

# Course Information

“Some people would rather die than think. And they do.” – Bertrand Russell

## Description

The course focuses on ethical arguments and how they relate to contemporary issues, including questions about oppression, abortion, and animal rights.

You will learn what many talented and well-respected philosophers have to say about these questions, but the class is designed to get you *doing* philosophy, not just learning about it. I want to get you asking important questions, reasoning clearly and capably, and sharpening your critical thinking skills—developing abilities, in other words, that will make a difference in your life long after specific content details have faded from memory.

This course satisfies a requirement for Warren College. It is in-person only, with no synchronous remote option unless we are directed to do otherwise.

## Contact Information, etc.

**Professor** Mara Harrell

Office: RWAC-Bldg 1, A&H, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, #0462

[mharrell@ucsd.edu](mailto:mharrell@ucsd.edu)

**Student Walk-in Hours**

W 10:00a-12:00p

A&H 0462

TAs	Sections	Email	Student Walk-in Hours
Ahmed Siddiqi	A01 & A02	<a href="mailto:ahsiddiq@ucsd.edu">ahsiddiq@ucsd.edu</a>	M 2-3 in A&H 0429, 3-4 via Zoom ( <a href="https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/5564337548">https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/5564337548</a> )
Moraima Arias Bejarano	A03 & A04	<a href="mailto:moarias@ucsd.edu">moarias@ucsd.edu</a>	TBD
Aaron Chipp-Miller	A05 & A06	<a href="mailto:achippmi@ucsd.edu">achippmi@ucsd.edu</a>	M 12:00p-12:50p & by appointment

## Class Meetings

Lecture	A00	MW	1:00p-1:50p	CENTR 115
Discussion Sections	A01	M	11:00a-11:50a	YORK 4050A
	A02	M	12:00p-12:50p	YORK 4050A
	A03	W	2:00p-2:50p	CENTR 207
	A04	W	3:00p-3:50p	CENTR 207
	A05	M	10:00a-10:50a	CENTR 203
	A06	M	11:00a-11:50a	CENTR 217A

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Distinguish between moral claims and descriptive claims.
- Distinguish between moral arguments and descriptive arguments.
- Recognize moral arguments.
- Represent the structure of moral arguments.
- Evaluate moral arguments.
- Create moral arguments.

## Texts

The required textbook for this course is *Doing Practical Ethics* by Stoner and Swartwood, which is available from the bookstore, and also a part of the Inclusive Access program. All other texts, like the philosophical articles we will read, will be available on the Canvas site for this course.

## Assignments & Grading

There will be five types of assignments in this class: the syllabus quiz, in-class activities, reading quizzes, regular homework assignments, and paper assignments. The quizzes will be delivered through and graded automatically on Canvas, while the

other assignments will be submitted through Canvas and graded by your TAs. The assignments in this course will not be graded in the traditional fashion. Instead, they will all be graded on a “satisfactory/unsatisfactory” basis. The system is called “**specifications grading**.” An assignment is “satisfactory” if it has met all the specifications for that assignment. The specifications for each assignment will be described in more detail in the instructions on Canvas.

Your final grade in this course will then be determined by how many of the assignments you have completed satisfactorily (see below). This means that you can choose what grade you would like to earn in this course and aim toward that grade, as it will depend on the successful completion of various assignments. Rubrics will be available so you can see how each assignment is graded.

#### What counts as “satisfactory” for each assignment?

*In-class Activities:* A question will be posed in each lecture and discussion section that is to be answered at that time via Canvas or another program. This will be marked as satisfactory only if you are in class. **If you are not in class, this assignment cannot be made up.**

*Quizzes:* Answering at least 80% of the questions correctly on a quiz earns a grade of “satisfactory.” There are automatically three chances to get a satisfactory on the quizzes.

*Homework:* Answering at least 80% of the questions correctly on a homework assignment earns a grade of “satisfactory.” The criterion for a correct answer to a homework problem will be explained in the instructions.

*Papers:* A list of specifications the assignment must meet will be given in the instructions for each assignment. Earning a grade of “satisfactory” means that the assignment has met *all* of the specifications.

#### What happens if what I turn in isn’t deemed “satisfactory”?

The point of having a grading system like this is to make the student’s final grade in the course actually indicate the level of mastery of the material the student achieved. In traditional points-based grading, a student can consistently produce sub-standard work and still pass the class, in which case the passing grade does not reflect the fact that the student may not have actually mastered *any* of the material at all.

