

## **Teaching Experience:**

### **As Instructor of Record**

#### **UNC – Chapel Hill**

Spring 2018 – PHIL 280: Morality and Law

Spring 2017 – PHIL 210: Ancient Greek Philosophy

Summer 2015 – PHIL 165: Bioethics

Summer 2015 – PHIL 160: Introduction to Ethics

### **As Teaching Assistant**

#### **UNC – Chapel Hill**

Fall 2014 – PHIL 112: Making Sense of Ourselves, Prof. C.D. C. Reeve

Spring 2014 – PHIL 155: Introduction to Mathematical Logic, Prof. Keith Simmons

Fall 2013 – PHIL 160: Introduction to Ethics, Prof. Geoffrey Sayre-McCord

#### **Tufts University**

Spring 2011 – PHIL 24: Introduction to Ethics, Prof. David Denby

Fall 2010 – PHIL 3: Language and Mind, Prof. Daniel Dennett

#### **Center for Talented Youth (Johns Hopkins University) – Santa Cruz Site**

#### **Summer Programs (gifted students from grades 7-10)**

Summer 2010 – Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Logic

#### **Additional courses I am prepared to teach:**

Free Will and Responsibility

Contemporary Moral Problems

Skepticism

Philosophy of Gender

Introduction to Early Modern Philosophy

## Teaching Statement

As an undergraduate, I was fortunate enough to take a drawing class with an excellent instructor. She emphasized drawing what we saw, not what we thought we saw. In the service of this, she assigned the class an exercise that I still recall vividly now, twelve years later. She placed a reproduction of a Man Ray photograph of a woman's face with an African mask beside it on the projector completely out of focus, so that it was just a field of gray, and then instructed us to draw it. This left many of us scratching our heads and thinking, "Draw what, exactly?" but we dutifully began filling the page with charcoal shading. Fifteen minutes later, she turned the dial on the projector so the image was slightly more in focus. This process continued for two hours, the image drawing increasingly into view. Because we had been unable in the beginning to see more than light and shadow, we had been forced to set aside our assumptions about what we were drawing, and as a result we were able to more faithfully capture what was there. I see my task as a philosophy instructor as analogous to the task undertaken by my art professor: to encourage students to slow down, be careful, and be curious about what they can learn from a place of uncertainty. Being unable to judge what exactly I was drawing allowed me to see it more clearly, without interference from my presuppositions about what a woman's face looks like. Similarly, I try to raise questions about students' default ways of describing normative reality in order to create a sense of aporia, where their presuppositions are likewise disarmed. My aim is to create a productive kind of confusion, one which makes room for students to see things anew.

When I first taught my own course, Introduction to Ethics, I underestimated how difficult it would be for my students to tolerate uncertainty. On our first day of class, I told them that we would be discussing three major ethical theories: utilitarianism, Kantianism, and virtue ethics. One of my students then asked me which of these was the correct ethical theory. When I said that I didn't think any ethical theory was correct exactly, my student's face fell. This is one of many cases

in which students have shown a reluctance to regard uncertainty as something potentially fruitful, which makes sense given that it is at odds with how students are often taught to think about their education.

Teaching philosophy is peculiar in that one must both encourage students to care about the truth when it comes to complex subjects, and yet also reassure those same students that they are not being evaluated based on whether they come up with the right answer. In my experience, the best way to do this is to try to show students directly what can be gained from questioning what they take to be obvious, even if they are left with some remaining doubts. In support of this, I find it helpful to center theoretical discussions around examples from ordinary life. Students tend to have clear intuitions about these cases, but the clarity of their intuitions often comes from inattention to normative detail. By eliciting a conflicting set of intuitions that come from paying attention to other normative considerations that they previously overlooked, one demands of students to slow down and be more careful in their thinking.

When teaching Bioethics, I discussed a case involving a deaf couple who purposefully conceived two deaf children. My first intuition about this case, and one that was shared by nearly all of my students, was that this decision caused their children harm. Further reflection, however, forced many of us to concede that if the children would suffer more because of being deaf in a world that discriminates against people with disabilities, this would also generate reasons for people of color to abstain from having biological children because their children would likely experience racial discrimination. This raised an aporia for the class; selecting for disability *felt* different than deliberately conceiving a child who would probably experience racism, but it is not at all obvious what the difference might be in the context of this argument. By comparing situations that they had not thought to compare before, students were able to bring more of the normative details of this case into focus; in particular, they realized that they had to look deeper in order to establish whether

or not selecting for disability was permissible. These students, many of whom aspired to be health care professionals, expressed surprise and gratitude at having been asked to consider the implications of what they took to be a perfectly straightforward argument that these parents prevented their children from having an optimal health outcome.

A similar exchange took place in my Morality and Law course, where I devoted considerable attention to the justification of punishment. Many of my students had reservations about the current criminal justice system in the United States but had even stronger reservations about reducing or eliminating hard treatment as a response to breaking the law. In particular, they thought that harsh punitive measures were necessary to deter crime. When I presented them with empirical evidence that past a certain minimal point, increasing the severity of punishment had no additional deterrent effects, this left them not only with questions about whether harsh punitive measures could be justified, but with the sense that our current scheme of punishment was far from inevitable. When we discussed possible alternatives to punishment, my students had additional tools to raise critical questions about these alternatives without simply dismissing them out of hand as idealistic or otherwise ill-advised. Regardless of whether they go on to study philosophy further, my hope is that my students will recognize that doubt, while sometimes unpleasant, can profoundly enlarge their sense of how the world might be.

