



School: **School of Philosophical & Historical Inquiry (SOPHI)**

Department/Program: **Department of Philosophy**

Unit of Study: **PHIL2617: Practical Ethics**

Session: **Summer 2015**

## **Unit of Study Outline**



### **Unit Coordinator**

Unit coordinators are listed on undergraduate and postgraduate coursework semester timetables, and can be consulted for help with any difficulties you may have.

Unit coordinators (as well as the Faculty) should also be informed of any illness or other misadventure that leads students to miss classes and tutorials or be late with assignments.

**Unit Coordinator:** **Dr. Andrew Cooper**  
Location: S406, Main Quadrangle, A14  
Email address: [a.cooper@sydney.edu.au](mailto:a.cooper@sydney.edu.au)  
Consultation Hours: By appointment

This Unit of Study Outline **MUST** be read in conjunction with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Student Administration Manual ([sydney.edu.au/arts/current\\_students/student\\_admin\\_manual.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/student_admin_manual.shtml)) and all applicable University policies.

In determining applications and appeals, it will be assumed that every student has taken the time to familiarise themselves with these key policies and procedures.

# PHIL2617 Practical Ethics

## UNIT DESCRIPTION

This unit draws on contemporary moral philosophy to shed light on some of the most pressing practical ethical questions of our time, including euthanasia, abortion, surrogacy, animal rights, marriage and environmental ethics.

By the end of the unit, students should have a good understanding of these practical ethical issues; and, more crucially, be equipped with the conceptual resources to think through new ethical questions and dilemmas as they arise in their personal and professional lives.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

This unit will enhance generic learner attributes, including analytical and critical thinking skills, communication skills, research skills, lateral thinking skills and independent thinking skills. It will foster abilities to engage open-mindedly with different viewpoints, analyse and evaluate arguments and to develop and communicate new perspectives clearly. It will encourage reflection on, and appreciation of, personal, civic and professional ethical obligations. This unit will also develop attributes of philosophical scholarship, including understanding of the methods of philosophical analysis and argument.

## LEARNING STRUCTURE

2x2-hr lecture/week

2x1-hr tutorial/week

Students should be aware of Faculty policy on attendance at classes.

## UNIT SCHEDULE

Readings are to be completed before the lecture and tutorial of the corresponding date.

Week	Date	Lecture	Tutorial reading
1	13 January	Introduction: Life and Death	Don Marquis, 'Why Abortion is Immoral'
1	15 January	Abortion	Judith Thomson, 'A Defense of Abortion'
2	20 January	Child Support	Elizabeth Brake, 'Fatherhood and Child Support'
2	22 January	Euthanasia I	James Rachels, 'Active and Passive Euthanasia'
3	27 January	Euthanasia II	J. David Velleman, 'Against the Right to Die'
3	29 January	Animal Welfare	Peter Singer, 'All Animals are Equal'
4	3 February	Climate Change	Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, 'It's Not My Fault'
4	5 February	Designing Children	Michael Sandel, 'The Case Against Perfection'
5	10 February	Disability	Elizabeth Barnes, 'Valuing Disability, Causing Disability'

5	12 February	Commercial Surrogacy	Elizabeth Anderson, 'Why Commercial Surrogate Motherhood Unethically Commodifies Women and Children'
6	17 February	Marriage	Elizabeth Brake, 'Minimal Marriage'
6	19 February	Moral Ignorance	Cheshire Calhoun, 'Responsibility and Reproach'

## READING REQUIREMENTS

Required readings are contained in the course reader, which is available for purchase at the Copy Centre.

Additional readings will be available in Library 2 hour loan collections or via the Library's eReadings system

## ONLINE COMPONENTS

This unit requires regular use of the University's Learning Management System (LMS), also known as Blackboard Learn. You will need reliable access to a computer and the Internet to use the LMS.

The easiest way to access is through MyUni (click on the 'MyUni' link on the university home page, <http://sydney.edu.au> or link directly to the service at <https://myuni.sydney.edu.au/>. There is a 'BlackBoard LMS' icon in the QuickLaunch window on the left hand side of the screen.

If you have any difficulties logging in or using the system, visit the Student Help area of the LMS site, <http://sydney.edu.au/learning/student/help/>.

### **Mobile Learn**

You can also access your LMS sites via the Sydney Uni App for iPhone and Android. The full set of features available on the mobile app for the University LMS can be found in detail in this PDF document: [Features in the mobile App for the University LMS \(PDF\)](#)

To download the University of Sydney mobile app directly to your phone or mobile device you need to be able to access the marketplace associated with your device's operating system.

- iTunes store on your iPhone/ iPod touch or iPad
- Play Store or the Android Marketplace (depending on the phone's OS)
- BlackBerry App World® on your BlackBerry® smartphone device
- Palm App Catalog on your HP webOS device

Once you are at the marketplace or app store:

1. Search for *University of Sydney*
2. Install the app
3. Open the app and click on the icon 'Bb Learn' to access the LMS
4. Login to the LMS with your UniKey and password.