So, what to do? The answer is to give the students ways not only to master the content but also to demonstrate that mastery. So, for any assignment that is deemed unsatisfactory, the student can **revise and resubmit** it within 48 hours of the posting of the grade (Please make sure you have Canvas set to provide you notifications in a timely manner). On the other hand, the student should have incentives to turn in their best work on the first try. Thus, the opportunities the student has to revise and resubmit are limited to homework and paper assignments and **only if** the original submission is submitted on time. You will have three attempts for the quizzes to earn a “satisfactory” on each.

This leads to TOKENS. You will each begin the quarter with 4 tokens. You may use one or more of them throughout the quarter to **revise & resubmit** a homework or paper assignment that earned an “unsatisfactory” grade (only once per assignment).

#### How do I revise and resubmit an assignment?

Revising and resubmitting an assignment requires (1) notifying your TA that you would like to use one of your tokens, (2) submitting a revision of the assignment based on the feedback given by the TA, and (3) submitting a reflection on the revision (a short description of how you used the formative feedback you received to improve your revision).

#### Will late assignments be accepted?

For the Homeworks and Papers there is a 48-hour grace period to submit the original assignment. This means that, for any of these assignments, you can submit up to 2 days after the stated deadline and still have the assignment graded. However, the **only** assignments a student can revise and resubmit (in the case of earning an “unsatisfactory” grade) are those that the student has submitted **BEFORE** the stated deadline. This means that if you submit your assignment during the grace period, you will **NOT** be able to revise and resubmit if the assignment earns a grade of “unsatisfactory.” Additionally, any assignments submitted after the grace period are automatically “unsatisfactory.”

#### So, what do I have to do to get an A (or B or C) in this class?

As stated above, the grade you earn depends on the number of quizzes, homework, and paper assignments you complete satisfactorily.

The five types of assignments in this course:

- A. Insultingly easy syllabus quiz
- B. In-class activities
- C. Chapter quizzes
- D. Chapter homework
- E. Paper Assignments

Each assignment has its own set of criteria of adequacy, included with the assignment description. The earned grade of “satisfactory” required for each final letter grade:

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<i>A. Insultingly Easy Syllabus Quiz</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>B. In-Class Exercises (out of 26)</i>	22-26	18-21	13-17	9-12
<i>C. Reading Quizzes (out of 12)</i>	10-12	9	8	7
<i>D. Chapter Homework (out of 6)</i>	5-6	4	3	2
<i>E. Paper Assignments (out of 3)</i>	3	2	1	0

For a course grade of “F”, just do less than what’s required for a course grade of “D.”

### Can I only get A, B, C, D, or F? No plusses or minuses?

Actually, you *can* earn a + or - attached to your base grade in the following situations:

You will receive an extra third of a letter grade if you earn a grade of “satisfactory” on at least one of B (in-class activities), C (quizzes), or D (chapter homework) and an extra two-thirds of a letter grade if you earn a grade of “satisfactory” on E (papers) with the percentage that corresponds to a higher grade.

#### Example:

	<b>You complete satisfactorily</b>
<i>A. Insultingly Easy Syllabus Quiz</i>	1
<i>B. In-Class Exercises</i>	13
<i>C. Reading Quizzes</i>	8
<i>D. Chapter Homework</i>	3
<i>E. Paper Assignments</i>	1

- In this case, you start with a “C” (the level for which you have completed *all* the requirements)
- You then add 1/3 of a letter grade because you did more than the required number for C
- You earn a “C+” in the class

#### Example:

	<b>You complete satisfactorily</b>
<i>A. Insultingly Easy Syllabus Quiz</i>	1
<i>B. In-Class Exercises</i>	18
<i>C. Reading Quizzes</i>	9
<i>D. Chapter Homework</i>	4
<i>E. Paper Assignments</i>	3

- In this case, you start with a “B” (the level for which you have completed *all* the requirements)
- You then add 2/3 of a letter grade because you did more than the required number for E
- You earn an “A-” in the class

*Note: An A and an A+ both = 4.0 in your GPA calculation, however, if you exceed all the requirements to earn an “A” in the class, then your course grade will be “A+”.*

### How can I keep track of my grade in this course?

Find the grade listed above for which you met all of the listed requirements, then add a + for any group of assignments you have done more than what’s required for that grade. That will be your course grade! You can track your progress by determining what percentage of the quizzes, the homeworks, and the papers you have completed.

