PHIL 221
Ethics

Class Schedule

Course	Meet Days	Meet Time	Location	Instructor(s)
PHIL 221 001 [LEC]	**Tue, Thu** *Sep 3 - Dec 2*	02:30PM - 03:50PM	RCH 305	Patricia Marino pmarino@uwaterloo.ca

schedule data automatically refreshed daily

Instructional Team

Instructor: Patricia Marino (she/her or theythem). Instructor email: pmarino@uwaterloo.ca. Instructor Office: Hagey Hall 329. Instructor Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

TA: Kota Kitagawa. TA email: kota.kitagawa@uwaterloo.ca. TA Office: TBA. TA Office Hours: TBA.

Course Description

Calendar Description for PHIL 221

An introduction to moral theories, including ones based on virtue, consequences, and rights and duties, with discussion of historical developments leading to those theories.

View requirements for PHIL 221 [1]

This is a course on ethical theory in the Western Anglophone philosophical tradition. In the first part of the course, we will consider several different ethical views, including utilitarianism (which says to maximize the best consequences overall), Kantian ethical theory (which focuses on respect for individual autonomy), reflective equilibrium (in which we try to bring out existing moral beliefs into coherence), contractarianism (which is skeptical of morality and focuses on self-interest), care ethics (which centres relationships rather than individuals) and an Indigenous perspective basing justice on kinship. At this end of this first part, we will look at a direct debate between two dominant approaches (utilitarianism and reflective equilibrium) over the question of whether our ordinary moral beliefs, judgments, and intuitions should carry any weight in ethical theorizing. In the second part of the course, we'll see some of these ethical views in action, by considering implications for people with disabilities, implications for equality and justice, implications for autonomous decision-making in contexts such as medical-aid-in-dying, and implications for the relationship between private property and famine. There is one week listed as TBA where we may choose topics based on student interest. This course does not endorse any particular conclusion about ethical theory; rather, the idea is for you to both understand what others have had to say, and to develop, possibly change, and learn how to intelligently defend, your own opinions.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students should be able to...

explain the basics of various ethical theories
explain how ethical theories lead to specific conclusions in application to complex problems
form their own informed opinions about ethical theories and their applications
express their opinions about ethical theories and applications in writing and verbally

Tentative Class Plan

Week 0: Introduction

- **Sept 4:** John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Read Chapters 1 and 2 and pp 41-51). If you haven't read it before Sept 4, no problem! Read it before next week.

Week 1: Moral theory: early utilitarianism

- **Sept 9:** E. F. Carritt, "Criticisms of Utilitarianism," from *Ethical and Political Thinking*, reprinted selection in Bratman and Perry eds., *Introduction to Philosophy*, 477-479 and J. J. C. Smart, "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism," *The Philosophical Quarterly,* 6(25) (1956), 344-354.
- **Sept 11:** TBA

Week 2: Moral theory: Kantian moral philosophy, respect for autonomy, and reflective equilibrium

- **Sept 16:** Christine Korsgaard, "Kant's Formula of Universal Law," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 66 (1985), reprinted in Russ Shafer-Landau, Ethical Theory: An Anthology, 2nd edition (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 499-509. **(Optional):** Immanuel Kant, selection from Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, reprinted in Russ Shafer-Landau, *Moral Theory: An Anthology* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

- **Sept 18:** Alice Baderin, "Reflective Equilibrium: Individual or Public?." Social Theory and Practice (2017): 1-28. **(Optional):** W. D. Ross, "What Makes Right Acts Right," from his book *The Right and The Good (*Oxford University Press) 2002 (1930) (read pp. 16 - 47).

Week 3: Moral theory: skepticism, self-interest, and contractarianism

- **Sept 23:** David Gauthier, "Why Contractarianism?" In Vallentyne, P. (ed) *Contractarianism and Rational Choice: Essays on David Gauthier's Morals by Agreement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 15-30. **(Optional):** J. L. Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values" in his *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (Pelican Books, 1977). Read sections 1, 7, 8, 10, and 11.

