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## Justin Morton | Teaching Statement

I teach with a *problem-based approach*, one that motivates students to engage philosophical arguments by confronting them with pointed philosophical puzzles. When I first started teaching, I would often begin class or discussion section by putting an argument on the board, in premise-conclusion form. After explaining it, I would then ask the students for their evaluation of it. At best, this resulted in about 30% of the class half-heartedly engaging the premises. Here's what I realized: the students didn't *care* about the argument. They didn't see why the conclusion mattered to them. So, I decided to try to show my students why they in fact *already* care about philosophical issues: two (or more) claims which seem independently plausible are actually in tension with each other.

Consider Mill's claim that government coercion of an act is justified only if that act causes direct, unconsented-to harm to another. When I write this principle on the board, my students almost unanimously—if somewhat complacently—agree with Mill. But when I show them the news story about Arwin Meiwes, the German man who killed and ate Bernd Brandes, who *consented* to the act on video, most are adamant that coercion was justified here. Discussion usually takes off when they see the conflict—students are motivated to solve apparent inconsistencies in their beliefs.

I initially had trouble applying this method outside applied contexts, like the above. When I first taught Descartes' skeptical argument, I had trouble getting students to take it seriously. But this semester, when I taught it, I started by asking the following three questions: (1) What are some things that you're sure that you know? (2) Why do you think you know those things? (3) How would your life change if you found out you didn't have this knowledge, after all? Not only did this approach set the students up to see how Descartes' argument presents a problem for their beliefs; it also gave my quieter students a low-risk way of getting involved. One student responded that she knew that the people she thought her parents were actually her parents—and that, if she didn't know that after all, she would have to re-think basically everything. When I presented Descartes' argument, everyone wanted to find a plausible reply.

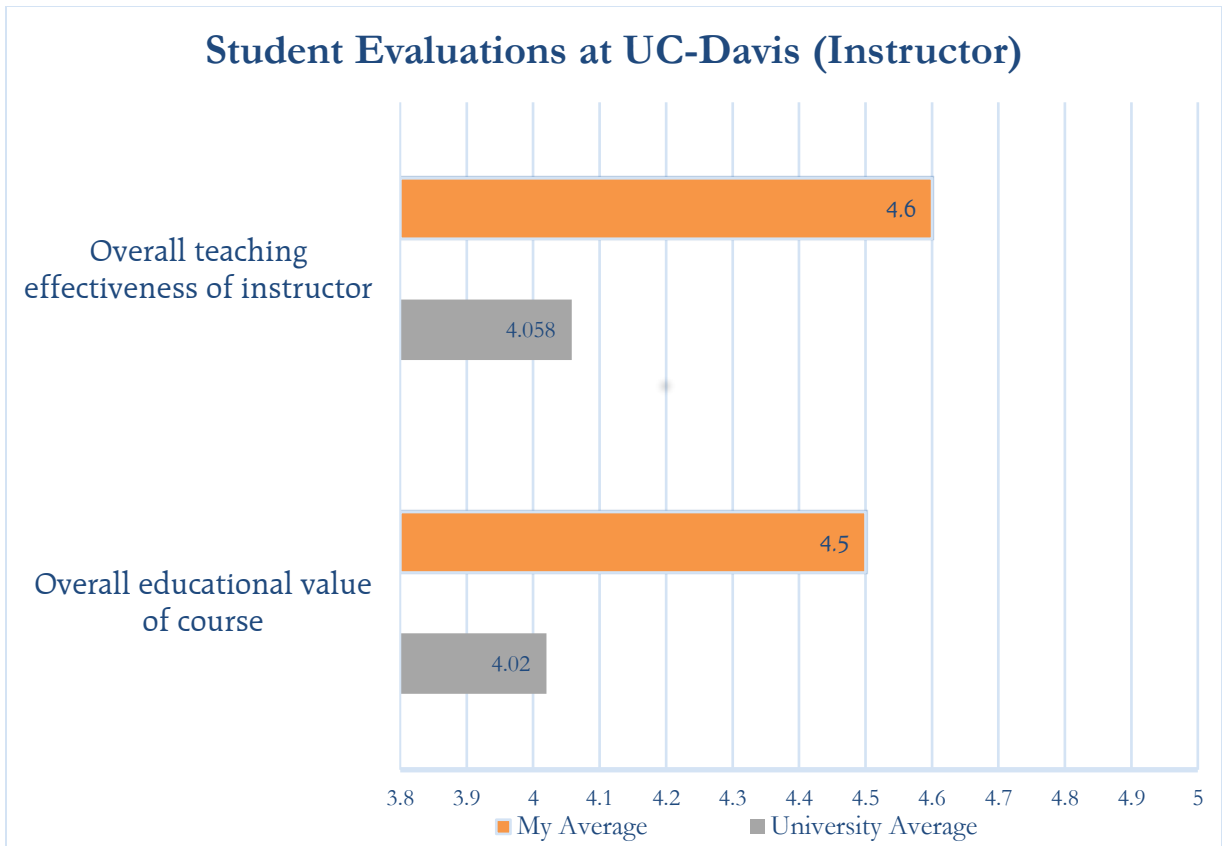
It is not only important to present a problem; it is crucial to make it one that students care about solving. In one discussion on free speech and university speech codes, the problem I wanted to highlight was the tension between the benefits of free speech and the perceived need to restrict hate speech. But instead of talking about some hypothetical case, I had the students read a short news article on a fraternity that was suspended because some of its members yelled racist slurs at a group of students. My students were invested in the question of how their own university ought to handle such issues, and so discussion was especially fruitful and genuine.

This problem-based approach can be an abrasive way to learn, and at any rate requires a lot of buy-in from the students. This quarter I experimented with having every student I teach come and meet with me in the second week of class, just to get to know each other. I had them come in pairs, so that they would feel more comfortable, but also so that they could establish a connection with another student in the course. I met with each pair for 20 minutes. My hypothesis was that students would participate more readily in class discussion—which is essential to my model—if they felt comfortable with me as a person, and knew someone else in the class. So far, this has paid off: not only did I get to establish many personal connections with my students, but I'm seeing deep engagement in class discussions.

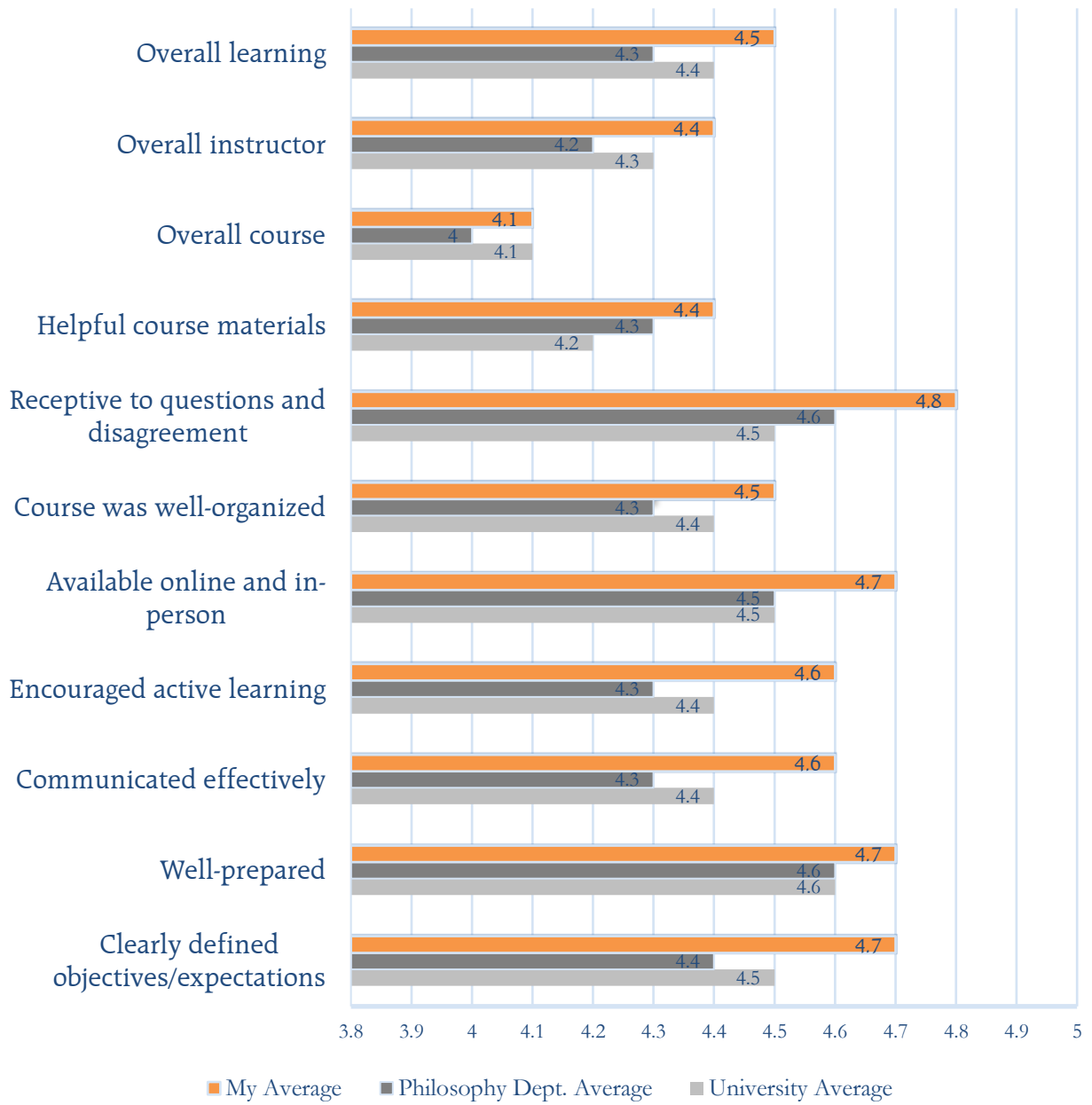
To measure how well students evaluate arguments, I think that essays are invaluable. But there are too many components of a good essay to expect an introductory student to master them all at once. So I break up the task: instead of having students go from never having written a philosophical essay to writing a full essay, I employ a “scaffolding” approach. I first have them identify the thesis of an article in a single sentence. Then, in a separate assignment, they write a 250-word summary of an article’s main argument. Finally, I assign a 500-word piece in which students either summarize an argument and sketch an objection to it, or construct a novel argument for/against some position. By the time they have to write a full essay, later in the semester, they have already practiced producing each of its major components.