IMPORTANT! Please note that although Canvas will display the grades that you have earned on each assignment, the score in the “Total” column in the gradebook has **no meaning** and does **NOT** correspond to your grade in the class.

## Attendance

Students who do not come to class tend to do poorly, so I am requiring attendance in lectures and discussion sections. There are many reasons why students who come to class tend to do better. First, the text and articles we are using were not written by me. In lecture and discussion, we (the TAs and I) will explain things a little bit differently, so the best option is to use the text *and* come to class. Going through the same ideas more than once is good, especially if they are from different perspectives. Second, you can’t have your questions answered while you are reading the text or watching a recording. In lecture, you can have your questions answered in real-time, and we can offer several alternative explanations if one isn’t sufficient. Finally, both the verbal and non-verbal feedback I get from students in class help me determine whether I am going too fast or if students are confused. The same is true for the discussion sections, where you will get still another point of view.

We will record attendance using the In-class Exercises mentioned above. This will be done in the lecture using classquestion.com. With this free online tool, I can pose questions during lectures that the students can answer using their laptops, tablets, or phones. This will be done in the discussion sections via a method determined by your TA.

## General Information

### Waitlist

Students will be admitted to this class according to their place on the waitlist.

### Professor Harrell's Student Walk-in Hours

If you cannot make it to the scheduled walk-in hours, please contact me to make an appointment. Also, whenever I am in my office with the door open, you are welcome to stop in.

I encourage you to use the student walk-in hours as an opportunity to clarify points you don't understand, get additional readings, talk about the subject matter in relation to your own interests, go over work in progress, or address problems you may be having in the course.

Visit early and often. Email is the most reliable way to contact me.

### Emailing Professor Harrell

I am happy to reply to emails sent from UCSD email addresses. Replies can be expected within 24-48 hours. In order to ensure that I do not miss your email, you should put "Phil 27" and which section you are enrolled in (A01, A02, etc.) in the subject line.

Please note that I do not reply to emails from non-UCSD addresses, and there are two subjects I do not discuss by email, even if they are sent from a UCSD account. These are:

- a) Requests for information about an assignment due during exam week that arrive in the 24-hour period immediately preceding the assignment deadline.
- b) Requests to adjust your final class grade. If you have an issue with your grade, please make an appointment to discuss it during my student walk-in hours next quarter.

## FAQ

### What should I call you?

Please refer to me as either Professor Harrell or Dr. Harrell.

### How much time will I need to devote to this course?

Phil 27 is a 4-unit course, and it will meet for approximately 3 instructional hours per week for 10 weeks. The general guideline for such a course is that you spend 3 hours on course-related work outside of class for every 1 hour you spend in class. That's an expected average, not a requirement. However, the course materials (and assignments) might require more time than you expect, so "budgeting" about 9 hours per week for this course should give you plenty of time.

### What should I do during our class meetings?

1. You should arrive at class sessions on time, stay for the required components of each class session, and constructively participate in all class activities.
2. During the class meetings, you should be focused on class, doing your best to avoid doing or interacting with things that will distract you, your classmates, or me.
3. DO NOT make any audio or visual recordings of any part of the class session unless you and I have specifically discussed doing so as one of your documented accommodations for ADA purposes. Doing otherwise undermines the ability to maintain your classmates' trust, violates your classmates' legitimate privacy expectations, and could lead to their feeling (or even being) unsafe. Unless your classmates and I have explicitly said otherwise, you DO NOT have permission to take a photo or screen capture, live stream a small-group discussion, or record any part of a class meeting.
4. You should treat everyone in the class with at least as much patience, respect, kindness, and consideration as you expect from the rest of us.

The listed items above apply to all our class meetings, whether in-person or online. These are not the only expectations, but they are some of the most important ones for helping to foster and maintain a culture of respect and engagement.

## Cell Phones, Laptops, and Other Related Technologies

How students interact with portable technology devices can very much harm the dynamics of the classroom. Studies have shown that it is not only students that use these devices who suffer, but also the students around them. Therefore, I expect you

to **turn off your cell phone** before coming to class. There is to be no text messaging, checking email or otherwise “playing” with electronics during class.