**Important:** due to the limitations of mobile devices you cannot submit assignments using the assignment tool. You should not complete graded tests (quizzes) using your mobile device

due to the possibility of internet drop out.

The University's Privacy Management Plan governs how the University will deal with personal information related to the content and use of its web sites. See <http://sydney.edu.au/privacy.shtml> for further details.

## ASSESSMENT TASKS AND DUE DATES

### *i) Argument Analysis Exercise x 2, worth 10% each*

- First exercise questions announced on Blackboard LMS in week 1; second exercise questions announced in week 2
- First exercise is due on *Tuesday 20 January*; second exercise is due on *Tuesday 27 January*. Exercises are to be submitted **at the beginning of the lecture** on the due date. If you can't be at the lecture, they must be emailed to Andrew by the start of the lecture – 10am.
- Extensions will only be granted for exceptional circumstances (documented illness or misadventure)
- Exercises that are not submitted by the due date, where no extension has been granted, will receive a mark of 0

### *(ii) 1,500 word research essay worth 35%*

- Covers content of lectures 1 – 6
- Topics announced in week 3
- Due *Monday 9 February*
- Dual submission of both a hard-copy to SOPHI and an electronic copy via LMS is required.

### *(iii) 1,500 word take-home exam worth 35%*

- Covers content of lectures 8 – 12
- Topics announced on Blackboard LMS in week 6
- Due *Friday 27 February*
- Dual submission of both a hard-copy to SOPHI and an electronic copy via LMS is required.

### *(iv) Tutorial Participation worth 10%*

- Mere attendance is insufficient for assessment
- Assessment will be based on discussions in class and evidence of preparation for discussion
- Adequate tutorial preparation requires completing the week's readings and preparing answers to tutorial questions (which will be uploaded to the LMS site).
- Inexcused absence (including a failure to provide documentation for e.g. illness) will receive a mark of 0 for the relevant tutorial
- Failure to prepare adequately will receive mark of 0 for the relevant tutorial

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This unit uses standards referenced assessment for award of assessment marks. Students' assessment will be evaluated solely on the basis of students' achievement against criteria

and standards specified to align with learning outcomes. For reference to criteria and standards, please consult the grade descriptors at [http://sydney.edu.au/arts/philosophy/undergrad/grade\\_descriptors.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/philosophy/undergrad/grade_descriptors.shtml).

## **SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

### **Compliance Statements**

All students are required to submit an authorised statement of compliance with all work submitted to the University for assessment, presentation or publication. A statement of compliance certifies that no part of the Work constitutes a breach of Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy.

The format of the compliance statement will differ depending on the method required for submitting your work (see “Assessment Submission” below). Depending on the submission method, the statement must be in the form of:

- a. a University assignment cover sheet;
- b. a University electronic form; or
- c. a University written statement.

### **Assessment Submission**

#### ***Dual online and paper submission***

Written work must be submitted both online via the Blackboard site for this Unit of Study, and in hard copy at the SOPHI Office by 4pm on the due date.

Online tasks must be completed by 11.59pm on the due date.

You must complete, sign and attach a cover sheet/compliance statement to any written work handed in for assessment.

Essays and assignments not submitted on or before the due date are subject to penalty. Refer to [http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current\\_students/late\\_work.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/late_work.shtml) for the Policy on Late Work.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM**

Academic honesty is a core value of the University. The University requires students to act honestly, ethically and with integrity in their dealings with the University, its members, members of the public and others. The University is opposed to and will not tolerate academic dishonesty or plagiarism, and will treat all allegations of academic dishonesty or plagiarism seriously.

The University’s Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy 2012 and associated Procedures are available for reference on the University Policy Register at <http://sydney.edu.au/policies> (enter “Academic Dishonesty” in the search field). The Policy applies to the academic conduct of all students enrolled in a coursework award course at the University.

Under the terms and definitions of the Policy,

- “academic dishonesty” means “seeking to obtain or obtaining academic advantage (including in the assessment or publication of work) by dishonest or unfair means or knowingly assisting another student to do so.
- “plagiarism” means “presenting another person’s work as one’s own work by presenting, copying or reproducing it without appropriate acknowledgement of the source.”

The presentation of another person's work as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement is regarded as plagiarism, regardless of the author's intentions. Plagiarism can be classified as negligent (negligent plagiarism) or dishonest (dishonest plagiarism).

An examiner who suspects academic dishonesty or plagiarism by a student must report the suspicion to a nominated academic in the relevant faculty. If the nominated academic concludes that the student has engaged in **dishonest plagiarism** or some other sufficiently serious form of academic dishonesty, the matter may be referred to the Registrar for further disciplinary action under the terms of the *Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy 2012* and Chapter 8 of the *University of Sydney By-Law 1999* (as amended).