## Diversity Statement

I see one of my primary tasks as a philosophy instructor as allowing students to see philosophy as *for them*: even if they've never been exposed to philosophy before, even if they find it more difficult than they expected, even if their only associations to philosophy involve old white men with beards.

I was initially insulated from some of these reasons for thinking philosophy was not for me. I was a philosophy major at Simmons College, a small women's college in Boston with four full-time faculty, none of whom were white men. When I wanted to apply to graduate school, I was cautioned that my experiences with philosophy up to that point were far from representative of the profession as a whole. I thought I gave this advice sufficient consideration and decided to apply anyway. I enrolled in the philosophy MA program at Tufts, where the climate was generally excellent. There was gender parity among the graduate students, and the faculty were welcoming, but I noticed that my female colleagues were generally the quietest voices in the classroom. There were a few women on the faculty, formidable presences who I admired a great deal but couldn't imagine emulating. I felt out of place in a way I couldn't identify. Then, after my first year in the program, we hired a junior faculty member who was a woman. She was generous with her time and her feedback, and I found her style of practicing academic philosophy at departmental events, in her research, and in the classroom particularly accessible. Her modeling a style of philosophical inquiry that was rigorous but approachable, neither diffident nor arrogant, contributed to my sense that I should continue on in philosophy.

Being trained at UNC has also given the opportunity to develop as a teacher at a public university where students are consistently smart and motivated but have a wide range of educational backgrounds and life experiences. In the classroom, I am committed to modeling the activity of doing philosophy in a way that is accessible to students from a variety of backgrounds. This includes designing syllabi to include a diverse range of authors, and when teaching ethics courses, papers that

address issues in lived moral experience alongside ethical theory. This commitment also means that I try to create an atmosphere in the classroom where students feel comfortable sharing their own perspectives and competent when respectfully engaging with the perspectives expressed in the assigned reading and with their peers. Sometimes, this means encouraging students to tolerate being uncertain or confused without condemning themselves or others.

I actively encourage students to see philosophy as a skill, something they should not expect themselves to know how to do right away, but that they can learn with practice. Before the first paper in every course, I set aside time at the beginning of several classes for them to ask questions about the assignment. In addition, I create a forum on my course websites where students can converse with each other and with me about the course material, so that students who are shy about speaking in class have another place to contribute to the discussion. I also try to find ways to take away the shame associated with not performing as well as one would like to. For example, when I was a teaching assistant for an introductory Logic course, I had several students who grasped the material quickly and with ease, and several others who struggled the entire semester. My primary aim was to encourage all of them to contribute in our discussion sections, and so I devised a system where we went around the room, and each student had at least try to provide the next step in the proof. If they were unable to do so, I gave them permission to “phone a friend” (in the style of “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?”), in which case the rest of the class could chime in. Because the steps in each proof were of varying difficulty, more or less every student had both given the correct a response and had phoned a friend on at least one occasion by semester’s end. My hope is that these techniques give students the space to feel both welcomed and challenged in the classroom.

## Course Evaluations

The tables on the following pages provide quantitative and qualitative data from anonymous course evaluations at the University of North Carolina. There, students are asked to complete anonymous online course evaluations during the final two weeks of each term.

**Table 1** provides the mean responses for the two courses I have taught most recently. Data from other courses is available upon request. Responses are based on a scale of 1 to 5, where (unless otherwise noted) the students are given the following reference points: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree.

| <b>Table 1</b><br><b>Quantitative Evaluations for Courses at the University of North Carolina</b>      | <b>Morality &amp; Law</b><br><b>Spring 2018</b><br><b>(38 students, 86.8% response rate)</b> | <b>Ancient Greek Philosophy</b><br><b>Spring 2017</b><br><b>(35 students, 88.57% response rate)</b> |
|--|--|---|
| This course challenged me to think deeply about the subject matter                                     | 4.55   | 4.42  |
| The instructor clearly communicated what was expected of me in this class                              | 4.30   | 4.35  |
| I was able to get individual help when I needed it.  | 4.68   | 4.66  |
| The course material (e.g., coursepack, website, texts) helped me better understand the subject matter. | 4.13   | 4.20  |
| The course assignments helped me better understand the subject matter.                                 | 4.06   | 3.97  |
| The instructor evaluated my work fairly.   | 4.30   | 4.23  |
| The instructor showed concern about whether students learned the material.                             | 4.42   | 4.26  |
| The instructor expressed ideas clearly.  | 4.03   | 4.10  |
| The instructor showed enthusiasm for teaching the class.   | 4.44   | 4.55  |
| The instructor treated all students with respect.  | 4.68   | 4.80  |
| The instructional techniques engaged me with the subject matter.                                       | 3.81   | 3.65  |
| The instructor provided me helpful feedback on my performance.   | 4.00   | 4.26  |
| This course was very exciting to me intellectually.  | 4.06   | 3.61  |