- **Sept 25:** Christopher Morris, "Moral Standing and Rational-Choice Contractarianism," In Vallentyne, P. (ed) *Contractarianism and Rational Choice: Essays on David Gauthier's Morals by Agreement (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 76-95.

Week 4: Moral theory: care ethics and Indigenous perspectives

- **Sep 30:** Nel Noddings, "An Ethic of Caring," from Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education (University of California Press, 1984), 79–103, reprinted in Russ Shafer-Landau, Moral Theory: An Anthology (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

- **Oct 2:** Kyle Whyte, "Indigenous Environmental Justice: Anti-Colonial Action Through Kinship." In *Environmental Justice*, pp. 266-278. Routledge, 2020.

- **Oct 2: First in-class writing assignment.**

Week 5: Moral theory and methodology: should ordinary moral beliefs count for anything?

- **Oct 7:** Peter Singer, "Ethics and Intuitions." *The Journal of Ethics* 9 (2005): 331-352.

- **Oct 8: first paper due**

- **Oct 9:** Joakim Sandberg and Niklas Juth, "Ethics and Intuitions: a Reply to Singer." *The Journal of Ethics* 15 (2011): 209-226.

READING WEEK OCT 13-17

Week 6: Contemporary utilitarianism and implications for people with disabilities part 1

- **Oct 21:** Peter Singer, selection from *Practical Ethics* 2nd edition (Cambridge University Press, 1993). Read pages 8-24 and 71-93.

- **Oct 23: first in class-test**

Week 7: Contemporary utilitarianism and implications for people with disabilities part 2

- **Oct 28:** Peter Singer, selection from *Practical Ethics* 2nd edition (Cambridge University Press, 1993); read pages 155-167 AND Harriet McBryde Johnson, "Unspeakable Conversations" from the New York *Times* Magazine.

- **Oct 30:** Eva Feder Kittay, "The Personal is Philosophical is the Personal," in Kittay and Carlson, eds., *Cognitive Disability and Its Challenge to Moral Philosophy*, (Wiley-Blackwell 2010).

Week 8: Moral theory and methodology: inequality, racial oppression and the method of "ideal theory"

- **Nov 4:** John Rawls, selection from *A Theory of Justice* (first published 1971), reprinted in Russ Shafer-Landau, *Ethical Theory* (Wiley, 2013) 581-591.

- **Nov 6:** Charles Mills, "'Ideal Theory' as Ideology," *Hypatia*, 20(3) (2005), 165–183.

Week 9: Capitalism, property, and rights

- **Nov 11:** Robert Nozick, "Distributive Justice," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 3 (1973), 45-126, **read only pages 45 to 61.**

- **Nov 13: TBA and second in-class writing exercise**.

Week 10: Rights, autonomy, and consent: poverty and medical-aid-in-dying

- **Nov 18:** Amartya Sen, "Property and Hunger." *Economics & Philosophy* 4, no. 1 (1988): 57-68.

- **Nov 20:** Anita Ho "The Individualist Model of Autonomy and the Challenge of Disability." *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* 5, no. 2 (2008): 193-207.

Week 11: Ethics in AI and technology

- **Nov 25:** Selection from Cathy O'Neil, *Weapons of Math Destruction* (Crown Press, 2016) and Oscar Gandy, "Engaging Rational Discrimination: Exploring Reasons for Placing Regulatory Constraints on Decision Support Systems." *Ethics and Information Technology* 12 (2010): 29-42.

- **Nov 27:** Savulescu, Julian, Christopher Gyngell, and Guy Kahane. "Collective reflective equilibrium in practice (CREP) and controversial novel technologies." *Bioethics* 35, no. 7 (2021): 652-663.

Week 12: second in-class test

- **Dec 2: second in-class test**

Required Materials & Technologies

Note: Any prices provided in course outlines are best estimates based on recent online prices and do not include shipping or taxes. Prices may vary between retailers.