### Religious Observance

If you have a conflict between a religious holiday and a graded assignment, please contact one of us in advance so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

### Accommodation for Disability

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please arrange to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. Contact the OSD for further information: 858.534.4382 (phone), [osd@ucsd.edu](mailto:osd@ucsd.edu) (email), [disabilities.ucsd.edu](http://disabilities.ucsd.edu) (web)

### Health and Well-being

Take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this quarter by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. If there are issues related to coursework that are a source of particular stress or challenge, please speak with me, so that I am able to support you. UC San Diego provides several resources to all enrolled students, including:

Counseling and Psychological Services (858-534-3755 | [caps.ucsd.edu](http://caps.ucsd.edu))

Student Health Services (858-534-3300 | [studenthealth.ucsd.edu](http://studenthealth.ucsd.edu))

CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center (858-534-5793 | [care.ucsd.edu](http://care.ucsd.edu))

The Hub Basic Needs Center (858-246-2632 | [basicneeds.ucsd.edu](http://basicneeds.ucsd.edu))

### Help with Assignments

In addition to Professor Harrell and the TAs for this course, there are services on campus to help students with coursework.

Office of Academic Support & Instructional Services (OASIS): OASIS offers free, one-on-one tutoring for students (<http://oasis.ucsd.edu>). Tutoring services are designed to guide students to the point at which they become independent learners, no longer needing a tutor.

Teaching + Learning Commons: The Teaching + Learning Commons offers a range of services that will benefit you in this class and others. Their free services include one-on-one and group consultations for written assignments and oral presentations, content tutoring, or understanding various learning strategies. You can drop by in person on the lower level of Geisel Library or make an appointment online at <http://commons.ucsd.edu>.

### Academic Integrity

The integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and, in so doing, protect the validity of intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. More information about UCSD's policy on academic integrity is available at <http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/appendices/2>

Representing other people's ideas as though they were your own is plagiarism and a violation of academic integrity. I have a zero-tolerance policy about plagiarism. Plagiarism is not restricted to verbatim copying of other people's words. You should cite anything that (a) you got from someone else and (b) a reasonable person would not know beforehand. You should cite any ideas and quotes from other people for proper citation. (Your choice about citation format, but please be consistent.)

I realize that the vast majority of you will never consider cheating. However, a few of you may (for a variety of reasons) be tempted to plagiarize others' work. **Do not take chances with plagiarism:** if you are uncertain whether you are doing something unacceptable, please just ask. I am happy to answer questions about whether something constitutes plagiarism. And if you are ever tempted to present someone else's ideas as your own, please talk to one of us so that we can address the underlying challenges pushing you to that point.

## Academic Integrity Policy: Use of AI Tools in Coursework

Academic integrity is fundamental to ensuring a fair and enriching learning environment for all students in this course. You are expected to produce original work that reflects your own understanding, critical thinking, and analysis of course material. This policy outlines how AI tools, such as ChatGPT, can and cannot be used in this course, ensuring that their use aligns with the values of academic honesty and intellectual growth.

### General Principles:

1. **Originality of Work:** All submitted work must be your own. While peer collaboration is encouraged in certain activities, assignments requiring individual submission should reflect your ideas, research, and critical thinking. Using AI tools in a way that replaces or undermines your intellectual contribution violates this principle.
2. **Transparency:** If you use AI tools like ChatGPT to generate ideas and clarify concepts or as part of your research process, you must disclose this in your assignment. Transparency about the use of these tools helps maintain academic integrity.

### Permissible Use of AI Tools:

You may use AI tools like ChatGPT in the following ways, provided you adhere to the guidelines below:

- **Idea Generation and Clarification:** You may use AI tools to help brainstorm ideas, clarify complex concepts, or explore potential approaches to your assignments. However, you must critically analyze and refine these ideas. The final product should represent your thoughts and argumentation.
- **Proofreading and Language Assistance:** You may use AI tools to assist with grammar, syntax, and writing mechanics as long as the content of the work remains your own. However, you are responsible for ensuring that the meaning and arguments remain accurate and reflect your intentions.
- **Technical or Factual Inquiries:** You may use AI to look up factual information, such as definitions or explanations of technical concepts. You are responsible for verifying the accuracy of any information provided by AI and citing your sources appropriately if used in your assignments.