|   |      |      |
|---|------|------|
| Rate the grading standards of this course compared with others you have taken at UNC. (1=Very Easy; 5= Most Rigorous) | 3.50 | 3.39 |
| Overall, this course was excellent.   | 3.85 | 3.65 |
| Overall, this instructor was an effective teacher.  | 4.18 | 4.13 |
| Overall, I learned a great deal from this course.   | 4.15 | 4.00 |
| The instructor was one of the best I have had at Carolina, fully deserving of a teaching award.                       | 3.52 | 3.29 |
| The instructor used examples that had relevance for me.   | 4.30 | 4.19 |
| The instructor used class time well.  | 4.33 | 4.32 |
| The instructor encouraged students to participate in this class.  | 4.52 | 4.35 |
| This course was designed to keep me engaged in learning.  | 3.94 | 3.86 |

### Qualitative Course Evaluations

When completing their online, end-of-the-semester quantitative evaluations, UNC students have the opportunity to include qualitative feedback under the prompt, “Comments on overall assessment of this course”. **Tables 2 and 3** present the full set of comments that I received for the same two courses represented above.

**Table 2 - PHIL 280: Morality and Law**

|   |
|---|
| Very challenging material but intellectually stimulating– good for anyone interested in law.  |
| I learned a lot and expanded my philosophical knowledge. However, I have a number of qualms with this course. First, the grading is too vague. While I don't mind rigorous grading, I am somewhat worried about it in the context of a philosophy course, especially when many, maybe most of the students are in a PHIL course for the first time. People's perceptions of philosophical ideas vary drastically based on life experiences. It is hard to objective grade something fairly when people write and think so differently from one another. If the feedback was clearer or more frequent, it would be fine, but I had to go to OH to understand the comments left on paper. Second, there was little in the way of actual law topics. Although there is a lot in the topics of morality, it is sometimes not clearly connected to law. The best classes were those where we read caselaw and analyzed those in both a legal and philosophical lens. Third, the readings were too hard or too long. Readings for a class like this ought to either be hard or long, but not both. As someone who's taking this class mostly for fun and the gain of knowledge, I felt like I was wasting my time with some of the readings, as they were either boring or way too difficult, which made it hard to enjoy nor learn anything until it was explained in class. |

|  |
|--|
| <p>I really enjoyed the topics and the readings for this course, and the instructor was enthusiastic. My greatest problem with the course was that there was little to no time for small group discussion, and the group discussion was greatly diminished because the instructor chose to summarize the reading and arguments every class. I felt it was a waste of my time to do the readings because I would get the same information in class, only I would be bored because I'd already read the information I was hearing. I think many students made this same calculus. Because we were not expected to know the arguments or reading when we came in, we didn't do them and the little conversation we could have suffered as a result. I think a better way would be to treat the course more like a law class where the instructor called on students to recount the facts of the paper or state their opinions or even ask questions before giving any explanation of the reading, and creating minor consequences for students who obviously hadn't done the reading.</p> |
| <p>I thoroughly enjoyed the fact that it was discussion based, and thought the blogs were a useful way to synthesize the information presented.</p>  |
| <p>I thought the way the course was taught (lecture—&gt; notes—&gt; study for exams/papers) worked very well together.</p>   |
| <p>Pretty challenging. Kinda interesting.</p>  |
| <p>I enjoyed the course a lot, I thought that the way it was structured was very organized and I appreciated the fair grading practices.</p>   |
| <p>I loved the way Professor Larisa taught this course</p>   |
| <p>I liked this course a lot. Especially how it demanded my ability to process theories and ideas. The reading load was quite large, but it was manageable. Perhaps more in-class activities.</p>  |
| <p>Lots of reading— not able to dive deep into the meaning of the pieces, have sufficient discussion on objections. Would have been nicer to have less readings and be able to think critically about them. Also, too much information to connect back and reflect on.</p>   |
| <p>It was very interesting and exposed me to a lot of different viewpoints on the topics we discussed.</p>   |
| <p>Course materials and readings were varied and interesting. No single perspective dominated the discourse. Readings were challenging but not frustratingly so. Times which assignments were due (online blog posts) seemed unreasonable for meeting time of class. Instead of having them due at 5 PM the day before class, I think midnight or class start time would have been more appropriate.</p>   |
| <p>Larissa is very well organized and clearly intelligent. I wish, however, that sometimes she would talk just a bit slower only because the concepts we learned were pretty complex.</p>  |
| <p>Our professor was enthusiastic about the material. Philosophy can be difficult to teach being that at times the theories don't always line up with what is going on within our society, but I felt that she taught the course in a great manner.</p>  |
| <p>Good course, good professor.</p>  |
| <p>I found this class to be more challenging than anticipated, with assignments and grading more rigorous than other 200-level courses. I also feel like the professor, Larisa Svirsky, although helpful in a one-on-one setting, was sometimes difficult to follow in lecture.</p>  |

