice. The unit aims to encourage deep intellectual and also personal reflection on the complex ethical issues raised by such questions and to introduce students to the different positions and arguments within the relevant philosophical debates. All enrolment queries should be directed to Open Universities Australia (OUA): see www.open.edu.au

Important Academic Dates
Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/

Learning Outcomes
1. An ability to recognize and describe key theories in philosophical ethics;
2. Skills in applying these theories to the ethical issues discussed in class and beyond;
3. The ability to develop well defended ethical arguments (both written and verbal), rather than relying on intuitions or emotional reactions;
4. Skills in evaluating the relative merits of competing ethical arguments, whilst appreciating that ethical conflicts are often inevitable and sometimes insoluble;
5. The ability to reflect on and critically interrogate the values you have and how they influence you as a person, student, and future professional.

**General Assessment Information**

Assessments are to be submitted through Turnitin, and will be marked and returned via Grademark. For information about these tools, see:

[http://www.mq.edu.au/iLearn/student_info/assignments.htm](http://www.mq.edu.au/iLearn/student_info/assignments.htm)

For information about extension, lateness penalties and special consideration, see the "Policies and Procedures" section below.

**Assessment Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Journal Part 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5pm Sunday Week 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5pm 2nd Sun Mid Semester Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Journal Part 2</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5pm Sunday week 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5pm Friday Week 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Weeks 1-12</td>
</tr>
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**Reflective Journal Part 1**

Due: **5pm Sunday Week 2**  
Weighting: **15%**

**RECALL** - A recent tricky moral situation/scenario in your personal life. Describe it in as much or as little detail as you wish (but making sure your marker can understand the situation). [Note: If you wish you can describe a current situation you are facing. This may be harder to reflect abstractly upon, but you may find it helps you find a resolution.]

**REFLECT** - How did you approach this difficulty in trying to work out what you would do or what your response would be? Was/is it the way you always approach these situations, or a different way? Did you engage in a conscious strategy or thought process? A deliberation process? Fall back on gut instinct, and if so, how would you explain that process? Some other activity (eg asking family/friends/professional?)

**EVALUATE** - How did that approach work out for you (or how are you currently finding it?) Was/is it helpful? Do you think it will be helpful in future? Were there any drawbacks? Would you recommend this approach?

This task will be assessed by the following criteria: content, structure, argument, critical analysis, and written expression. A detailed rubric for this task will be supplied on iLearn.
You should write between 900-1000 words in response to this task.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:
• Skills in applying these theories to the ethical issues discussed in class and beyond;
• The ability to reflect on and critically interrogate the values you have and how they influence you as a person, student, and future professional.

Short paper
Due: 5pm 2nd Sun Mid Semester Break
Weighting: 25%

Present and evaluate one key objection to a chosen argument.

This task will be assessed by the following criteria: content, structure, argument and critical analysis, written expression and referencing. A detailed rubric for this task will be supplied on iLearn.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:
• An ability to recognize and describe key theories in philosophical ethics;
• Skills in applying these theories to the ethical issues discussed in class and beyond;
• The ability to develop well defended ethical arguments (both written and verbal), rather than relying on intuitions or emotional reactions;
• Skills in evaluating the relative merits of competing ethical arguments, whilst appreciating that ethical conflicts are often inevitable and sometimes insoluble;

Reflective Journal Part 2
Due: 5pm Sunday week 11
Weighting: 15%

Review your first Reflective Journal discussion. Address the following questions:

1. How do you now view and evaluate the approach you took to resolving the moral scenario when you first confronted it?

2. How would you approach this scenario if you confronted it for the first time now? Has your approach to deliberating about moral challenges like this one changed in any way as a result of the work you’ve done in this unit? If so, how? If not, comment on that.

This task will be assessed by the following criteria: content, structure, argument, critical analysis, reflection and written expression. A detailed rubric for this task will be supplied on iLearn.

You should write between 700-800 words in response to this task.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:
Skills in applying these theories to the ethical issues discussed in class and beyond;
Skills in evaluating the relative merits of competing ethical arguments, whilst appreciating that ethical conflicts are often inevitable and sometimes insoluble;
The ability to reflect on and critically interrogate the values you have and how they influence you as a person, student, and future professional.

**Essay**

*Due: 5pm Friday Week 13*

*Weighting: 30%*

Write an essay of 1600-1800 words, on one of the questions provided in class/on iLearn. This task will be assessed using the following criteria: content, structure, argument, critical analysis, written expression and referencing. A detailed rubric for this task will be supplied on iLearn.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- An ability to recognize and describe key theories in philosophical ethics;
- Skills in applying these theories to the ethical issues discussed in class and beyond;
- The ability to develop well defended ethical arguments (both written and verbal), rather than relying on intuitions or emotional reactions;
- Skills in evaluating the relative merits of competing ethical arguments, whilst appreciating that ethical conflicts are often inevitable and sometimes insoluble;

**Participation**

*Due: Weeks 1-12*

*Weighting: 15%*

Participation: Including general commitment to online discussion + three 'journal posts'. Online participation will be worth half your participation mark and journal posts will comprise the other half of your mark.

Participation will be assessed by the following criteria: quality of your posts and their timeliness (you should post within a week of the topic). Quality is not just measured by the philosophical content of your posts, but by your willingness to engage in discussion with your peers. Much of what you learn in philosophy you will learn by involving yourself in discussion and argument. So while we would like to see some well thought out responses to the topics for each week and to the reading questions, we would also really encourage you to respond to the messages of other students, ask questions, post your thoughts and engage fully in the philosophical community. You'll find that if you make the most of the discussion facilities available, not only will you maximise your participation marks, but you will also get more out of the course in general.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:
An ability to recognize and describe key theories in philosophical ethics;
Skills in applying these theories to the ethical issues discussed in class and beyond;
The ability to develop well defended ethical arguments (both written and verbal), rather than relying on intuitions or emotional reactions;

Delivery and Resources

Online units can be accessed at: http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/

PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement.