Justin Morton | Evidence of Teaching Excellence

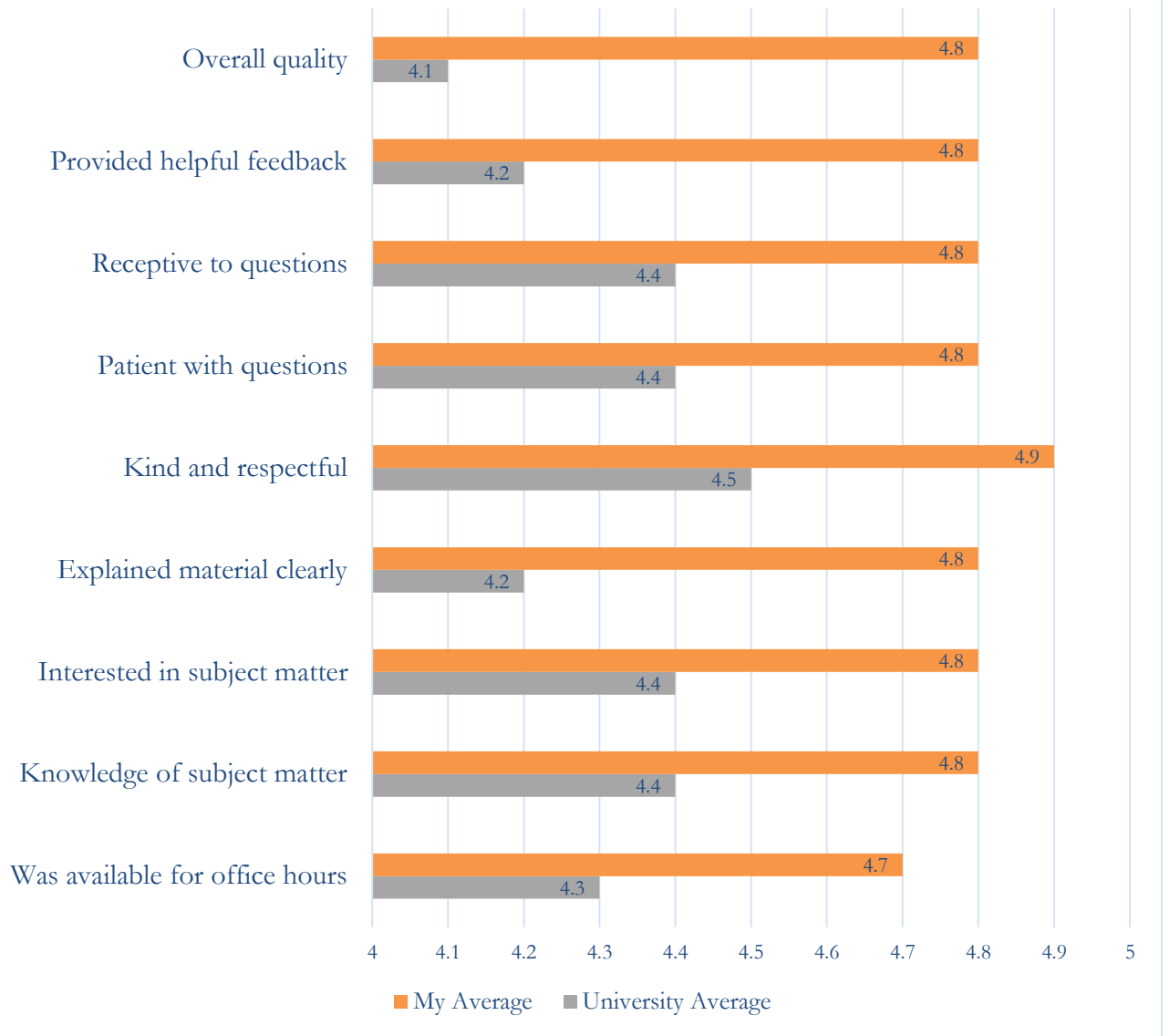
Below please find charts representing (respectively) my evaluations as a Professor at UC-Davis, as an instructor at the University of Texas, as a Teaching Assistant at the University of Texas, and as a Teaching Assistant at the University of Wisconsin. These are juxtaposed to departmental and university averages, when these were available at the time of preparation.



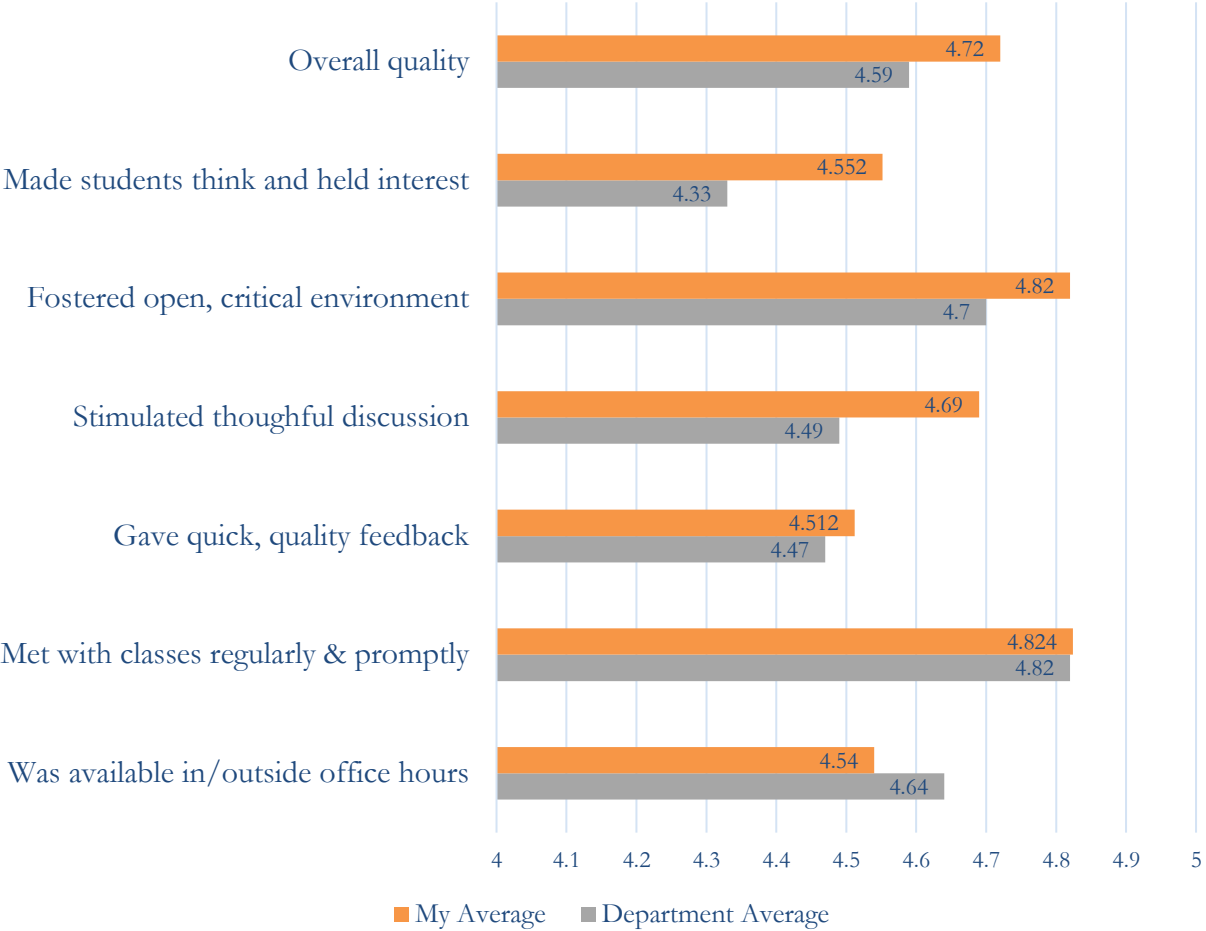
## Student Evaluations at Texas (Instructor)