**Table 3 - PHIL 210: Ancient Greek Philosophy**

|  |
|--|
| <p>Very good course, deeper study of a lot of topics that allowed me to have a greater understanding.</p>  |
| <p>Really great course. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Larisa was an excellent instructor. She knew the material well but was even more impressive in how she handled student questions. An outstanding example of the principle of charity. My classmates asked what I believed to be outrageously bad/off-topic questions and Larisa managed to interpret them as intelligent and insightful and used them to clarify the topic we were discussing. I was astonished. This is truly a rare skill and invaluable in an instructor.</p>  |
| <p>Overall this course was great, but I have two critiques. The first is that I wished that the instructor provided some sort of visual while speaking during class (ex. powerpoints or writing on the board). She usually kept the class hybrid lecture/discussion based. I found it difficult to write down what she was saying during class fast enough. She wrote on the board sometimes, which helped me a lot to piece together concepts more easily as a visual learner. My second critique would be to have at least one other exam throughout the course (maybe one midterm.) The only exam we have is the final, which is cumulative and forty percent of our grade. In this course, I have had no experience with what the test style is like, so the fact that the final is worth a large part of our grade and is cumulative is very overwhelming and might be avoided by dividing up the percent into another final, and having practice with taking an exam in this class before the final. However, overall this course has been great. I've had no experience with learning philosophy, and Larisa made it fun.</p> |
| <p>Good class overall. I wish there had been more attention given to comparing/contrasting the various philosopher's and their views. This type of synthesis done regularly would have helped my overall understanding of the course material more. I also liked when we split up into groups to discuss and would have enjoyed more classes like that.</p>  |
| <p>I felt as though this course only cursorily went over a broad amount of information, and I think it would have been so much more interesting (and so much more feasible to finish the readings) if we had focused on maybe two presocratic philosophers and then did what we did with Plato and Aristotle. I also wasn't entirely convinced Larisa wanted us to do super well in the course. As someone with no prior knowledge of philosophy, it was extremely hard to figure out what I was doing — especially in relation to writing the papers. All in all the course was interesting but it didn't seem accessible.</p>  |
| <p>I LOVE LARISA</p>   |
| <p>I am not particularly interested in the field of philosophy, and I was only taking this course as a requirement for graduation. While the ancient philosophers had interesting view points on some things, I don't find them particularly applicable to my life or to my academic study here at UNC. The way the course was taught was entirely fitting to the subject matter, and the teacher was competent and enthusiastic. However, I was not interested in the subject, and this course has not changed my opinion.</p>  |
| <p>The course was very interesting in its content. Implementing some more teaching approaches such as visual inputs, activities or some other way to engage the students a little</p>  |

more in the subject might make the course a lot better. Lecture can sometimes seem long and confusing due to the subject; therefore, it is sometimes helpful to have outlines of notes or visual aids so one can digest the information more thoroughly. Assignments involve a lot of critical thinking, and the feedback at the end is perfect; however, it was hard to attain a great grade on a paper so I felt like I was just writing and hoping it was what you wanted even though I covered all bases in the paper. Still don't know what the final will be like, maybe would be nice to have an outline down as well.

Frequently found that this course was challenging to participate and therefore discuss in class because confusing but such an interesting class and really glad I choose to take it with Professor Svirsky!

Professor Svirsky was a great professor who truly has a passion for philosophy. Although I know her field of expertise is not in ancient Greek philosophy, she taught the course with great enthusiasm and had a wealth of knowledge that allowed us students to draw from. I truly appreciate Ms. Svirsky's time and efforts and I would absolutely recommend this course to somebody else.

The way the lecture was structured did not make it super easy for me to learn. I don't do well with discussion based classes, I much prefer a lecture where everything we need to know is presented in a very straightforward fashion. With the discussion parts of the class, we jumped around a lot and it made it kind of harder to understand what was going on and what we really needed to know.

This course was extremely difficult in terms of learning the material but Larisa made it worth while and helped tremendously. I truly enjoyed the course, how she taught, and the topics discussed.

The readings were often dense and difficult to understand, especially towards the end of the course. The instructor was very enthusiastic about the topic which made it easier to get through a class that otherwise might have been unpleasant due to its complexity. A little more help with understanding how to write a philosophy paper would have been helpful. Maybe provide a sample paper that was well-written that we can access throughout the course?

Good course, wish I had a lecture on how to write philosophy papers prior to being told to write them throughout the semester. I felt blind about the writing style, as it is vastly different from what I have experience with and was definitely detrimental to my grades over the course of the semester.

## Bioethics

### Instructor

Larisa Svirsky

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### Course Description

In this class, we will explore ethical questions that arise in the context of medical research and health care. Some central themes we will consider are autonomy and informed consent, what justice requires in terms of access to health care, and the norms that health care providers should follow with respect to their patients. We will consider these questions through theoretical lenses at times, but our focus will always be on the practical import of the ethical claims we are considering. In support of this, several classes will involve small group discussions of case studies drawn from medical practice and research.

### Course Website

This course will have a website in which I will post the syllabus, course assignments, and any additional readings. All students enrolled in the course should have access to this website already, but if you have any difficulties with this, let me know.

The course website will also have a section labeled Blogs in which you are to complete your responses to course readings, described in my detail below. Additionally, the course website will also have a forum, where you should feel free to post any questions you have about the course reading or class discussions. These forum posts count as a form of participation in the course, and I will reply to them regularly, schedule permitting.