> This course has **no additional costs** for students.

Readings

No materials required. Readings will be available (at no cost) as pdfs students can download from the university library.

Assessments & Activities

Component / Activity	Date or Due Date	Location / Submission Method	Weight (%)
Paper 1 in-class writing exercise	Thursday, October 2	in-person	0% (but must pass - see info!)
Paper 1	Wednesday, October 8	LEARN dropbox	20%
First in-class test	Thursday, October 23	in-person	25%
Paper 2 in-class writing exercise	Thursday, November 13	in-person	0% (but must pass - see info!)
Paper 2	Wednesday, November 19	LEARN dropbox	25%
Second in-class test	Tuesday, December 2	in-person	25%
Attendance and participation		in-person, LEARN, and/or email	5%

For each paper, you must complete a corresponding "in-class writing exercise." These will be short writing exercises and will be graded only as satisfactory or unsatisfactory; you must earn "satisfactory" to get a passing grade on the corresponding paper. As long as you pass the in-class exercise, numerical paper grades will be determined by the quality of the polished paper you hand in to the LEARN dropbox at the later due date.

Both papers should be 900-1200 words and topics will be handed out. For the first paper, you have the option of handing in a rewrite based on my comments. If you choose to do this your new paper grade will be an average of the original and the rewrite; your grade will not go down if the new draft is worse, but improved grades require significant changes and not just small edits. For the second paper, I will write fewer comments; if you would like more feedback, don't hesitate to ask.

Paper assignments will ask you to write about your own ideas about a philosophical problem while engaging the texts and ideas we've encountered in class. The focus is on presenting an original argument. Of course, this means the ideas in your papers must be your own; we will talk more in class about how to ensure that the ideas you present as your own really are, and how to cite any outside sources you do use appropriately. We will also discuss in class the use of generative AI and how it can and should be used. If you have any questions at any time about academic honesty and what it requires, do not hesitate to ask. For help with writing, check out The Writing Centre on campus.

In class tests will be a mix of question formats including multiple choice, short answer, and very short essay. Test 1 covers the first half of the course and test 2 the second half. For a course such as this, attendance and participation are important. There are several ways to participate in this class: you can participate in class discussion, or by contributing to discussion on LEARN, or by emailing or speaking with me personally. Attendance counts toward your participation grade. If you attend class regularly, that will earn a grade of 65 for participation. If you attend class regularly and participate in any of the various forms at least once per week, that will earn a grade at least in the 70s range. Attendance plus more frequent participation will raise your participation grade; less frequent attendance will lower it. I will post attendance and participation grades on LEARN at the end of term; if you don't agree with yours please email me and we can discuss it.

Obviously if you feel unwell you should stay home. I also know that students may encounter other obstacles to attending class -- talk to me about any problems that come up. You may miss up to four class meetings in the term for any reason, but if you find that you will have to miss more meetings, let me know. Adjustments to the attendance and participation criteria above must be approved by the instructor.

I will use LEARN for announcements etc. so please check it at least once a day.

Late / Missed Content

For the two papers, there is a late penalty of 3 percentage points per day of lateness. That is, if your paper earned a grade of 75 and it was two days late, your grade would be 69. Obviously if you have extenuating circumstances, talk to me or send me an email. For in-class exercises and tests, make-up options can be arranged.

Assignment Screening

No automated assignment screening will be utilized within this course.

Generative AI

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) trained using large language models (LLM) or other methods to produce text, images, music, or code, like Chat GPT, DALL-E, or GitHub CoPilot**, may be used under specific conditions** in this course with proper documentation, citation, and acknowledgement.**Permitted uses of and expectations for using GenAI will discussed in class and outlined on assignment instructions.**

[Recommendations for how to cite generative AI in student work at the University of Waterloo may be found through the Library.](#) [2]

Please be aware that generative AI is known to falsify references to other work and may fabricate facts and inaccurately express ideas. GenAI generates content based on the input of other human authors and may therefore contain inaccuracies or reflect biases.