## Student Evaluations at Texas (TA)



### Student Evaluations at Wisconsin (TA)



Select Comments:

**Introduction to Ethics (Spring 2017):**

This was an incredible class, my favorite at UT so far (and I'm a junior). Really made me think about real world problems. All in all, this class taught me to listen and be open-minded.

I really enjoyed this course. I learned a lot about ethics, especially in the real world.

This class has been amazing and I have enjoyed each class day. The textbook and the instructor made material that was already interesting even more so. A++!

I learned a lot in this course, especially on how to communicate disagreements in a professional and academic manner, and how to listen to others' ideas and actually think about them.

Justin has been my favorite professor this semester; his class is always interesting, and he's understanding and accepting of others.

Professor Morton always managed to incite valuable discussions about sometimes sensitive topics while keeping passions distant.

Amazing discussions.

Very nice guy, very approachable and cares very much about this subject.

Course was great! Professor was one of the best! We did tend to get off track a bit, but it was one of the things that made this class so good and unique.

Really sweet professor, very helpful and kind.

Justin is great and got me excited about ethics and philosophy in general.

**Knowledge and Reality (Fall 2016):**

He really cared about how we were doing in the class and was always so patient and helpful. Extremely intelligent and personable TA. I'm glad he was the TA for this course.

Easily one of the better discussion sections. Helped me understand what was taught in lectures much easier.

I honestly like the way the TA teaches more than how the professor teaches.

He was very much available and insistent to help. His explanations were very clear.

Knew material and was really helpful in clearing up all confusion. Receptive and accessible whenever we needed extra help. Overall great and helpful TA.

By far my favorite TA of the semester. Knowledgeable, able to articulate clearly, and a very cool guy overall.

Justin was a very good TA and taught me a lot. He explained the course material well which allowed me to better understand the overall concept. Great TA.



Justin was by far the best teaching assistant I have had. His enthusiasm, amicability, and ability to lead the class were phenomenal. He should be made a professor.

Very good at leading discussions.

This was a great class. I learned a lot and had fun doing it.

Justin was well prepared and receptive to his students! Awesome TA.

Kick [expletive deleted] semester! This has been one of my favorite classes in my 4 years here at UT.

He was extremely approachable and was very patient with questions.

I truly would not have been able to follow the course material as well without your awesome discussion session.

### **Contemporary Moral Issues (Spring 2013):**

Morton is one of the best TAs I've had during my student career. He is comfortable discussing material, facilitates group conversations, and is in general very amicable and wise. I don't have any real recommendations for improvement.

One of the most open-minded, down-to-earth TAs I've ever had. This is the first interesting discussion section I've ever been in.

You are an extremely wonderful TA. One of your strongest points is your ability to hear out each student's argument and present it in its best light.

I think Justin did a really good job this semester. He took on more responsibility than was asked. He shows a legitimate interest in the success of all of us and it is obvious! He was very willing to help with final papers and understanding of topics! I was scared to take a philosophy class and now I'm comfortable holding arguments. *Over-worked and under paid!*

Best TA I've had—very approachable and affable. Held great, stimulating discussions.

Justin has been such an awesome TA. Even if I got confused in lecture, discussion was always mentally stimulating. He let everyone talk and was open to all views.

Very good at facilitating discussion and at making everyone feel comfortable with adding to the discussion.

### **Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2013):**

Justin was one of the best TAs I've had. He always answers questions clearly and put extra effort into helping his students. I am now considering double-majoring in philosophy and am taking a second philosophy course next semester.

Justin was absolutely excellent, and the only reason I am doing well in this class is because he is an excellent TA. He needs a raise.

Awesome! Answered any and all of our questions, and discussions and reviews were always helpful.

Justin did an extremely good job of teaching us what we need to know, in an engaging, open environment.

Justin was an excellent TA, and often explained the material better than the professor. He made it very easy to engage and ask questions.

He did a great job making the material relatable to the students.

Best TA I've had. Returns work with comments so you know what to improve on. Always open to others' ideas. Returns work really fast.

#### **Elementary Logic (Spring 2014):**

Justin was my savior for this class. Professor [name redacted] is so confusing, and discussion and office hours were the only time I ever got anything from this class. I would recommend him for anything. He seems like a great person and a great TA.

Great job! You stimulated discussion of the concepts and encouraged us to think for ourselves.

Your explanation is very patient and clear! Thank you!

Justin was a very helpful TA and honestly helped explain the material better than the professor!

#### **Contemporary Moral Issues (Fall 2014):**

Justin was an outstanding TA. He made the class bearable and actually made sense. Almost every lecture I left feeling in some way confused, and every week when I talked to Justin I felt better. He's a great guy and will make a great professor someday!

I really enjoyed taking the class with Justin. He really has a great ability to stimulate conversation.

Justin is a super nice guy and an extremely helpful TA. He was always willing to make appointments for extra help and his discussion sections were thought-provoking and well carried out. Overall one of the best TAs I've had.

Did a really good job facilitating discussions. Really nice, approachable TA. Made discussions interesting.

Justin does a great job making himself available to students. He also does a great job creating an environment where everyone feels they can express their opinion. His discussion topics/activities also really helped me grasp the material much more than lecture did.

Justin seemed to have a thorough understanding of all the concepts we covered and was efficient at coming up with interesting ways to discuss them.

I enjoyed discussions. The only class all week that I looked forward to...

Justin produced a very inviting atmosphere in which it was not intimidating to talk. I liked how he added on to arguments made and presented new ones for us to consider.

Good TA—makes people feel open to share opinions. Available to help outside of class. Prepared. Clearly has invested interest in students doing well.

Justin was very helpful, and held a very useful review session before our midterm. He also gave great feedback for my paper outline and really helped explain the material. He's a great TA.

**Contemporary Moral Issues (Spring 2015):**

Wish we had discussion more than once a week—great TA!

Justin is an excellent TA who has the unique ability to capture people's interest and make the subject fun to learn. Awesome guy!!

Justin was impressively knowledgeable on the material and more or less was the reason I did well in this course. Thank you, sir.

Justin made discussion very interesting. To be frank, I learned more from his discussion than from lecture.

Justin was one of the best TAs I had.

Justin is very helpful when it comes to exam prep. He makes the topics that are discussed in lecture clear and easy to understand. Great TA!

Very helpful with emails if we missed class. Very enthusiastic.

# Introduction to Ethics

PHL 318  
Burdine Hall, Room 134

## Instructor Information

### Instructor

Justin Morton

### Email

[mortonjj@utexas.edu](mailto:mortonjj@utexas.edu)

### Office Location & Hours

WAG 411 | MW 11:00-12:00

### Grader

Elliot Goodine

### Email

[egoodine@utexas.edu](mailto:egoodine@utexas.edu)

### Office Location & Hours

WAG 319 | THUR 1:00-3:00

## General Information

### Description of Course Content

You are all in college because you think it will make your life better. But what makes a life good?

When I was little, I used to pick on my little brother just for fun, and that was wrong. But why was it wrong?

Caligula was a notoriously sadistic Roman emperor. Suppose that he really thought he was doing the right thing in torturing someone—would it still be wrong? Or does its wrongness depend somehow on what Caligula believes?

These are some of the kinds of questions we will be considering this semester. We will investigate the nature of the good life, when and why acts are morally wrong, whether moral truths are objectively or only relatively true, and whether (and how) God is necessary for morality. The promise of this course is that you will understand and be able to reason clearly about some of the deepest questions about morality.