### Assigned Text

*Autonomy and Trust in Bioethics* by Onora O'Neill. All other readings will be posted on the course website.

### Course Requirements:

|                                     |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1) Four writing assignments         | 40% (10% each) |
| 2) Ten responses to course readings | 10% (1% each)  |
| 3) Midterm exam                     | 20%            |
| 4) Final exam                       | 20%            |
| 5) Participation                    | 10%            |

#### 1) Writing assignments

There are four papers that need to be handed in (in class) during the semester. They must be 2-3 pages (double-spaced, 12 pt font, Times New Roman, 1" margins). Topics will be posted two weeks before the due date.

#### 2) Responses to course readings

In preparation for the class, you will need to post a short response to the readings for that week on Sakai (under 'blog') before 5 pm on day before the class meets, for a total of ten posts. These responses should be short (100-150 words) and include, regarding a passage/chapter of your choice: 1. A question (explained if necessary), 2. A critique (a short paragraph), and 3. Something you liked about the reading (a sentence or two).

### **3 & 4) Midterm and final exams**

The examinations for this course will be a combination of multiple choice and short essays. These exams will primarily test your ability to understand and write clearly about the works that we have studied. The final exam will be cumulative.

### **5) Participation**

One earns a high participation grade in this course by attending class regularly, carefully preparing thoughts on the readings, and speaking in class and/or posting on the course website forums. Reading philosophy can be quite difficult, especially if you haven't done much of it before. I recommend taking notes and reading the required texts multiple times.

### **Grading**

I will grade all assignments from this course (aside from the blog posts) anonymously. What this means is that **you should not include your name anywhere on your course assignments, but rather include your student ID number as identifying information.** Grading anonymously is one way of correcting against certain kinds of bias, and ensuring that every student is graded fairly.

Below is a list of criteria that will be used to evaluate your papers (note that the % only give a rough indication of how important these aspects are, and that not all of the criteria will apply equally to each of the different assignments; this is not a mathematical scale):

#### **a. Quality of ideas (50%)**

Range and depth of argument; fair representation position of the philosopher; logic of argument; quality and/or originality of thought; appropriate sense of the complexity of the topic; appropriate awareness of opposing views.

#### **b. Organization and Argumentation (40%)**

Clarity of thesis statement in the introduction; logical and clear arrangement of ideas; effective use of transitions; unity and coherence of paragraphs; good development of arguments through supporting details and evidence.

#### **c. Clarity, style, and grammar (10%)**

Ease of readability; appropriate voice, tone, and style for the assignment; clarity of sentence structure; grammatically correct sentences; accurate spelling; careful proofreading.

If you have any questions about these policies, please feel free to ask me about them.

### **Late Work Policy**

If you need an extension on a paper, you must contact me with at least one day's notice and a medical or comparable excuse (barring very unusual circumstances). Otherwise, late work will be graded down a third of a letter grade for each full day that it is late. In other words, if a paper were due on Monday, you would need to email me by Sunday to receive an extension if one is appropriate. If you didn't contact me or an extension is not appropriate given your circumstances, handing in the paper on Tuesday would bring an A paper down to an A-, etc.

### **Excused Absences**

If you have special needs, or plan to be absent from class on a particular date, please send me an e-

mail (preferably at least one day in advance) to explain your situation. Otherwise I expect you to attend each and every class and take the exams as scheduled.

### **Class Conduct**

I consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability, and other visible and invisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

### **Accommodations**

If you have a learning or physical disability, or if you learn best utilizing a particular method, please discuss with me how I can best accommodate your learning needs. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all learning styles. I can do this most successfully if you discuss your needs with me in advance. I will maintain the confidentiality of your learning needs.

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs.

**Note:** I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including paper due dates and test dates, when unforeseen circumstances occur. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that you can adjust your schedule.

## **Reading Schedule:**

### **Week 1: Course Introduction**

Arguments - Validity and soundness (handout on course website)

Brief in-class overview of moral philosophy

O'Neill, O. *Autonomy and Trust in Bioethics* ch. 1

### **Week 2: Informed Consent**

O'Neill, O. *Autonomy and Trust in Bioethics* ch. 7

AMA Journal of Ethics: Weighing the Duty to Inform a Patient of Possible Future Illness

### **Week 3: Responsibility for Health**

Hunt, L. and Arar, N. "An Analytical Framework for Contrasting Patient and Provider Views of the Process of Chronic Disease Management"

Horton, S. and Barker, J.C. "Stigmatized Biologies: Examining the Cumulative Effects of Oral Health Disparities for Mexican American Farmworker Children"

Brown, R.C.H., "Moral Responsibility for (Un)healthy Behavior"

**1<sup>st</sup> writing assignment due**

### **Week 4: Sports Performance Enhancement**

Savulescu, J., Foddy, B., Clayton, M. "Why We Should Allow Performance Enhancing Drugs in Sport"

### **Weeks 5–7: Reproductive Ethics**

#### **Week 5:**

Purdy, L. "Genetics and Reproductive Risk: Can Having Children Be Immoral?"