To protect the privacy and security of any data entered, students should use the University's version of [Co-Pilot](#) [3] and login with their UW ID. Data entered into other systems can be added to training sets, monitored, geolocated and even reproduced as output which may share private personal information or result in intellectual property breaches.

In addition, you should be aware that the legal/copyright status of generative AI inputs and outputs is unclear. Exercise caution when using large portions of content from AI sources, especially images. [More information is available from the Copyright Advisory Committee.](#) [(4)]

You are accountable for the content and accuracy of all work you submit in this class, including any supported by generative AI. You should be able to readily demonstrate your knowledge of your submissions. To demonstrate your learning, you should keep your rough notes, including sources, research notes, brainstorming, drafting notes and prompts. You may be asked to submit these notes along with earlier drafts of your work, either through saved drafts or saved versions of a document.

Administrative Policy

Pronouns and chosen or preferred first name

Students can verify their chosen or preferred first name by logging into [WatIAM](#) [(5)]. Your chosen or preferred first name listed in WatIAM will be used across campus (e.g., in LEARN, Quest, WaterlooWorks, WatCard, etc). Your legal first name will always be used on certain official documents, such as diplomas and transcripts.

Students can view and change their pronouns in [Quest](#) [(6)]. Should you choose to include your pronouns in Quest, your pronouns will be accessible by instructors, advisors, and employees with access to Quest. If no pronoun is added, the field in Quest will remain blank. The University is working to provide your pronouns to other systems across campus (e.g., LEARN, WaterlooWorks).

Accommodating religious and spiritual observances

[Applies only to students taking undergraduate courses]

The University of Waterloo has a duty to [accommodate religious, spiritual, and other creed-based beliefs and practices](#) [(7)] under the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2015) *[Policy on preventing discrimination based on creed](#)* [(8)]. Students may seek accommodations for missed course components on religious, spiritual, or other creed grounds. In such cases the students should please consult the instructor within two weeks of the announcement of the due date for which the accommodation is being sought. Students also may request accommodations for temporary absences from classes or other course-related activities to engage in prayer or other daily spiritual practices. Instructors are expected to make reasonable arrangements to respectfully accommodate such requests. The University of Waterloo has a number of [multi-faith spaces](#) [(9)] that students can use for faith-based practices.

Declaring absences

[Applies only to students taking undergraduate courses]

Please see the [Academic Regulations](#) [(10)] section of the Undergraduate Calendar for more details. Regardless of the process used to declare an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact their instructor so that the instructor can determine how to accommodate the missed work.

Absences due to religious, creed, and spiritual observances

Beginning Fall 2024, students can submit a Religious Observance Self-Declaration Form in Quest. This form allows the student to register dates of potential conflicts with coursework. Students are expected to record their absence within two weeks of announcement of the due date or scheduled examination date for which academic accommodation is being sought. Submission through Quest will notify your instructors of your absence.

Absences due to verified illness

For absences due to illness that are not pandemic-related, students need to obtain a [Verification of Illness or Extenuating Circumstances Process](#) [(11)]. Submission through the [Absence Verification System](#) [(12)], once registered, will notify your instructors of your absence. Students should not submit their VIF or any other medical documentation to your instructors, teaching assistants, or other course personnel. To request and arrange accommodations, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor within 48 hours of the date of any missed course component, or as soon as the student is able to given their health condition.

Absences due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., bereavement)

For absences due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., bereavement, serious family illness), students submit [a request for absence due to extenuating circumstances](#) [(13)] to the [Absence Verification System](#) [(14)] for processing. Students use the form to submit supporting documentation, which will be considered in a comparable manner to a VIF. Official documentation is necessary before any action can be taken. Examples are plane/train/bus tickets, court documents, police reports, death certificates/obituaries/letters from funeral directors. To request and arrange accommodations, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor within 48 hours of the date of any missed course component, or as soon as the student is able to given their circumstances.