### Course Objectives

- Understand the major positions in ethical theory.
- Develop the abilities to reason about and debate these issues.

## Course Materials

### Required Materials

- Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics* (this will be abbreviated as “RSL” in what follows)

All other materials will be made available throughout the term, with the exception of any movies assigned.

## Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading
<b>Weeks 1 &amp; 2</b> Jan. 18-20 Jan. 23-27	Introduction and Syllabus/ What is the good life?	RSL, Introduction RSL, Ch. 1: Hedonism: Its Powerful Appeal Watch <i>The Truman Show</i> (movie)* RSL, Ch. 2: Is Happiness All that Matters? ○ First homework due Jan. 27
<b>Week 3</b> Jan. 30-Feb. 3	What is the good life?	RSL, Ch. 3: Getting What You Want News Excerpt: “Man Tries to Cut Off his Arms at California Home Depot” RSL, Ch. 4: Problems for the Desire Theory
<b>Week 4</b> Feb. 6-10	What is the good life?	Jean Kazez, “Necessities”
<b>Week 5</b> Feb. 13-17	How should I live?	Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” RSL, Ch. 9: Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions ○ First paper due Feb. 15
<b>Week 6</b> Feb. 20-24	How should I live?	RSL, Ch. 9 (cont.) Watch <i>The Dark Knight</i> (movie)* RSL, Ch. 10: Consequentialism: Its Difficulties
<b>Week 7</b> Feb. 27-Mar. 3	How should I live?	Summary of Operation Red Wings Kant, selection from <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> RSL, Ch. 11: The Kantian Perspective: Fairness and Justice
<b>Week 8</b> Mar. 6-10	How should I live?	Jesus, selection from <i>The Sermon on the Mount</i> RSL, Ch. 17: Virtue Ethics ○ Second paper due Mar. 10
<b>Week 9</b> Mar. 20-24	Why should I be moral?	Plato, <i>The Ring of Gyges</i> Wolf, “Moral Saints” RSL, Ch. 8: Ethical Egoism
<b>Week 10</b> Mar. 27-31	Is moral truth objective?	RSL, Ch. 19: Ethical Relativism RSL, Ch. 20: Moral Nihilism
<b>Week 11</b> Apr. 3-7	Is moral truth objective?	David Enoch, “Why I am an Objectivist About Ethics” RSL, Ch. 21: Eleven Arguments Against Moral Objectivity

Week	Topic	Reading
Week 12 Apr. 10-14	Is God necessary for morality?	Plato, selection from <i>Euthyphro</i> Alston, “What Euthyphro Should Have Said” o Third paper due Apr. 14
Week 13 Apr. 17-21	Is God necessary for morality?	Dostoevsky, selection from <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> Zagzebski, “Does Ethics Need God?”
Week 14 Apr. 24-28	Choice Week**	
Week 15 May 1-5	Choice Week**	

\* Movies can be watched privately, but I will also screen them on campus, outside of class hours.

\*\* At some point midway through the semester, you as a class will vote on what topics you want to cover in the final two weeks of class. I will give you a list of possible topics, such as:

- The problem of evil (what the existence of evil tells us about the existence of God)
- Monism/Pluralism (whether there is more than one fundamental moral principle)
- Feminist Ethics
- Immigration
- Abortion
- The Moral Status of Animals
- Human Genetic Enhancement
- Affirmative Action
- ...Or suggest another topic to me or Elliot!

## Evaluation

First Short Paper | 10%

Second Short Paper | 15%

Third Short Paper | 25%

Final Exam | 20%

Two Homework Assignments | 10% each

Participation/Attendance | 10%

The **short papers** will each isolate a reasoning/writing skill, and will build on each other. You will be given prompts as the date approaches.

The **first homework assignment** will help you develop the ability to construct and evaluate formal arguments. The **second homework assignment** will be to write a very short summary of some ethical issue that you have seen in popular media (the news, a TV show, a Facebook debate, etc.).

## **Policies**

**Attendance.** You may miss 5 classes, unexcused. Miss any more and you will lose this portion of your grade.

**Electronic Devices.** You may NOT use cell phones or other electronic devices in class, unless specifically authorized by me. (If, for example, you are waiting on a very important phone call, see me before class.) Failure to follow this policy will result in losing all participation/attendance points.

**Grades.** Grades will be assigned numerically (e.g., “96”) and then translated at the end of the course into letter grades, according to the standard university distribution.

## **Further Information**

### **Students With Disabilities**

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any instance may be punished by a report to the relevant dean, as well as failure of the assignment or course. Please see me if you are unclear about either the definition of plagiarism in general, or about whether some particular case is an instance of plagiarism.

# Introduction to Philosophy

PHL 2300

First Summer Session

M-F 12:00-1:50

## Instructor Information

**Instructor**

Justin Morton

**Email**

[mortonjj@utexas.edu](mailto:mortonjj@utexas.edu)

**Office Location & Hours**

Office 256 | 11:30-12:00 M-F

## General Information

### Description of Course Content

Some questions are only important to people who have certain interests, or who are in certain situations. In this course we will confront questions that ought to be important to every human being that is capable of understanding them. Most people assume a set of answers to these questions without ever thinking about it. In this course we will see just how far *reason* can take us toward their answers.

Here are those questions:

- Is there a God?
- How is God's existence compatible with the existence of evil in the world?
- How should we live? Is there a right to immigrate? How far should free speech extend on our campus?
- How can I know anything at all?
- Do we have free will?
- How can I be the same person as I was 10 years ago, even though almost everything about me has changed?

### Course Objectives

- Understand some important claims (and arguments for those claims) in philosophy.
- Develop the abilities to reason about and debate these issues.

### Course Materials

Peter van Inwagen, *Metaphysics*. Westview Press. Third edition.

Stephen Hetherington, *Knowledge Puzzles*. Westview Press.

\*Any other assignment besides something from one of these books will be emailed or handed out to you.



## Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading
<b>Week 1</b> Jun. 5-8	Introduction and Syllabus An Argument Against God's Existence	Hume, <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> , Part 9 J.L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence" Peter van Inwagen, <i>Metaphysics</i> , selections from Arguments for God's Existence: chapters 8 & 9
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Teleological Argument</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 2</b> Jun. 11-15	Arguments for God's Existence: Ethics	Peter van Inwagen, <i>Metaphysics</i> , chapter 7 William Rowe, "The Cosmological Argument and the Principle of Sufficient Reason"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Cosmological Argument</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free Speech on Campus</li> <li>Immigration</li> </ul>	Selection from Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> Altmann, "Speech Codes and Expressive Harm" Huemer, "Is There a Right to Immigrate?"
<b>Week 3</b> Jun. 18-22	Free Will Personal Identity	<i>Metaphysics</i> , chapter 12 Strawson, "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility" Williams, "Personal Identity and Individuation" <i>Metaphysics</i> , chapter 11
<b>Week 4</b> Jun. 25-29	Epistemology	<i>Knowledge Puzzles</i> , chapter 22: Regress Skepticism
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Regress Problem and some solutions</li> <li>Can we know anything?</li> </ul>	<i>Knowledge Puzzles</i> , chapter 23: Foundationalism <i>Knowledge Puzzles</i> , chapter 24: Contextualism <i>Knowledge Puzzles</i> , chapter 25: Coherentism <i>Knowledge Puzzles</i> , chapters 6 & 7: Reliabilism (*These chapters 5-6 pages each, on average.)
<b>Week 5</b> Jul. 2 & 3	Epistemology	<i>Knowledge Puzzles</i> , chapter 12: Induction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can we learn from the past?</li> </ul>	
	Reflections on the course and review for the final	

## Movies

Once or sometimes twice a week you will have the option to get together with the students from another Introduction to Philosophy class and watch a philosophically-oriented movie. I've chosen these movies because they each flesh out a theme from the course. After each movie, we'll spend a

little time talking about its relevant philosophical themes. However, it will be conducted outside of class, and thus will only be graded for extra credit.

### Movie Schedule

Fri. 6/8	<i>Contact</i>
Fri. 6/15	<i>No Country for Old Men</i>
Tues. 6/19	<i>Minority Report</i>
Fri. 6/22	<i>The Prestige</i>
Wed. 6/27	<i>Groundhog Day</i>
Fri. 6/29	<i>The Matrix</i>

### Evaluation

First Short Paper	10%
Second Short Paper	15%
Third Short Paper	25%
Final Exam	20%
Two Homework Assignments	10% each
Participation/Attendance	10%

The **short papers** will each isolate a reasoning/writing skill, and will build on each other. You will be given prompts as the date approaches.