Veatch, R. "Genetics, Birth, and the Biological Revolution"

#### **Week 6:**

Spriggs, M. "Lesbian Couple Create a Child Who is Deaf Like Them"

Levy, N. "Deafness, Culture and Choice"

Kittay, E.F., "How Not to Argue for Selective Reproductive Procedures"

**Midterm**

**Week 7:**

Marquis, D. "Why Abortion is Immoral."

Thomson, J. J. "A Defense of Abortion"

**Week 8: Medical Competence and Autonomy**

O'Neill, O. *Autonomy and Trust in Bioethics* ch. 2

Dresser, R.S. and Robertson, J.A. "Quality of Life and Non-Treatment Decisions for Incompetent Patients: A Critique of the Orthodox Approach"

Levy, N. "Addiction, Autonomy, and Informed Consent: On and Off the Garden Path"

**2<sup>nd</sup> writing assignment due**

**Week 9: Medical Paternalism**

Buchanan, A. "Medical Paternalism,"

Goldman, A. "The Refutation of Medical Paternalism"

**Week 10: Euthanasia**

Rachels, J. "Active and Passive Euthanasia"

Sullivan, T. "Active and Passive Euthanasia: An Impertinent Distinction?"

AMA Journal of Ethics: The Patient Who Says He is Ready to Die

**Weeks 11-12: Medical Research Ethics****Week 11:**

Brandt, A.M., "Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment"

Emanuel, E., Wendler, D., Killen, J., Grady, C. "What Makes Clinical Research in Developing Countries Ethical?"

**3<sup>rd</sup> writing assignment due**

**Week 12:**

Newkirk, V.R. II, A Generation of Bad Blood

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/06/tuskegee-study-medical-distrust-research/487439/>

AMA Journal of Ethics: Helping Patients Decide Whether to Participate in Clinical Trials

AMA Journal of Ethics: When Does the Amount We Pay Research Participants Become “Undue Influence”?

**Week 13: Fair Distribution in Health Care**

Buchanan, A. “The Right to a Decent Minimum of Health Care”

Buyx, A.M., “Personal Responsibility for Health as a Rationing Criterion: Why We Don’t Like It and Why Maybe We Should”

Walker, T., “Who Do We Treat First When Resources are Scarce?”

**4<sup>th</sup> writing assignment due**

**Week 14:**

Course wrap-up and exam review

**Final exam**

# Philosophy of Gender

## Instructor

Larisa Svirsky

Email: svirsky.4@osu.edu

## Course Description

This class will survey historical and contemporary perspectives on gender, primarily (though not exclusively) from a feminist perspective. In this course, we will consider questions such as the following: What does it mean to be a woman or a man? Is it possible to be neither? What is the relationship between gender and sexuality, race, class, and culture? What is gender-based oppression, and what would it mean to overcome it? Along the way, we will examine how feminist theory expands and challenges mainstream beliefs and philosophical approaches.

## Course Website

This course will have a website in which I will post the syllabus, course assignments, and any additional readings. All students enrolled in the course should have access to this website already, but if you have any difficulties with this, let me know.

The course website will also have a section labeled Blogs in which you are to complete your responses to course readings, described in my detail below. Additionally, the course website will also have a forum, where you should feel free to post any questions you have about the course reading or class discussions. These forum posts count as a form of participation in the course, and I will reply to them regularly, schedule permitting.

## Course Requirements:

|                                     |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1) Four writing assignments         | 40% (10% each) |
| 2) Ten responses to course readings | 10% (1% each)  |
| 3) Midterm exam                     | 20%            |
| 4) Final exam                       | 20%            |
| 5) Participation                    | 10%            |

### 1) Writing assignments

There are four papers that need to be handed in (in class) during the semester. They must be 2-3 pages (double-spaced, 12 pt font, Times New Roman, 1" margins). Topics will be posted two weeks before the due date.

### 2) Responses to course readings

In preparation for the class, you will need to post a short response to the readings for that week on Sakai (under 'blog') before 5 pm on day before the class meets, for a total of ten posts. These responses should be short (100-150 words) and include, regarding a passage/chapter of your choice:

1. A question (explained if necessary), 2. A critique (a short paragraph), and 3. Something you liked about the reading (a sentence or two).

### 3 & 4) Midterm and final exams

The examinations for this course will be a combination of multiple choice and short essays. These exams will primarily test your ability to understand and write clearly about the works that we have studied. The final exam will be cumulative.

## 5) Participation

One earns a high participation grade in this course by attending class regularly, carefully preparing thoughts on the readings, and speaking in class and/or posting on the course website forums. Reading philosophy can be quite difficult, especially if you haven't done much of it before. I recommend taking notes and reading the required texts multiple times.

## Grading

I will grade all assignments from this course (aside from the blog posts) anonymously. What this means is that **you should not include your name anywhere on your course assignments, but rather include your student ID number as identifying information.** Grading anonymously is one way of correcting against certain kinds of bias, and ensuring that every student is graded fairly.

Below is a list of criteria that will be used to evaluate your papers (note that the % only give a rough indication of how important these aspects are, and that not all of the criteria will apply equally to each of the different assignments; this is not a mathematical scale):

### a. Quality of ideas (50%)

Range and depth of argument; fair representation position of the philosopher; logic of argument; quality and/or originality of thought; appropriate sense of the complexity of the topic; appropriate awareness of opposing views.