Self-declared short-term absences for any reason

Students can [self-declare](#) [(15)] one short-term absence per term on Quest for any reason. A short-term absence covers two calendar days, and no documentation is required. The student has only one self-declared short-term absence per term and this absence can only be used during the formal lecture period. Self-declared absences cannot be applied to Laboratory (LAB), Clinic (CLN), or Studio (STU) course components. Submitting the self-declaration through Quest will notify your instructors of your absence. It is the student's responsibility to contact their instructors within the first 24 hours after submitting their self-declaration to discuss accommodations for missed course components.

Recording lecture

Use of recording devices during lectures is only allowed with explicit permission of the instructor of the course. If allowed, video recordings may only include images of the instructor and not fellow classmates. Posting of videos or links to the video to any website, including but not limited to social media sites such as: Facebook, Twitter, etc., is strictly prohibited.

University Policy

Mental Health: At the University of Waterloo, we are dedicated to supporting your mental and emotional well-being. Our Counselling Services offer confidential support, including individual counselling, workshops, and crisis intervention.

If you're struggling, please reach out for help at 519-888-4096 or visit their website [16] for more information.

Academic integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity [17] for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4 [18]. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity [19] for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline [20]. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties [21].

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances [22] (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline [23] may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals [24].

Note for students with disabilities and disabling conditions: The University of Waterloo recognizes its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code to accommodate students with known or suspected disabilities and disabling conditions (e.g. medical conditions, injuries, impacts of trauma such as from violence or discrimination) to the point of undue hardship. To support this obligation, AccessAbility Services [25] (AAS) collaborates with all academic departments and schools to facilitate academic accommodations for students with disabilities and disabling conditions without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you believe you may require academic accommodations (e.g., testing accommodations, classroom accommodations), register with AAS as early in the term as possible by completing the online application [26]. Students already registered with AAS must activate their accommodations for each of their courses at the beginning of each term using AAS' online system. If you require assistance, contact AAS by phone (519-888-4567 ext. 35082), email (access@uwaterloo.ca) or in-person (Needles Hall North, 1st Floor, Room 1401).

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit alternate assignment.

Reference: Links from Document

1. https://acal.fast.uwaterloo.ca/course/1259/PHIL/221
2. https://subjectguides.uwaterloo.ca/chatgpt_generative_ai
3. https://copilot.microsoft.com/
4. https://uwaterloo.ca/copyright-at-waterloo/teaching/generative-artificial-intelligence
5. https://idm.uwaterloo.ca/watiam/
6. https://uwaterloo.ca/quest/help/students/how-do-i/view-or-update-my-personal-information
7. https://ugradcalendar.uwaterloo.ca/page/Acad-Regs-Accommodations
8. https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-creed
9. https://uwaterloo.ca/multi-faith-spirituality-resource-team/multi-faith-spaces-campus
10. https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-calendar/undergraduate-studies/catalog#/policy/SkiPsB9Vp?bc=true&bcCurrent=Assessments%3A%20Academic%20Considerations%20and%20Accommodations&bcGroup=Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies
11. https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/undergraduate/student-support/accommodations-illness-or-extenuating-circumstances#submit-other
12. https://vif.uwaterloo.ca/
13. https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/undergraduate/student-support/accommodations-illness-or-extenuating-circumstances#submit-other
14. https://vif.uwaterloo.ca/
15. https://uwaterloo.ca/quest/help/students/how-do-i/self-declare-absence-undergraduate-students
16. https://uwaterloo.ca/students/health-and-well-being/counselling-appointments
17. https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/
18. https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70
19. https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/
20. https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71
21. https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/guidelines/guidelines-assessment-penalties
22. https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70
23. https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71
24. https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72
25. https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/

26. https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/students/applying-academic-accommodations/documentation-information-forms