The **first homework assignment** will help you develop the ability to construct and evaluate formal arguments. The **second homework assignment** will be to write a very short summary of some philosophical issue that you have seen in popular media (the news, a TV show, a Facebook debate, etc.).

### Policies

**Attendance.** You may miss 5 classes, unexcused. Miss any more and you will lose this portion of your grade.

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Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any instance may be punished by a report to the relevant dean, as well as failure of the assignment or course. Please see me if you are unclear about either the definition of plagiarism in general, or about whether some particular case is an instance of plagiarism.

# PHI 117 Foundations of Ethics

Fall 2018

## Instructor Information

Instructor

Dr. Justin Morton

Email

[jjmorton@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jjmorton@ucdavis.edu)

Office Location & Hours

Social Sciences 2281  
Friday 1:00-3:00

## General Information

### Description

It would be wrong for me to give you a D on a perfect paper. Would this be the case even if everyone (including you!) thought it was ok? More generally: are moral facts determined by our attitudes, or are they independent of those attitudes? This is one of the most important questions in all of ethics. In this class, we will learn and evaluate some of the deepest arguments on both sides of this issue.

### Expectations and Goals

The goal of this course is twofold. First, as with any philosophy course, the goal is to develop your critical reasoning skills. This will happen in the form of in-class debate and discussion, paper-writing, and close reading of relatively complex philosophical texts. Second is a subject-specific goal: to learn about one of the most important issues in ethics. That issue is whether moral facts are determined by the attitudes of agents.

## Course Materials

### Required Materials

Good news: no required texts! I'll upload or email all readings.

### Optional Materials

If you want to read more on anything, or get background reading on any issues, just come ask me.

### Evaluation

4 short (1-1.5 page) critical response papers | 10% each

1 longer paper (5-6 pages) | 50%

Attendance and participation | 10%

- The idea behind the short papers is to force you to give a maximally concise summary of an argument, and an equally concise reply to that argument. Concision is an overlooked skill that is nevertheless hugely important. The goal is also to get you started practicing *early* in the course, and in such a way that you have lots of opportunities to correct for mistakes.
- The longer paper will constitute your take-home final. The idea here is to develop a fuller line of philosophical argument about one of the themes of the course.

- While the response papers must be on an assigned reading, the longer paper need only be directly related to course material (though it's fine if it only relies on assigned readings).

## Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading	Notes
<b>Week 1:</b> Sept. 26-28	Intro	Plato, selection from <i>Euthyphro</i> Williams, "The Amoralist" Plato, "The Ring of Gyges"	Class cancelled Friday 9/28
<b>Week 2:</b> Oct. 1-5	The Argument from Queerness Error Theory vs. Relativism	Mackie, "The Argument from Queerness" Olson, selection	
<b>Week 3:</b> Oct. 8-12	Moral Metaphysics: Relativism	Street, "What is Constructivism in Ethics and Metaethics?" Street, "In Defense of Future Tuesday Indifference"	First short paper due Friday 10/12
<b>Week 4:</b> Oct. 15-19	Moral Metaphysics: Error Theory (i.e. Nihilism)	Mackie again Olson, excerpt from <i>Moral Error Theories</i>	
<b>Week 5:</b> Oct. 22-26	Moral Metaphysics: Realism	Enoch, "Why I Am an Objectivist About Ethics (And Why You Are, Too)" Enoch, ch. 2 of <i>Taking Morality Seriously</i>	Second short paper due Friday 10/26
<b>Week 6:</b> Oct. 29-Nov. 2	Moral Metaphysics: Non-naturalism vs. naturalism	Moore, "The Subject Matter of Ethics" Shafer-Landau, ch. 3 of <i>Moral Realism</i>	
<b>Week 7:</b> Nov. 5-9	Moral Knowledge: The Evolutionary Challenge	Street, "A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value" (excerpts) Enoch, ch. 7 of <i>Taking Morality Seriously</i> (excerpts)	Third short paper due Friday 11/9
<b>Week 8:</b> Nov. 12-16	Moral Knowledge: Disagreement	Cont. from Week 3 McGrath, "Moral Disagreement and Moral Expertise"	*No class Monday 11/12 (Veterans Day)
<b>Week 9:</b> Nov. 19-23	Moral Motivation	Plato, <i>Protagoras</i> (excerpt)	Fourth short paper due Wednesday Wed. 9/21

Week	Topic	Reading	Notes
		Shafer-Landau, ch. 6 of <i>Moral Realism</i>	*No class Friday 11/23 (Thanksgiving)
<b>Week 10:</b> Nov. 26-30	God and Morality	Dostoevsky, excerpt from <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> Mavrodes, "Religion and the Queerness of Morality"	
<b>Week 11:</b> Dec. 3-7	God and Morality	Adams, "A Modified Divine Command Theory of Ethical Wrongness"	<b>Long paper (take-home final) due Thursday, 12/13, at 12:30 pm.</b>

## Additional Information and Resources

### Electronics policy:

No cellphones or laptops in class. This does not apply to those who have a good reason to be using such. If you do have such an excuse, see me privately.

### Student Academic Code of Conduct:

<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/cac.pdf>

### Plagiarism:

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### American Cultures, Governance, and History (AH):

This course fulfills the AH requirements. Students will learn diverse perspectives on the fundamental nature of morality. They will also learn invaluable critical thinking skills, as well as public discussion skills. The first will be evaluated mainly through the assigned papers; the latter through in-class discussion.

### Writing Experience (WE):

This course fulfills the WE requirements. Students will write at least 10 pages over the course of the term. The first four papers are designed so that feedback on each of the prior papers will inform students' work on the next paper. These assignments are designed so that students can practice the basic task of summarizing and criticizing an argument multiple times, improving due to my written feedback on each.

# Knowledge in the Real World (FYS)

Fall 2018

## Instructor Information

### Instructor

Dr. Justin Morton

### Email

[jjmorton@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jjmorton@ucdavis.edu)

### Office Location & Hours

Social Sciences 2281  
Wed. 1:00-3:00

## General Information

### Description

Traditional epistemology has been concerned with questions such as: “What is knowledge?” and “Is justification fallible?” These questions are very important. However, in many cases, such questions are asked and answered without much concern for how it affects our epistemic standing in the real world. Outside the philosophy classroom, we are often concerned with such questions as: “How can I find out whether there was a conspiracy to kill JFK?”, “Which experts do I trust, when they disagree?”, and “Can I really trust what science says?” In this course, we will be concerned with questions like these: questions about how we ought to form and organize our beliefs about concrete issues in the world of our daily experience.

### Expectations and Goals

The goals of this course are (1) to acquaint you with the thought of philosophers on how you ought to order your beliefs in the real world, and (2) to teach you a host of critical thinking skills, such as public debate, private reasoning, critical reading, and analytical writing.

## Course Materials

### Required Materials

None! I will supply all readings on Canvas.

## Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading	Notes
Week 1: Oct. 2	Intro	None	
Week 2: Oct. 9	Should we ever believe conspiracy theories?	Watch selection from <i>Loose Change</i> Keeley, “Of Conspiracy Theories”	
Week 3: Oct. 16	Which experts should we trust?	Goldman, “Experts: Which Ones Should We Trust?”	

Week	Topic	Reading	Notes
Week 4: Oct. 23	How do we gain knowledge from testimony?	Nagel, “Testimony”—ch. 6 of <i>Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction</i>	**First short paper due in class
Week 5: Oct. 30	What should we do when we disagree with our peers?	Feldman, “Reasonable Religious Disagreements”	
Week 6: Nov. 6	When do outside influences on our beliefs undermine knowledge?	Greene, “The Secret Joke of Kant’s Soul”	
Week 7: Nov. 13	Does science track truth? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The underdetermination of theory by evidence</li> </ul>	Psillos, ch. 8 of <i>Scientific Realism</i>	**Second short paper due in class
Week 8: Nov. 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inference to the best explanation</li> </ul>	Sober, “Why is Simpler Better?”	
Week 9: Nov. 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pessimistic meta-induction</li> </ul>	Psillos, chs. 5 and 6 of <i>Scientific Realism</i>	
Week 10: Dec. 4	When are groups justified in their beliefs?	Pettit, “Groups with Minds of Their Own”	

## Evaluation

2 short papers | 20% each  
Final project | 30%  
Discussion | 30%

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# Social and Political Philosophy

## Course Description

The government is a strange thing: it can take your money without your consent. It can force you to go to war, and it can then attack other groups of people. It can confine you to jail or even kill you. And under certain circumstances, most people would agree it is *permissible* for the government to do each of these things.

