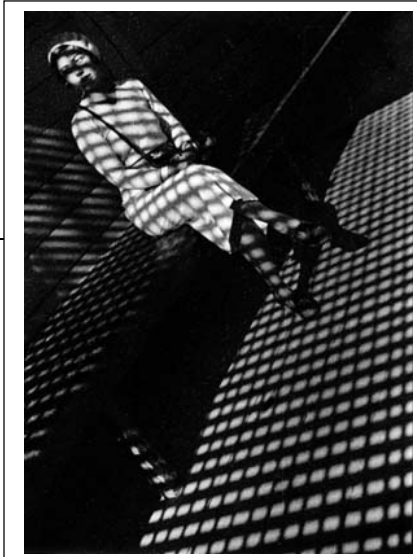


Huron University College

Department of Philosophy

Philosophy 2700G

Introduction to Ethics & Value Theory



Professor: Dr. Steve D'Arcy

Course Time & Location: Tuesdays, 2:30pm to 4:30pm, and
Wednesdays, 2:30pm to 3:30pm (Huron W6)

E-mail Address: sdarcy@huron.uwo.ca

Telephone: (519) 438-7224 ext. 606

Web Site: <http://sdarcy.edublogs.org>

2nd Term Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, from
1:30pm to 2:30pm (Huron, Room A303)

Course Description

“Short then is the time which each of us lives, and small the nook of the earth where we live; and short too the longest posthumous fame, and even this only continued by a succession of poor human beings, who will very soon die, and who know not even themselves, much less those who died long ago” (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Bk III).

Considerations of this kind have led many people to suggest that human life is in some sense “meaningless” or “absurd.” But what does it mean to ask about the “meaning of life”? There is a long tradition of attempts to formulate both the questions about life’s meaning and possible responses to them. This course surveys and explores that tradition, taking into account a variety of sources, from ancient times to the present. In the course of doing so, we students will become familiar with some of the leading perspectives in moral philosophy, including consequentialism, Kantian deontology, and virtue ethics.

Required Readings

- 1. Course Pack for Philosophy 2700G (D’Arcy)**
Available at **InPrint** (downstairs in the UCC; not in the Bookstore)
- 2. *The Noble Quest: Translations from the Pāli Canon***, trans. S. D’Arcy.
<<http://sdarcy.edublogs.org/translations>>
- 3. *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation***, chs. 1-5 (Jeremy Bentham). Follow appropriate link from <<http://sdarcy.edublogs.org/2700G>>

Grade Components

- 1. Mid-Term Test**
Worth 20% of final grade.
Written in class on 29 January 2009
- 2. Major Essay**
Worth 40% of final grade (1,600-2,000 words in length)
Due no later than the beginning of class, 31 March 2009
- 3. Final Examination**
Worth 40% of final grade
Written as scheduled by the Registrar during the April exam period

Prerequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Antirequisite: Philosophy 201f/g

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Absences

For all work in this course, a student who is unable to complete the assigned work for a medical reason must present documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Huron students should take their medical documentation to the Academic Counselor, Academic Services Centre at Huron University College, together with a Request for Relief specifying the nature of the accommodation requested. Documentation for non-Huron students must be submitted as soon as possible to the student's Faculty Dean's office. The request and documentation will be assessed and appropriate accommodation will be determined by the Dean's office in consultation with the instructor.

Academic accommodation will be granted ONLY where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities.

The UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC)

(https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_document.pdf) and Request for Relief

(<http://www.huronuc.ca/pdf/AcademicCounsellingRequestforReliefFormMar08.pdf>) are available at the Student Centre Website (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>), the Huron University College Academic Counseling website

(http://www.huronuc.ca/faculty_arts_social_science/academic_counselling/) or from the Academic Services Centre at Huron.

Policy on Accommodation for Non-Medical Absences

Documentation and a request for relief must be submitted to the Academic Services Centre in advance in order for accommodation for non-medical absences from tests and examinations to be considered.

Technology

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited, to laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on Academic Offences

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words.

Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf> .