### Prohibited Use of AI Tools:

The following uses of AI tools are considered violations of academic integrity and are strictly prohibited:

- **Generating Complete Assignments:** You may not use AI tools to generate entire essays, reports, or other assignments. This includes any submission where AI-generated text forms most of the content, even if you edited or modified it.
- **Copying AI-Generated Content without Attribution:** Submitting AI-generated content as your own without acknowledging that you used an AI tool is considered plagiarism. Any content generated by AI tools you incorporate into your work must be cited as a source, just like any other reference material.
- **Automating Responses for Class Participation:** If class participation (e.g., discussion boards and in-class activities) is part of your grade, you are expected to contribute based on your ideas and knowledge. Using AI to generate responses for these activities is not permitted.

### Guidelines for Citing AI Tools:

If you use an AI tool in your research or writing process, you must include a brief note in your bibliography or the body of your text, such as:

- “I used <LLM> for idea generation for this assignment, but the final analysis and writing are my own.”
- “I used <LLM> to clarify concepts related to the material, though all arguments and conclusions are original to me.”
- “I used <LLM> to check for spelling and grammar mistakes, but the ideas and writing are my own.”

### Encouraging Ethical Use of AI:

This course encourages the responsible and ethical use of AI tools. These tools can help expand understanding and facilitate learning, but they should be used as supplements to, not replacements for, your own intellectual work. Always approach AI tools critically and remember that this course aims to develop your ability to engage with technology and human values from a position of informed analysis.

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### Additional Best Practices:

- **Engage Critically:** If you use AI tools, treat the content they produce critically, recognizing that these tools can generate both accurate and inaccurate information. Always verify facts and consider the ethical implications of the tool's use.
- **Seek Guidance:** Before submitting your work, ask me for guidance if you're unsure whether your use of AI meets the course's academic integrity standards.

# Course Schedule

**Texts:** Stoner & Swartman *Doing Practical Ethics* (Available through the bookstore); Additional readings (marked with (C)) will be posted on Canvas.

Week		Reading to do before class	Assignment Due
1	M 3/31	Introduction	
1	W 4/2	Cultural Relativism: Read Rachels (C)	Quiz #1 on Rachels due before class
2	M 4/7	Chapter 1: Recognizing Moral Arguments	Insultingly Easy Syllabus Quiz
2	W 4/9	Chapter 2: Generating Illustrative Examples	
3	M 4/14	Chapter 3: Generating Counterexamples	Quiz #2 & Quiz #3 on Chapter 1
3	W 4/16	Chapter 4: Representing Arguments	HW #1 on Chapter 2
4	M 4/21	It's Not My Fault: Read Sinnott-Armstrong (C)	Quiz #4 on Sinnott-Armstrong due before class HW #2 on Chapter 3
4	W 4/23	Chapter 5: Analyzing Arguments from Principle	HW #3 on Chapter 4
5	M 4/28	Chapter 6: Evaluating Arguments from Principle	
5	W 4/30	Chapter 7: Developing an Argument from Principle	Quiz #5 & Quiz #6 on Chapter 5
6	M 5/5	A Defense of Abortion: Read Thomson (C)	Quiz #7 on Thomson due before class HW #4 on Chapter 6
6	W 5/7	Chapter 8: Analyzing Arguments from Analogy	Paper #1
7	M 5/12	Chapter 9: Evaluating Arguments from Analogy	
7	W 5/14	Chapter 10: Developing an Argument from Analogy	Quiz # 8 & Quiz #9 on Chapter 8
8	M 5/19	Licensing Parents: Read: LaFollette (C)	Quiz #10 on LaFollette due before class HW #5 on Chapter 9
8	W 5/21	Chapter 11: Analyzing Inference to the Best Explanation	Paper #2
9	M 5/26	<b>No Class</b>	
9	W 5/28	Chapter 12: Evaluating Inference to the Best Explanation	Quiz #11 & Quiz #12 on Chapter 11
10	M 6/2	Chapter 13: Developing an Original Inference to the Best Explanation	
10	W 6/4	Wrap Up	HW #6 on Chapter 12
	W 6/11		Paper #3