Of course, the big question here is: “What *are* those circumstances?” In this course, we’ll be considering this question across an array of contexts. We’ll first ask when it is permissible for the government to coerce you—to prevent you from doing something by force or some other form of pressure, or to punish you after you’ve done it. We’ll then try to figure out why and when, if at all, we are obligated to obey the law, especially in light of some fairly obvious cases in which it was permissible to break it. What distinguishes the cases where it is permissible from those where it is not? Next we’ll consider how resources ought to be distributed. Many suffer from lack of food, shelter, etc. Is this unjust? If so, how should we go about remedying the situation?

Then we’ll move on to ask what rights, if any, we have. Do we have only basic rights, to that which is necessary for survival, or are we entitled to more? And, if we have such rights, do we have them inherently, by nature as it were, or are rights somehow “socially constructed”? After that, we’ll try to decide whether, if ever, war is just, and what it is just to do in war. We’ll finish the semester by considering when we can permissibly hold someone legally responsible for their act, focusing on James Holmes’ recent insanity plea.

## Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading
Week 1	When is coercion justified?	Mill, chapter 1 of <i>On Liberty</i> Feinberg, “Grounds for Coercion” (ch. 2 of <i>Social Philosophy</i> )
Week 2		Feinberg, “Hard Cases for the Harm Principle” (ch. 3 of <i>Social Philosophy</i> )
Week 3		Wilson, “Against the Legalization of Drugs” Huemer, “America’s Unjust Drug War”
Week 4		<b>Case Study:</b> University Speech Codes Mill, selections from “Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion” (ch. 2 of <i>On Liberty</i> ) Altmann, “Speech Codes and Expressive Harm”
Week 5	(Why) Do we have an obligation to obey the law?	<b>Case Study:</b> Montgomery Bus Boycott Plato, <i>Crito</i>



Week	Topic	Reading
Week 6		Rawls, “Legal Obligation and the Duty of Fair Play” Simmons, “The Principle of Fair Play”
Week 7		MLK Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail” Singer, “Civil Disobedience, Violence, and Terrorism”
Week 8	How should resources be distributed? · The Difference Principle	Rawls, from <i>A Theory of Justice</i>
Week 9	· Egalitarianism	Frankfurt, “Equality as a Moral Ideal” Cohen, “Are Freedom and Equality Compatible?”
Week 10	· Libertarianism	Nozick, from <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i>
Week 11	What are our rights?	Hart, “Are There Any Natural Rights?” Shue, “Basic Rights” Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”
Week 12	When is war (un)just?	Aquinas, “Whether It Is Always Sinful to Wage War?” Posner and Becker, “Preventive War” Anscombe, “Just War: The Case of World War II”
Week 13	When is someone legally responsible for an act?	Wasserstrom, “Strict Liability in the Criminal Law”
Week 14		<b>Case Study:</b> James Holmes and the 2012 Aurora shooting Bonnie, “The Moral Basis of the Insanity Defense”

# Bioethics

## Description of Course Content

What counts as death? How important is autonomy? Do we have a right to healthcare? These are big questions, but they have very real consequences. For example, if you've died whenever you permanently lose consciousness, then an MRI could determine whether your organs can permissibly be harvested. If your autonomy is not always as important as your happiness, then doctors might permissibly operate on you by force. If we have a right to healthcare, then perhaps the government may permissibly increase taxes to implement a socialized medicine system.

In this course, we will discuss these questions, and many like them, in a philosophical context.

## Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading
Week 1	How important is patient autonomy?	Hippocratic Oath Transcript of Proceedings: Testimony of Mary C. Northern "The Refutation of Medical Paternalism" Alan Goldman
Week 2		"It's For Your Own Good!" Cass Sunstein ** "Why Doctors Should Intervene" Terrence Ackerman
Week 3	What is the nature of competency and addiction?	"Deciding for Others: Competency" Buchanan and Brock "Autonomy and Addiction" Neil Levy **
Week 4	What is the nature of health and well-being?	Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization ** "Concepts of Disease and Health" Dominic Murphy **
Week 5	How should health care professionals handle advance directives?	"Enough: The Failure of the Living Will" Fagerlin and Schneider "Testing the Limits of Prospective Autonomy: Five Scenarios" Norman Cantor
Week 6	Can doctors assist patient suicides? Can they kill consenting patients?	<b>Watch</b> <i>You Don't Know Jack</i> <b>Case Study:</b> Death and Dignity: A Case of Individualized Decision Making "Active and Passive Euthanasia" James Rachels **
Week 7	When does death occur?	"The Whole-Brain Concept of Death Remains Optimum Public Policy" James Bernat "An Alternative to Brain Death" Jeff McMahan

Week	Topic	Reading
Week 8	How should scarce medical resources be allocated?	<p>“Four Unsolved Rationing Problems A Challenge” Norman Daniels **</p> <p>“Responsibility in Health Care: A Liberal Egalitarian Approach” Cappelen and Norheim</p> <p>“Principles for Allocation of Scarce Medical Interventions” Persad, Wertheimer, and Emanuel</p>
Week 9	Do we have a right to healthcare?	<p><b>Case Study:</b> The Young Invincibles</p> <p>“Equal Opportunity and Health Care” Norman Daniels</p> <p>“Foundational Ethics of the Health Care System: The Moral and Practical Superiority of Free Market Reforms” Robert Sade</p>
Week 10	Can health care providers conscientiously object to providing treatment?	<p>“The Limits of Conscientious Objection—May Pharmacists Refuse to Fill Prescriptions for Emergency Contraception?” Cantor and Baum</p> <p><b>Case Study:</b> Why Physicians Participate in Executions</p> <p>“‘To Comfort Always’: Physician Participation in Executions” Ken Baum</p>
Week 11	(When) Is abortion permissible?	<p>“A Defense of Abortion” Judith Thomson</p> <p>“I Once Was a Fetus: That is Why Abortion is Wrong” Alex Pruss **</p>
Week 12	What’s wrong (if anything) with surrogacy?	<p>“The Ethics of Surrogacy: Women’s Reproductive Labour” Van Niekerk and van Zyl **</p> <p>“Parental Obligations and the Ethics of Surrogacy A Causal Perspective” James Nelson **</p>
Week 13	(When) Is human genetic modification permissible?	<p>“Genetic Interventions and the Ethics of Enhancement of Human Beings” Julian Savulescu</p> <p>“The Case Against Perfection: What’s Wrong with Designer Children, Bionic Athletes, and Genetic Engineering” Michael Sandel</p>
Week 14	How should we treat human subjects in experiments?	<p>The Nuremberg Code</p> <p><b>Case Study:</b> The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment</p> <p>“Ethical Difficulties with Randomized Clinical Trials Involving Cancer Patients: Examples from the Field of Gynecologic Oncology” Maurie Markman</p>

# Philosophy of Law

## Course Description

In 1850, the U.S. Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which required escaped slaves to be returned to their masters. This was clearly unjust. But does that invalidate it as a law? Some think yes—“unjust law is not law”, as Augustine said. Others think that what is law depends only on social facts, and not at all on how *good* the supposed law is.

In this course, we’ll discuss this issue, as well as several others: did Americans in 1850 have an obligation to follow the law, or were they permitted to break it? When can the government coerce my action—just when that action harms another person? Or is my merely *offending* you grounds for the government to punish me? Suppose I do offend you, but I didn’t intend to—should I be held responsible for this? And finally, even if the Constitution were to say that we can’t be punished for merely giving offence, how should we go about interpreting this law?

We’ll consider responses to each of these questions, by philosophers and legal theorists, both old and new. For each major topic, we’ll start by considering a **case study**—a short summary of a relevant law, case, or event—before considering philosophical treatments of the issue.

## Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading
Week 1	What is law? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Natural law theory</li></ul>	<b>Case Study:</b> Fugitive Slave Act Selections from Augustine, <i>On the Freedom of the Will</i> Selections from Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologica</i>
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Legal Positivism</li></ul>	Austin, “A Positivist Conception of Law” Hart, “Law as the Union of Primary and Secondary Rules”
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Dworkin: Law as Integrity</li></ul>	Dworkin, “The Model of Rules”
Week 4	(Why) Do we have an obligation to obey the law?	<b>Case Study:</b> Montgomery Bus Boycott Plato, <i>Crito</i>
Week 5		Rawls, “Legal Obligation and the Duty of Fair Play” Simmons, “The Principle of Fair Play”
Week 6		MLK Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail” Singer, “Civil Disobedience, Violence, and Terrorism”

Week	Topic	Reading
Week 7	When is coercion justified?	Mill, chapter 1 of <i>On Liberty</i> Feinberg, “Grounds for Coercion” (ch. 2 of <i>Social Philosophy</i> )
Week 8		Feinberg, “Hard Cases for the Harm Principle” (ch. 3 of <i>Social Philosophy</i> )
Week 9		Wilson, “Against the Legalization of Drugs” Huemer, “America’s Unjust Drug War”
Week 10		<b>Case Study:</b> University Speech Codes Mill, selections from “Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion” (ch. 2 of <i>On Liberty</i> ) Altmann, “Speech Codes and Expressive Harm”
Week 11	When is someone legally responsible for an act?	Wasserstrom, “Strict Liability in the Criminal Law”
Week 12		<b>Case Study:</b> James Holmes and the 2012 Aurora shooting Bonnie, “The Moral Basis of the Insanity Defense”
Week 13	How should we interpret a legal text?	Bork, selections from <i>The Tempting of America</i> Brest, “The Misconceived Quest for the Original Understanding”
Week 14		Dworkin, “Natural Law Revisited” Alexander, “Constrained by Precedent”

# Contemporary Moral Problems

## Description of Course Content

This year, the Supreme Court upheld UT's affirmative action admissions policies. The Texas legislature recently passed a law allowing licensed concealed carry of handguns on campus. Donald Trump wants to build a wall on our southern border to stifle illegal immigration. In this course, we will discuss whether decisions and policies such as these are the right ones or the wrong ones. This will take us into deeper issues, regarding, for example, whether we have certain rights, and whether those rights entitle us to specific courses of action. In brief, we will consider arguments for and against certain policies and courses of action. My aim is to focus on things that are *timely*—issues that are being decided right now.

## Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading
Week 1	How to Do Ethics/ The Harm Principle	Bonevac, "Introduction: Moral Arguments" Mill, selection from <i>On Liberty</i>
Week 2	Free Speech on Campus	Mill, selection from <i>On Liberty</i> Altmann, "Speech Codes and Expressive Harm"
Week 3	Pornography	Brison, "'The Price We Pay?' Pornography and Harm" Burger and Douglas, "Majority and Dissenting Opinions in <i>Miller v. California</i> "
Week 4	Drug Legalization	Nadelmann, "The Case for Legalization" Wilson, "Against the Legalization of Drugs"
Week 5	Gun Regulation	Lafollette, "Gun Control" Hughes and Hunt, "The Liberal Basis of the Right to Bear Arms"
Week 6	Gay Marriage	Koppelman, from <i>The Decline and Fall of the Case Against Gay Marriage</i> Gallagher, from <i>(How) Will Gay Marriage Weaken Marriage as a Social Institution: A Reply to Andrew Koppelman</i>
Week 7	Abortion	Thompson, "A Defense of Abortion" Pruss, "I Was Once a Fetus: That is Why Abortion is Wrong"
Week 8	Animal Rights	Regan, "The Case For Animal Rights" **MIDTERM**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
<b>Week 9</b>	Environment	Bonevac, "Is Sustainability Sustainable?"
<b>Week 10</b>	War	Aquinas, "Whether It Is Always Sinful to Wage War?" Posner and Becker, "Preventive War"
<b>Week 11</b>	Affirmative Action	NY Times article on "Fisher v. University of Texas" Scalia, "The Disease as a Cure"
<b>Week 12</b>	Economic Inequality	Rawls, from <i>A Theory of Justice</i> Nozick, from <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i>
<b>Week 13</b>	Immigration	Huemer, "Is There a Right to Immigrate?"
<b>Week 14</b>	**Overflow Week	

# Philosophy of Religion

## Course Description

If God exists, then he knows everything. But doesn't that mean that he knows that tomorrow at noon, you'll decide to skip class? And if it's true now that you'll make that decision tomorrow, how is it within your control to make that decision?

If God exists, then surely he could prevent evil, and surely he wants to prevent evil. So if God exists, why is there evil—at least, why is there evil to the great extent that we witness it in our world?

These are just two of the issues we'll deal with in this course, which covers many central questions concerning the existence and attributes of God, the nature and rationality of faith, and death and the afterlife.

## Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading
Week 1	Puzzles Concerning Divine Attributes	"Is God's Power Limited?" Aquinas "Some Puzzles Concerning Omnipotence" George Mavrodes
Week 2		"God's Foreknowledge and Human Free Will are Incompatible" Nelson Pike "God's Foreknowledge and Human Free Will are Compatible" Alvin Plantinga "Can God Be Free?" William Rowe
Week 3		"The Freedom of God" Edward Wierenga "Temporal Eternity" Stephen Davis "The God Beyond Time" Hugh McCann
Week 4	Arguments for God's Existence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· The Teleological Argument</li></ul>	"A Scientific Argument for the Existence of God" Robin Collins "Fine-Tuning is Not Surprising" Cory Juhl
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· The Cosmological Argument</li></ul>	"The Five Ways" Aquinas "An Examination of the Cosmological Argument" William Rowe "The Kalam Cosmological Argument" W.L. Craig and J.P. Moreland
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· The Ontological Argument</li></ul>	"The Ontological Argument" St. Anselm "Necessary Being: The Ontological Argument" Peter Van Inwagen



<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
<b>Week 7</b>	· The Moral Argument and Pascal's Wager	<p>"The Moral Argument for God's Existence" W.L. Craig</p> <p>"Does Ethics Need God?" Linda Zagzebski</p> <p>"The Wager" Blaise Pascal</p>
<b>Week 8</b>	The Problem of Evil	<p>"Evil and Omnipotence" J.L. Mackie</p> <p>"The Inductive from Evil Against the Existence of God" William Rowe</p>
<b>Week 9</b>		<p>"The Free Will Defense" Alvin Plantinga</p> <p>"Evil and Soul-Making" John Hick</p> <p>"The Problem of Evil and the Desires of the Heart" Eleonore Stump</p>
<b>Week 10</b>	Religious Epistemology	<p>"The Ethics of Belief" W.K. Clifford</p> <p>"Rational Theistic Belief Without Proof" John Hick</p> <p>"Intellectual Virtue in Religious Epistemology" Linda Zagzebski</p>
<b>Week 11</b>	The Nature and Rationality of Faith	<p>"The Nature of Faith" Richard Swinburne</p> <p>"Propositional Faith: What It Is and What It Is Not" Daniel Howard-Snyder</p> <p>"Can It Be Rational to Have Faith?" Lara Buchak</p>
<b>Week 12</b>	Miracles	<p>"Against Miracles" David Hume</p> <p>"Miracles and Testimony" J.L. Mackie</p> <p>"Of 'Of Miracles'" Peter Van Inwagen</p>
<b>Week 13</b>	Religious Experience	<p>"Perceiving God" William Alston</p> <p>"Religious Experience and Naturalistic Explanations" Jeff Jordan</p>
<b>Week 14</b>	Death and the Afterlife	<p>"Personal Identity and Life After Death" Jeffrey Olen</p> <p>"Death and the Afterlife" Lynne Rudder Baker</p>

## Assignment: Philosophy in the Real World

**Broad Description:** You're going to describe an experience in which you see an ethical theme in your day-to-day life, and briefly evaluate the philosophical significance of this experience.

**Purpose:** To get you to connect what you learn in a classroom to the real world. People rely on ethical claims all the time—sometimes these claims are radically false or unsupported; other times they are plausible.

### Details:

- Write between 250 and 350 words
- Two main components: **first** summarize the article/conversation/show/movie/etc. **Second**, evaluate the ethical significance of the piece.
- Have as many paragraphs as you want, but use **headings** to distinguish the two main components—for example, “Summary” and “Evaluation”.
- There's lots of room for creativity here. As long as you're summarizing something of ethical significance outside the classroom, and evaluating it, you're going to do fine on this assignment.
- Elliot will grade this as either full or no points. You get two chances.

### Examples:

Obviously these are far shorter than your assignments will look—most of the details are left out. This is just to give you an idea of what to shoot for.

1. **Summary:** In the comments section of my friend's Facebook post, she claims that P. I asked her why she thought this, and she gave me the following argument: XYZ. **Evaluation:** It seems to me that the best way of construing XYZ commits my friend to claim Q. Q seems false to me though: here's a counterexample C.
2. **Summary:** Politician Polly Pocket claimed that anyone who supported her opponent was immoral, because her opponent is a racist. She was referring to incidents 1, 2, and 3, in which her opponent said X, Y, and Z. **Evaluation:** I don't deny that Pocket's opponent is a racist. But I think that we can support racist politicians without being immoral people. This could happen in circumstances C: I endorse consequentialism, and in C, consequentialism says that we ought to support a racist candidate, even though racism is morally evil. I think the actual circumstances are very similar to C, but there's an important difference, D.
3. **Summary:** The plot of movie M goes like this....Character C1 decides to live Life 1 rather than Life 2. She reasons as follows....**Evaluation:** C1 did the *right* thing, because she fulfilled her duty. But she's going to live a *worse* life because of it, because of reasons R.