Plagiarism is an academic offence and will be treated as such. Students who are in doubt as to the nature of this offence should consult their instructor, Department Chair or the Dean, as well as the *Huron University College Statement on Plagiarism*, available at the reference desk in the HUC Library and at <http://www.huronuc.on.ca/pdf/FASSonPlagiarism.pdf>. In addition, students may seek

guidance from a variety of current style manuals available at the Reference Desk in the HUC Library Information about these resources can be found at:
http://www.huronuc.ca/library/research_guides_and_handouts/.

Plagiarism Detection Software

All required papers (or assignments) may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Support Services

Students in the Department of Philosophy requiring academic counseling concerning courses and modules in Philosophy should see the Chair, Department of Philosophy, Dr. David Conter.

Other academic services such as academic counseling, community-based learning, career development, writing services, cross-cultural services, international opportunities are available through the Academic Services Centre: West Wing, Huron University College, and http://huronuc.ca/faculty_arts_social_science/academic_counselling/.

Course-related Resources

The following web site directs students to resources related to this course:

<http://sdarcy.edublogs.org>

See also the WebCT course site, to which assignments must be submitted:

<http://webct.uwo.ca>

Tentative Schedule of Readings:

6 January: Introduction to the Course

- Reading: Syllabus

PART ONE: What Do We Mean by “the Meaning of Life”?

8 January: Why do people sometimes say that human life is absurd?

- Reading: Thomas Nagel, “The Absurd” (course pack)

13 January: Nagel’s Account of Absurdity

- Reading: Thomas Nagel, “The Absurd” (course pack)

15 January: First-order and Second-order Evaluation

- Reading: Charles Taylor, “Responsibility for Self” (course pack)

20 January: Radical Choice?

- Reading: Charles Taylor, “Responsibility for Self” (course pack)

22 January: Two Models of Ethical Value – Challenge v. Impact

- Reading: Dworkin, “Equality and the Good Life” (course pack)

27 January: transcendent v. indexed; limitations v. parameters

- Reading: Dworkin, “Equality and the Good Life” (course pack)

29 January: TEST

- 50 minutes

PART TWO: What Makes a Life Worthwhile?

Pleasure

3 February: Consequentialism and Hedonism

- Reading: Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Chapters 1-5 (available on course web site)

5 February: Classical Utilitarianism

- *Reading:* Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Chapters 1-5 (available on course web site)

10 February: Mill's Qualitative Utilitarianism

- *Reading:* John Stuart Mill, "What Utilitarianism Is" (Course Pack)

Rational Autonomy

12 February: Autonomy

- *Reading:* Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Bk I. <www.constitution.org/jjr/socon_01.htm> *(just give this a 'quick read')
 - *Reading:* Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of Metaphysics of Morals* (Course Pack)
- ⇒ *Reading Week: February 16-20*

24 February: The Motive of Duty; The Priority of Right

- *Reading:* Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of Metaphysics of Morals* (Course Pack)

26 February: Categorical Imperative – Universal Law

- *Reading:* Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of Metaphysics of Morals* (Course Pack)

3 March: Categorical Imperative – Ends in Themselves

- *Reading:* Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of Metaphysics of Morals* (Course Pack)

Self-Perfection

5 March: Life of the Buddha

- *Reading:* *Translations from the Pāli Canon*

10 March: Suffering and its Causes; the Nibbāna Ideal

- *Reading:* *Translations from the Pāli Canon*

12 March: 'Immeasurable' Compassion and Benevolence [Mettā]

- *Reading:* *Translations from the Pāli Canon*

Self-Invention

17 March: The Death of God

- *Reading:* Friedrich Nietzsche, "Nietzsche Selections" (Course Pack)

19 March: Master and Slave Morality

- *Reading:* Friedrich Nietzsche, "Nietzsche Selections" (Course Pack)

24 March: 'Existence Precedes Essence'

- *Reading:* Simone de Beauvoir, "Introduction" to the *Second Sex* (Course Pack)

26 March: The Absolute Other

- *Reading:* Simone de Beauvoir, "Introduction" to the *Second Sex* (Course Pack)

Self-Realization

31 March: Virtue and 'Eudaimonia'

- *Reading:* Aristotle, from *Nicomachean Ethics* (Course Pack)

2 April: Virtue and the Mean

- *Reading:* Aristotle, from *Nicomachean Ethics* (Course Pack)

7 April: Virtue and Human Nature

- *Reading:* Aristotle, from *Nicomachean Ethics* (Course Pack)