### b. Organization and Argumentation (40%)

Clarity of thesis statement in the introduction; logical and clear arrangement of ideas; effective use of transitions; unity and coherence of paragraphs; good development of arguments through supporting details and evidence.

### c. Clarity, style, and grammar (10%)

Ease of readability; appropriate voice, tone, and style for the assignment; clarity of sentence structure; grammatically correct sentences; accurate spelling; careful proofreading.

If you have any questions about these policies, please feel free to ask me about them.

## Late Work Policy

If you need an extension on a paper, you must contact me with at least one day's notice and a medical or comparable excuse (barring very unusual circumstances). Otherwise, late work will be graded down a third of a letter grade for each full day that it is late. In other words, if a paper were due on Monday, you would need to email me by Sunday to receive an extension if one is appropriate. If you didn't contact me or an extension is not appropriate given your circumstances, handing in the paper on Tuesday would bring an A paper down to an A-, etc.

## Excused Absences

If you have special needs, or plan to be absent from class on a particular date, please send me an e-mail (preferably at least one day in advance) to explain your situation. Otherwise I expect you to attend each and every class and take the exams as scheduled.

## Class Conduct

I consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions,

national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability, and other visible and invisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

### **Accommodations**

If you have a learning or physical disability, or if you learn best utilizing a particular method, please discuss with me how I can best accommodate your learning needs. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all learning styles. I can do this most successfully if you discuss your needs with me in advance. I will maintain the confidentiality of your learning needs.

Much of the material for this class concerns sensitive topics. Please do not hesitate to let me know if engagement with certain topics may prevent you from experiencing a productive learning environment. I will work with students on a case-by-case basis to address these concerns.

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs.

**Note:** I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including paper due dates and test dates, when unforeseen circumstances occur. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that you can adjust your schedule.

## **Reading Schedule:**

### **Week 1: Course Introduction**

Jenny Nordberg, “Afghan Boys are Prized, So Girls Live the Part” (New York Times, 9/20/10)

Ruth Padawer, “What’s So Bad About a Boy Who Wants to Wear a Dress?” (New York Times, 8/8/12)

### **Weeks 2-4: Historical Perspectives on Gender**

#### **Week 2:**

Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1 (Ch. 1-7, 12-13), II, Ch. 1-5)

Rousseau, “Sophie” (Selections from *Emile*)

#### **Week 3:**

Mary Wollstonecraft, “Of the Pernicious Effects which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions Established in Society”

Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I A Woman?”

John Stuart Mill, *On the Subjection of Women* (excerpt)

#### **Week 4:**

Jane Addams, “Women and Public Housekeeping,”

Emma Goldman, “The Tragedy of Woman’s Emancipation”

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Introduction and Conclusion

**1<sup>st</sup> writing assignment due**

### **Weeks 5-6: What is Gender?**

#### **Week 5:**

Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Social Construction: Who? What? When? Where? How?”

Anne Fausto-Sterling, “The Five Sexes, Revisited”

#### **Week 6:**

Jack Halberstam, “Transgender Butch”

Talia Mae Bettcher, “Trans Women and the Meaning of ‘Woman’”

Robin Dembroff, “Why Be Nonbinary?”

### **Midterm**

#### **Weeks 7-8: Oppression**

##### **Week 7:**

Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression”

##### **Week 8:**

Marilyn Frye, “Oppression”

Trudy, “Explanation of Misogynoir”

**2<sup>nd</sup> writing assignment due**

#### **Weeks 9-10: Intersectionality**

##### **Week 9:**

bell hooks, “Reconstructing Black Masculinity” and “Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory”

Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics”

##### **Week 10:**

Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference”

Trina Grillo, “Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality”

#### **Weeks 11-12: Sex, Love, and Relationships**

##### **Week 11:**

Rebecca Kukla, “That’s What She Said: The Language of Sexual Negotiation”

Adrienne Maree Brown, *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good* (excerpts)

**3<sup>rd</sup> writing assignment due**

##### **Week 12:**

Amia Srinivasan, “Is Anyone Entitled to Sex?”

Debra Satz, “Markets in Women’s Sexual Labor”

**Week 13: Resistance**

(many authors), “Guerrilla Feminism,” *Lesbian Ethics*

Sara Ahmed, “Self-Care as Warfare”

Tamara Fakhoury, “Quiet Resistance”

**4<sup>th</sup> writing assignment due**

**Week 14:**

Course wrap-up and exam review

**Final exam**

## Morality and Law

### Instructor:

Larisa Svirsky

Email: svirsky.4@osu.edu

**Course Description:** It seems plausible that in general we morally ought to obey the law. There seem to be clear examples, however, of laws that are or were unjust. In this course, we will explore this tension in the course of considering a variety of views about the proper relationship between law and morality. More specifically, we will examine the moral dimensions of particular aspects of the law, including criminal law, judgments of competence and legal responsibility, punishment, and judicial review. No prior acquaintance with legal philosophy is expected or required.