## Paper Scaffolding: Part 1 | Summary of an Argument

**Prompt:** Summarize the argument of a philosophical excerpt.

**Details:**

1. Use no more than 250 words.
2. First summarize the main argument in **valid** premise-conclusion form (i.e., “numbered” form).
3. Then say how, if at all, the author supports each premise.
4. (So, the standard paper will have a numbered argument at the beginning, then one paragraph per premise, describing how the author supports that premise.)
5. Don’t worry about introductions or conclusions, or even transitions between paragraphs.
6. Don’t worry about citations.
7. Don’t quote more than a few words.

## Paper Scaffolding: Part 2 | Summary and Objection

**Prompt:** (i) Summarize the argument of a philosophical excerpt, and (ii) give an original objection to one of its premises.

The idea here is to do exactly what you did for the first paper, and then add one new element: a counterexample to one of the argument's premises.

### Details:

1. Use no more than 350 words (this includes your numbered argument and your paragraphs).
2. First summarize the main argument in **valid** premise-conclusion form (i.e., “numbered” form).
3. Then say how, if at all, the author supports each premise. Write one short paragraph per premise.
4. Finally, use one paragraph to give a counterexample to one of the author's premises.
5. Don't worry about introductions or conclusions, or even transitions between paragraphs.
6. Don't worry about citations.
7. Don't quote more than a few words.

### Tips:

1. I *strongly* encourage you to try to get the argument in numbered form before you think about objections. This will prevent you from writing a weak argument with implausible premises, just so that you can have an easy target for criticism.
2. I advise reading all the excerpts and picking one whose argument you disagree with. That will make it easier for you to think of an objection.
3. Do not feel like you need to fit every word, or even every paragraph of the excerpt into your formalization of the argument.
  - a. Sometimes there is just “noise” in a prose argument: irrelevant material.
  - b. Some of the material is best construed as SUPPORT for one of the premises—it won't enter into your numbered argument, but will be mentioned in your paragraphs below.
  - c. Sometimes there are multiple arguments in a given excerpt.
4. Can't think of an objection? Look at any general claims in the argument and see if you can think of a counterexample, just like we did in the logic homework.

## Paper Scaffolding: Part 3 | Summary, Objection, and Reply

**Prompt:** (i) Summarize the argument of a philosophical excerpt, (ii) give an original objection to one of its premises, and then (iii) give one reply to that objection.

The idea here is to do exactly what you did for the second paper, and then add one new element: a reply to your own objection.

### Details:

1. Use no more than 450 words (this includes your numbered argument and your paragraphs).
2. First summarize the main argument in **valid** premise-conclusion form (i.e., “numbered” form).
3. Then say how, if at all, the author supports each premise. Write one short paragraph per premise.
4. Use one paragraph to give an objection to one of the author’s premises. *Make sure and identify which premise you’re objecting to.*
5. Finally, use one paragraph to describe a reply to your objection.
6. Don’t worry about introductions or conclusions, or even transitions between paragraphs.
7. Don’t worry about citations.
8. Don’t quote more than a few words.

### Tips:

1. I *strongly* encourage you to try to get the argument in numbered form before you think about objections. This will prevent you from writing a weak argument with implausible premises, just so that you can have an easy target for criticism. For similar reasons, you should think up an objection before you think about how to reply to it.
2. I advise reading all the excerpts and picking one whose argument seems somehow objectionable to you.
3. Do not feel like you need to fit every word, or even every paragraph of the excerpt into your formalization of the argument.
  - a. Sometimes there is just “noise” in a prose argument: irrelevant material.
  - b. Some of the material is best construed as SUPPORT for one of the premises—it won’t enter into your numbered argument, but will be mentioned in your paragraphs below.
  - c. Sometimes there are multiple arguments in a given excerpt. We’re only asking you to find one.
4. Can’t think of an objection? Look at any general claims in the argument and see if you can think of a counterexample, just like we did in the logic homework.

## Logic Homework

### Identifying Arguments

Each problem below is worth 4 points. The assignment is graded out of 100 points—so since there are 26 problems, you have a chance at 4 bonus points.

Read the paragraph below that expresses an argument. Then use the given sentence numbers to supply the information requested. (NOTE: Remember that many “real world” arguments are messy—not all the claims made are premises OR a conclusion of the argument.)

[1] Is global warming a real threat? [2] Or is it hype propagated by tree-hugging, daft environmentalists? [3] The president apparently thinks that the idea of global climate change is bunk. [4] But recently his own administration demonstrated that the president is wrong about climate change. [5] His own administration issued a report on global warming called the U.S. Climate Action Report 2002. [6] It gave no support to the idea that global warming doesn't happen and we should all go back to sleep. [7] Instead, it asserted that global warming was definitely real and that it could have catastrophic consequences if ignored. [8] For example, global climate change could cause heat waves, extreme weather, and water shortages right here in the United States. [9] The report is also backed by many other reports, including a very influential one from the United Nations. [10] Yes, George, global warming is real. [11] It is as real as typhoons and ice storms.

- (1) What is the conclusion?
- (2) What are the premises?

### Clarifying Arguments

Regiment the following into arguments (i.e., separate the premises out with numbers, like we did in class):

- (3) John is watching the world cup. He's either studying in the library or watching the World Cup. But he's not in the library.
- (4) Children are both fun to beat and easy to cheat at scrabble, thus they make the best opponents.
- (5) You shouldn't love your neighbor as yourself. If you are on good terms with yourself, it's an impertinence; if on bad terms, an injury.
- (6) We shouldn't go back to put money in the parking meter. Because we've either already gotten a ticket or we haven't. If we have, then putting money in the meter won't help. And in that case, we shouldn't go back. And if we haven't gotten a ticket yet, we won't get one before we get back. And if we won't get a ticket before we get back, then we shouldn't go back to feed the meter.

(7) In baseball, when the count is full and there are two outs, should the runner on first base attempt to steal second? In this situation, either the ball is hit or not. If it's hit, then the runner gains an advantage by attempting to steal. If it's not hit, then the pitch is either a ball or a strike. If it's a ball, then the runner will move safely to second, and she risks nothing by attempting to steal. If it's a strike, then the inning is over, and she risks nothing by attempting to steal. So, the first base runner gains an advantage and risks nothing by attempting to steal when the count is full and there are two outs. So, the first base runner should attempt to steal when the count is full and there are two outs.

## Validity and Soundness

Identify whether following arguments are valid or invalid. If an argument is invalid, show that it is by giving a counterexample that makes the premises true and the conclusion false.

- (8) (P1) Your high idle is caused by a problem with your transmission, low oil, or both.  
(P2) Your oil is low.  
(C) Therefore, there is no problem with your transmission.
- (9) (P1) If the moon is made of green cheese, then cows jump over it.  
(P2) The moon is made of green cheese.  
(C) Therefore, cows jump over it.
- (10) (P1) Either Colonel Mustard or Miss Scarlet is the culprit.  
(P2) Colonel Mustard isn't the culprit.  
(C) Therefore, Miss Scarlet is the culprit.
- (11) (P1) All engineers enjoy ballet.  
(C) Therefore, some men enjoy ballet.
- (12) (P1) Beckham is famous.  
(P2) Beckham is a football player.  
(C) Therefore, Beckham is a famous football player.
- (13) (P1) If there is life on Pluto, then there is water on Pluto.  
(P2) There is no life on Pluto.  
(C) Therefore, there is no water on Pluto.
- (14) (P1) Every extremely complex thing was designed by an intelligent being.  
(P2) Our universe is extremely complex.  
(C) Thus, our universe was designed by an intelligent being.
- (15) (P1) Someone is sick.  
(P2) Someone is unhappy.  
(C) Therefore, someone is sick and unhappy.

## Counterexamples

Say whether the following conditionals are true or false. If false, give a counterexample.

(16) If X is a square, then X is a rectangle.

(17) If X is a rectangle, then X is a square.

(18) If it's raining outside, then it's wet outside.

(19) If X's name starts with an "A", then X's name is Alex.

(20) If X's name is Alex, then X's name starts with an "A".

(21) If there is water in a cup, then there are hydrogen atoms in that cup.

(22) If the Dude stole the rug, then the rug wasn't his.

(23) If the rug wasn't the Dude's, then he stole the rug.

(24) If the human eye is designed, then God exists.

(25) If it's wet outside, then it's raining outside.

(26) If you fall out of a plane, then you'll die.