

# PHILOSOPHY 1120: SOCIAL ETHICS

Spring 2009

Huenemann

In this course we will examine and assess arguments addressing different positions on such controversial topics as abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, censorship, terrorism, economic inequality, and animal rights.

**Text (required):** *Social Ethics*, edited by Thomas A. Mappes and Jane S. Zembaty, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (McGraw Hill)

- Assignments:**
- weekly group summaries 25%  
due each Tuesday (except for 2/17, 2/24, 3/10, and 4/14), beginning on 1/13 and ending on 4/21
  - one midterm exam (Th, 2/19) 25%
  - one final exam (Th, 4/30, 9:30-11:20) 25%  
(only covering material since 2/19)
  - class participation 25%

Exams will be 5 short-answer questions and one essay question. Books and notes may be used.

## **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>You should have read:</b>
1/8	Abortion	Introduction, 1-10; Marquis, 21-27; Little, 38-44
1/13	Abortion	Thomson, 27-38
1/15	Abortion	Blackmun 44-49
1/20	Euthanasia	Introduction, 58-65; Rachels, 66-71; Potts, 77-81
1/22	Euthanasia	Watts & Howell, 82-87; Rehnquist, 87-95
1/27	Death penalty	Introduction, 104-111; Stewart et al., 111-121; Marshall, 121-125
1/29	Death penalty	Primoratz, 125-131; Nathanson, 132-138
2/3	Death penalty	Pojman, 138-143; Dolinko, 149-153
2/5	Sex and marriage	Introduction, 155-163; Corvino, 183-191
2/10	Sex and marriage	Gallagher, 202-207; Rauch, 207-215
2/12	*** Review ***	
2/19	*** Midterm exam ***	

2/24	Pornography, hate speech, censorship	Introduction, 217-224; Mill, 224-227, Longino, 234-242; Wicclair, 242-248
2/26	Pornography, hate speech, censorship	Lawrence, 254; Stone, 267-270
3/3	Drug control and addiction	Introduction, 272-277; Szasz, 283-289; Goodin, 289-295
3/5	Drug control and addiction	Nadelmann, 296-302; Wilson, 302-308
3/17	Terrorism, human rights, and civil liberties	Introduction, 316-321; Nathanson, 322-333; Jagger 333-341
3/19	(no class)	
3/24	Terrorism, human rights, and civil liberties	Luban, 342-349; Black, 350-353; Murphy, 353-357; Waldron, 357-369
3/26	Terrorism, human rights, and civil liberties	(same)
3/31	Social justice, libertarianism	Introduction, 371-376; Hospers, 376-383
4/2	U.S. Bill of Rights	U.S. Bill of Rights
4/7	World hunger, poverty	Introduction, 430-435; Singer, 436-442; Hardin, 443-449
4/9	World hunger, poverty	(same)
4/14	Sweatshops	United Trauma Relief, 467-472; Zwolinski, 472-477
4/16	Environmental ethics	Narveson, 531-534; Smith, 534-537
4/21	TBA	TBA
4/23	*** Review ***	
4/30	Final exam, 9:30-11:20, ENG 104	

### Weekly group summaries

1. By the second day of class, students will form groups of 3 or 4. Each group will have to establish either a time and place to meet each week, or some way of having a group discussion (perhaps over email). Each week, a different member of the group will be responsible for leading the discussion and turning in a report. The group should schedule in advance who will be the leader for each week of the term.
2. The discussion leader for the week should choose one or two of the “QUESTIONS” that follow the assigned readings in the text for that week. Some questions might fall flat, while others lead to some interesting discussion. It is the responsibility of the leader to put together a summary of the most interesting part of the discussion -- what the question was, how different members responded, what further questions or objections were raised, etc. This summary should be written in the form of a 1-page report (about 200-300 words) and delivered or emailed to the instructor, or posted on the course website before the start of class on the following Tuesday.

3. NO LATE REPORTS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON. NO “MAKE-UPS” OR EXTRA CREDIT.

4. Each report will be marked as a “poor (1),” “adequate (2),” or “excellent (3).” *Everything* counts -- grammar, spelling, clarity, precision, depth. At the end of the term, the scores will be totaled, and grades distributed on the basis of the performance of all the groups (that is, the grade will be ‘curved’). The main thing I’m looking for is evidence of a serious and interesting discussion.

5. *Recommendation*: use the strengths of your group to overcome any weaknesses. Suppose that Adam, Eve, and Cain are in a group. Eve is an excellent writer, but Cain is not. It is Cain’s turn to write the report. He should do the best job he can, and circulate it among Adam and Eve for comments, suggestions, and corrections. Then he should fix it up and turn it in. Students should help each other -- but make sure that it really is *help*, and not one person doing all the work.

Sample report (from the “East of Edeners” group -- Adam, Eve, and Cain)

(Prepared by Cain.) Our group discussed question 1 on p. 95: “How important is a terminally ill person’s interest in controlling the time and manner of death?” Cain began the discussion by saying that the person’s own say is what matters above everything else. No one should interfere in someone’s decision to die or to live. Adam agreed. Eve pointed out that sometimes a patient may not know what their true interests are. Sometimes they may be in temporary pain, or depressed, and what they say should not necessarily be followed. The people who know them best also need to be consulted. Adam said he could see her point, but also that it would be really frustrating to be stuck in a painful illness with no way out. He suggested that the patient’s wish has to be followed, except where there is evidence that the pain or depression is temporary. Cain thought that even in these cases, what the patient wants needs to weigh the most.

6. Each report should indicate who prepared it. Also, make note of any absences, or if a member of the group did not participate at all.

7. You may turn in the report at the beginning of class, Tuesday, or by email, or by posting on the course webpage. If you submit the report by email, simply put the report in the body of the email message; please don’t put it in an attachment.

Email: [Charlie.huenemann@usu.edu](mailto:Charlie.huenemann@usu.edu)

Website: go to [usuphilosophy.com](http://usuphilosophy.com); click on “Course webpages,” and post a comment on the “Phil 1120: Social Ethics” page. Note: this is a good way for groups to see what one another is doing. Group scores will be posted on that page.

## Homework group

Name for the group (pick something interesting!):

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Members:

Name	Email address

### Preparation responsibility

Due date	Student responsible for report
1/13	
1/20	
1/27	
2/3	
2/10	
3/3	
3/17	
3/24	
3/31	
4/7	
4/21	

Day and time to meet, or will you discuss over email?

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