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### Course Requirements:

|                                     |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1) Two writing assignments          | 30% (15% each) |
| 2) Ten responses to course readings | 10% (1% each)  |
| 3) Midterm exam                     | 20%            |
| 4) Final exam                       | 30%            |
| 5) Participation                    | 10%            |

### 1) Writing assignments

There are two papers that need to be handed in (in class) during the semester. They must be 4-5 pages (double-spaced, 12 pt font, Times New Roman, 1" margins). Topics will be posted two weeks before the due date.

### 2) Responses to course readings

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## Course Schedule:

### Section 1: Foundations

#### Week 1: The Role of Law

Plato, “Crito”

Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

#### Week 2: Introduction to Moral Theory

Mark Timmons, *Moral Theory: An Introduction* (pgs 1- 8, 13-17)

How to read a legal case:

<http://euro.ecom.cmu.edu/program/law/08-732/Courts/howtoreadv2.pdf>

### Weeks 3 -5: Obedience and Disobedience

#### Week 3:

Christopher Wellman – “Why I Am Not an Anarchist” (from *Is There a Duty to Obey the Law?*)

“Fed Up with War, Some Won’t Pay Taxes”:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/04/AR2007070401145.html>

“We Will Not Pay: The Americans Withholding their Taxes to Fight Trump”

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/feb/15/tax-refusing-pay-protest-trump>

“Should We Prosecute Climate Change Protestors Who Break the Law?”

<https://psmag.com/environment/prosecute-climate-change-protesters-break-law-93187>

#### Week 4:

John Rawls, “The Arguments for the Principle of Fairness” (*A Theory of Justice*, p. 301-308)

Robert Nozick: “The Principle of Fairness” (*Anarchy, State, Utopia*, p. 90-95)

John Rawls, “The Duty to Comply with an Unjust Law,” “The Definition of Civil Disobedience” (*A Theory of Justice* p. 308-312, 319-323)

#### Week 5:

John Rawls, “The Justification of Civil Disobedience” (*A Theory of Justice* p. 326-331)

Tommie Shelby, “Justice, Deviance, and the Dark Ghetto”

## FIRST PAPER DUE

### Section 2: Freedom and Its Limits

#### Week 6: Paternalism

John Stuart Mill *On Liberty* chps 1 and 2

Sarah Conly, precis of *Against Autonomy: Justifying Coercive Paternalism*

The Nirvana Approach to Paternalism:

<http://bleedingheartlibertarians.com/2014/05/the-nirvana-approach-to-paternalism/#comment-1370989493>

Jessica Flanigan, selections from *Seat Belt Mandates and Paternalism*

## **Weeks 7 and 8: Freedom of Speech**

### **Week 7:**

Amendment 1

[https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/first\\_amendment](https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/first_amendment)

[https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/first\\_amendment](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/first_amendment)

Frederick Schauer, “On the Distinction Between Speech and Action”

### **Week 8:**

Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/315/568/case.html>

Brandenberg v. Ohio

[https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/395/444#writing-USSC\\_CR\\_0395\\_0444\\_ZO](https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/395/444#writing-USSC_CR_0395_0444_ZO)

Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/584/16-111/#tab-opinion-3910083>

## **MIDTERM**

## **Section 3: Legal Responsibility and Punishment**

### **Week 9: Causation and Responsibility**

Hart and Honore, selections from *Causation in the Law*

Palsgraff v. Long Island Railroad:

[http://www.courts.state.ny.us/reporter/archives/palsgraf\\_lirr.htm](http://www.courts.state.ny.us/reporter/archives/palsgraf_lirr.htm)

The Insanity Defense, [https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/insanity\\_defense](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/insanity_defense)

### **Week 10: Mitigation and Proportionality**

Jeffrey Toobin, “The Mitigator”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/05/09/the-mitigator>

Coker v. Georgia:

<https://www.oyez.org/cases/1976/75-5444>

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/433/584/>

Lockyer v. Andrade:

<https://www.oyez.org/cases/2002/01-1127>,

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/538/63/>

## **Weeks 11 & 12: The Justification of Punishment**

### **Week 11:**

Gary Watson, “Responsibility and the Limits of Evil”

John Rawls, “Two Concepts of Rules”

### **Week 12:**

Jean Hampton, “The Moral Education Theory of Punishment”

Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, “Criminal Justice and Legal Reparations as an Alternative to Punishment”

Nicola Lacey and Hanna Pickard, “To Blame or to Forgive? Reconciling Punishment and Forgiveness in Criminal Justice”

## **Section 4: Legal Interpretation and Course Wrap-up**

### **Week 13 & 14: Legal Interpretation and Judicial Review**

#### **Week 13:**

Marbury v. Madison:

<https://www.oyez.org/cases/1789-1850/5us137>,

Antonin Scalia on interpreting the Constitution:

[http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/boisi/pdf/Symposia/Symposia\\_2010-2011/Constitutional\\_Interpretation\\_Scalia.pdf](http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/boisi/pdf/Symposia/Symposia_2010-2011/Constitutional_Interpretation_Scalia.pdf)

Erwin Chemerinsky, “A Defense of Judicial Review”

## **SECOND PAPER DUE**

### **Week 14:**

Jeremy Waldron, “Does the Law Promise Justice?”

David Dyzenhaus, “With the Benefit of Hindsight: The Case of Bram Fischer”

Review

## **FINAL EXAM**