Please contact teaching staff for any further, more specific requirements. Consult the OUA website for more detailed information on technology requirements:

Essential Readings will be available electronically through the Macquarie University Library, with links from iLearn.

Unit Schedule

PART ONE - ETHICS IN THE PERSONAL SPHERE: LIFE, LOVE, DEATH

• Week 1: Introduction to course and ethical reasoning
• Week 2: Abortion
• Week 3: Marriage, family, parenting
• Week 4: Death: (a) Suicide
• Week 5: Death: (b) Euthanasia

PART TWO: EXPANDING THE CIRCLE OF MORAL CONCERN

• Week 6: What we owe to those less fortunate: (a) Poverty
• Week 7: What we owe to those less fortunate: (b) Refugees and asylum seekers
• MID SEMESTER BREAK 2 WEEKS
• Week 8: Non-human animals
• Week 9: The environment

PART THREE: WHEN MORAL RELATIONS BREAK DOWN

• Week 10: War and Humanitarian Intervention
• Week 11: Torture
Policies and Procedures

Late Submission

Unless otherwise stated, late submission of written work will result in a deduction of 10% of the mark awarded for each week or part of a week beyond the due date, or date to which an extension has been granted.

Extension Request


The University recognises that students may experience disruptions that adversely affect their academic performance in assessment activities.

The disruption to studies policy (http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html) applies only to serious and unavoidable disruptions that arise after a study period has commenced.

Serious and unavoidable disruption

The University classifies a disruption as serious and unavoidable if it:

• could not have reasonably been anticipated, avoided or guarded against by the student; and
• was beyond the student's control; and
• caused substantial disruption to the student's capacity for effective study and/or completion of required work; and
• occurred during an event critical study period and was at least three (3) consecutive days duration, and/or
• prevented completion of a final examination.

If you feel that you’ve been impacted by a serious and unavoidable disruption to study situation, submit an application as follows:

1. Visit Ask MQ (https://ask.mq.edu.au) and use your OneID to log in via 'Current student domestic and international'
2. Under 'Forms' select 'disruptions' and fill in your relevant details.
3. Attach supporting documents by clicking 'Add a reply', click 'browse' and navigating to the files you want to attach, then click 'submit form' to send your notification and supporting documents.
4. Please keep copies of your original documents, as they may be requested in the future as part of the assessment process

Review

Once your submission is assessed, recommendations are sent to your unit convenor to ensure an appropriate solution for affected assessment(s) is organised.

OUA Specific Policies and Procedures

**OUA Special Circumstances Process**

Special Circumstances refers to late withdrawal from a unit and your request to have your circumstances taken into account for a possible refund of fees and removal of a "fail" result.

Applications for Special Circumstances are to be submitted to Open Universities Australia directly:


Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:


In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/) of Policy Central.

**Student Code of Conduct**

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

**Results**

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in *eStudent*. For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au).
Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

Student Enquiry Service

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

Equity Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University’s IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Skills in applying these theories to the ethical issues discussed in class and beyond;
- The ability to develop well defended ethical arguments (both written and verbal), rather than relying on intuitions or emotional reactions;
Assessment tasks

- Short paper
- Essay

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to develop well defended ethical arguments (both written and verbal), rather than relying on intuitions or emotional reactions;
- Skills in evaluating the relative merits of competing ethical arguments, whilst appreciating that ethical conflicts are often inevitable and sometimes insoluble;
- The ability to reflect on and critically interrogate the values you have and how they influence you as a person, student, and future professional.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Journal Part 1
- Short paper
- Reflective Journal Part 2
- Essay

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to develop well defended ethical arguments (both written and verbal), rather than relying on intuitions or emotional reactions;
- Skills in evaluating the relative merits of competing ethical arguments, whilst appreciating that ethical conflicts are often inevitable and sometimes insoluble;
Assessment tasks

- Short paper
- Essay
- Participation

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Skills in evaluating the relative merits of competing ethical arguments, whilst appreciating that ethical conflicts are often inevitable and sometimes insoluble;
- The ability to reflect on and critically interrogate the values you have and how they influence you as a person, student, and future professional.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Journal Part 1
- Reflective Journal Part 2
- Participation

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- The ability to reflect on and critically interrogate the values you have and how they influence you as a person, student, and future professional.

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to
handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcome**

- The ability to reflect on and critically interrogate the values you have and how they influence you as a person, student, and future professional.

**Assessment tasks**

- Reflective Journal Part 1
- Reflective Journal Part 2
- Participation

**Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills**

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- An ability to recognize and describe key theories in philosophical ethics;
- Skills in applying these theories to the ethical issues discussed in class and beyond;
- The ability to develop well defended ethical arguments (both written and verbal), rather than relying on intuitions or emotional reactions;
- Skills in evaluating the relative merits of competing ethical arguments, whilst appreciating that ethical conflicts are often inevitable and sometimes insoluble;

**Assessment tasks**

- Short paper
- Essay
- Participation

**Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking**

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and
systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- Skills in applying these theories to the ethical issues discussed in class and beyond;
- The ability to develop well defended ethical arguments (both written and verbal), rather than relying on intuitions or emotional reactions;
- Skills in evaluating the relative merits of competing ethical arguments, whilst appreciating that ethical conflicts are often inevitable and sometimes insoluble;
- The ability to reflect on and critically interrogate the values you have and how they influence you as a person, student, and future professional.

**Assessment tasks**

- Reflective Journal Part 1
- Short paper
- Reflective Journal Part 2
- Essay

**Changes from Previous Offering**

Changes to timings of assessments.