## USE OF SIMILARITY DETECTION SOFTWARE

Students should be aware that written assignments submitted in this Unit of Study will be submitted to similarity detecting software known as **Turnitin**. The detection and identification of work that may be suspected of plagiarism is an academic judgment for the unit coordinator, and similarity detecting software is one of the tools that an examiner or marker may use to inform a decision that plagiarism has occurred.

Turnitin searches for matches between text in your written assessment task and text sourced from the Internet, published works and assignments that have previously been submitted to Turnitin for analysis. It produces an originality report showing matches with various sources, and an overall level of match or similarity index.

There will always be some degree of text-matching when using Turnitin. These are caused by the use of direct quotations, technical terms and phrases, and the listing of bibliographic material. This does not mean you will automatically be accused of plagiarism.

Further information about Turnitin is available at [http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current\\_students/plagiarism\\_and\\_turnitin.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/plagiarism_and_turnitin.shtml).

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences assesses student requests for assistance relating to completion of assessment in accordance with the regulations set out in the University Assessment Policy 2011 and Assessment Procedures 2011. Students are expected to become familiar with the University's policies and Faculty procedures relating to Special Consideration and Special Arrangements.

Students can apply for:

- **Special Consideration** - for serious illness or misadventure
- **Special Arrangements** - for essential community commitments
- **Simple Extension** – an extension of up to 5 working days for non-examination based assessment tasks on the grounds of illness or misadventure.

Further information on special consideration policy and procedures is available on the Faculty website at [http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current\\_students/special\\_consideration.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/special_consideration.shtml).

## OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELEVANT TO THIS UNIT OF STUDY

The Faculty's Student Administration Manual is available for reference at the "Current Students" section of the Faculty Website ([http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current\\_students/](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/)). Most day-to-day issues you encounter in the course of completing this Unit of Study can be addressed with the information provided in the Manual. It contains detailed instructions on

processes, links to forms and guidance on where to get further assistance.

## STAYING ON TOP OF YOUR STUDY

For full information visit [http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current\\_students/staying\\_on\\_top.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/current_students/staying_on_top.shtml)

**The Learning Centre** assists students to develop the generic skills, which are necessary for learning and communicating knowledge and ideas at university. Programs available at The Learning Centre include workshops in Academic Reading and Writing, Oral communications Skills, Postgraduate Research Skills, Honours, masters Coursework Program, Studying at University, and Workshops for English Language and Learning. Further information about The Learning Centre can be found at [http://sydney.edu.au/stuserv/learning\\_centre/](http://sydney.edu.au/stuserv/learning_centre/).

**The Write Site** provides online support to help you develop your academic and professional writing skills. All University of Sydney staff and students who have a Unikey can access the WriteSite at <http://writsite.elearn.usyd.edu.au/>.

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has units at both an Undergraduate and Postgraduate level that focus on **writing** across the curriculum or, more specifically, writing in the disciplines, making them relevant for all university students. To find out more visit [http://sydney.edu.au/arts/teaching\\_learning/writing\\_hub/index.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/teaching_learning/writing_hub/index.shtml) and [http://sydney.edu.au/arts/teaching\\_learning/pg\\_writing\\_support/index.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/teaching_learning/pg_writing_support/index.shtml).

In addition to units of study on writing, The FASS Writing Hub offers drop-in sessions to assist students with their writing in a one-to-one setting. No appointment is necessary, and this service is free of charge to all FASS students and/or all students enrolled in WRIT units. For more information on what topics are covered in a drop-in session and for the current schedule, please visit

[http://sydney.edu.au/arts/teaching\\_learning/writing\\_hub/drop\\_in\\_sessions.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/teaching_learning/writing_hub/drop_in_sessions.shtml).

Pastoral and academic support for **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students** is provided by the STAR Team in Student Support services, a dedicated team of professional Aboriginal people able to respond to the needs of students across disciplines. The STAR team can assist with tutorial support, mentoring support, cultural and pastoral care along with a range of other services. More information about support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can be found at [http://sydney.edu.au/current\\_students/student\\_services/indigenous\\_support.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/current_students/student_services/indigenous_support.shtml).

The **Library** offers students free, online tutorials in library skills at <http://sydney.edu.au/library/skills>. There's one designed especially for students studying in the Humanities and Social Sciences at <http://sydney.edu.au/library/subjects/subject.html>. And don't forget to find out who your Faculty Liaison Librarians are.

## OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

Disability Services is located on Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building G20; contact 8627 8422 or email <mailto:disability.services@sydney.edu.au>. For further information, visit their website at <http://sydney.edu.au/stuserv/disability/>.

Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) are located on Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building G20; contact 8627 8433 or email <mailto:caps.admin@sydney.edu.au>. For further information, visit their website at [http://sydney.edu.au/current\\_students/counselling/](http://sydney.edu.au/current_students/counselling/).