

Phil 162 Contemporary Moral Issues

Syllabus
Spring 2025
MWF 10:00-10:50 am
Mandeville Center Room B104
My office: RWAC 0491
Zoom Meeting Room:

Andy Lamey
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(858) 534-9111 (no voicemail)
Office Hours:
Tues 4-5 pm (Zoom) Fri 10:45-11:45 am (in person)
<https://ucsd.zoom.us/my/lameymeetingroom>

The best way to contact me is in person or by email (I don't check Canvas messenger).

1. Overview

This class examines issues related to free expression. Recent years have seen controversy over whether we should still engage the works of artists who are guilty of serious crimes; whether it is appropriate for a white author to write about indigenous characters; and what norms, if any, should apply to stand-up comedy. We will examine these and other issues at the intersection of expression and morality, including the ethics of swearing. The class assumes no background in philosophy and all students who put in the necessary work can do well.

2. Assessment

A 1,500-word essay due at 5:00 pm Tuesday April 22 (25%)

A 2,000-word essay due at 5:00 pm Tuesday May 20 (30%)

An in-person exam on Wednesday June 11 (25%)

In-class Participation (10%)

In-class quizzes (10%)

Please note that there is a strong penalty for using ChatGPT to create or partially create written work for this class.

3. Readings and Schedule

All of the short readings will be on Canvas. The three assigned books, by Young, Matthes and Roache, are in stock and available for purchase or rent at the bookstore. They are also available as electronic texts through the library. Note that it will help your class participation, and so your grade, if you are able to access print or electronic copies of assigned texts during class.

Week One March 31-April 4.

Monday: No Reading.

Wednesday: Simeon Goldstraw (2023). 'It was just a joke!' Comedy and freedom of speech. *European Journal of Political Theory*: 1-22.

Friday: James Young, *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts* (Blackwell: Oxford, 2010), Chapter Two.

Week Two April 7-11.

Monday: Robert Mark Simpson (2018). Regulating Offense, Nurturing Offense. *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 17/3: 235-256.

Wednesday: Young, *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts*, Chapter Three.

Friday: No reading.

Week Three April 14-18.

Monday: Tosi, Justin, and Brandon Warmke. Moral Grandstanding. *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 44/3 (2016): 197-217.

Also Monday: Justin Tosi and Brandon Warmke. Moral Grandstanding as a Threat to Free Expression. *Social Philosophy and Policy* 37/2 (2020): 170-189.

Students only need to read pages 180-89 of the second Tosi and Warmke reading.

Wednesday: Erich Hatala Matthes, *Drawing the Line: What to Do With the Work of Immoral Artists from Museums to the Movies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), Chapter One.

Friday: no reading.

Week Four April 21-5.

Monday: No reading: first essay questions and review.

First Essay Due Tuesday April 22nd 5:00 pm.

Wednesday: Matthes, *Drawing the Line*, Chapter Two.

Friday: Matthes, *Drawing the Line*, Chapter Three.

Week Five April 28-May 2.

Monday: Monday: Matthes, *Drawing the Line*, Chapter Four.

Wednesday: *Manhattan* (1979), dir. Woody Allen.

Friday: *Manhattan*, cont.

Week Six May 5-9.

Monday: Guest lecture: Prof. Steven Adler, UCSD Theatre and Dance, emeritus.

Wednesday: No reading.

Friday: Young, *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts*, Chapter Four.

Week Seven May 12-16.

Monday: Young, *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts*, Chapter Five.

Wednesday: Connor Kianpour, Strong Comic Immoralism. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* XX (2023): 1-15.

Friday: Rebecca Roache, *For F*cks Sake: Why Swearing is Shocking, Rude and Fun* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), Chapters 3-5: 48-95.

Week Eight May 19-23.

Monday: Roache, *For F*cks Sake*, Chapters 6-9: 96-136.

Wednesday: Roache, *For F*cks Sake*, Chapters 10-12: 137-180.

Second Essay Due Tuesday May 20th 5:00 pm.

Friday: No reading.

Week Nine May 26-30.

Monday: No class (Memorial Day).

Wednesday: Roache, *For F*cks Sake*, Chapters 14-conclusion: 195-228.

Friday: Randall Kennedy and Eugene Volokh. The New Taboo: Quoting Epithets in the Classroom and Beyond. *Capital University Law Review* 49 / 1 (2021), 1-65.

Half of Kennedy and Volokh is taken up by footnotes. Students only have to read the main text.

Week Ten June 2-6.

Monday: C. Thi Nguyen and Strohl, M. Cultural Appropriation and the Intimacy of Groups. *Philosophical Studies* 176 (2019): 981–1002.

Wednesday: Monday: Rebecca Tuvel, Putting the Appropriator Back in Cultural Appropriation, *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 61 / 3 (2021): 353-372.

Friday: No reading. Exam review.

In-person exam Wednesday June 11.

4. General Information

Office Hours

I am happy to meet with students during my office hours. Just drop in, you don't need an appointment. I am also available by appointment outside of those times. I am always happy to discuss any aspect of this course with you.

Email Policy

I am happy to reply to emails sent from UCSD email addresses. I do not reply to emails from non-UCSD addresses. Please note that 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 exam or assignment due during exam week that arrive in the 24-hour period immediately preceding the exam or assignment deadline.
- b) Requests to discuss or adjust your final class grade. If you have an issue with your grade please make an appointment to discuss it during my office hour next quarter. If you are graduating let me know and we will make alternative arrangements.

One-time Discretionary Extension

I am happy to grant each student one essay extension of up to 48 hours without requiring medical or other documentation. In order to grant such an extension I need to receive your request before noon (San Diego time) on the day the essay in question is due. Email is fine, but please note that UCSD's email servers sometimes go down, and students are advised not to leave their requests to the last minute. Requests received after noon on the due date will require documentation, as will requests for extensions longer than 48 hours. Please note that if you receive an extension your paper may be returned 48 hours after those that were completed on time.

Note that each student is entitled to only one discretionary essay extension. So if you receive one for your first essay, any extension for the second essay will require documentation.

Late Essays

For all essays handed in after the due date and without an extension, a five percent penalty applies for the first day of the missed deadline. After that, a subsequent penalty of two percent per day will be applied for the next thirteen calendar days after the due date (including Saturdays and Sundays). No assignment can be accepted after more than fourteen calendar days except in exceptional circumstances and in consultation with your professor. Assignments that are handed in late without an extension will be graded and returned after those that were completed on time and will not receive comments.

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 located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements 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 (email), disabilities.ucsd.edu (web)

Academic Integrity

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 University 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 <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/process/policy.html>

If you've read this far in the syllabus you deserve a reward. Here it is: when submitting the first or second essay, you can have a free 24-hour extension simply by inserting the phrase "low-key Easter egg" in the coversheet. This can be used by itself or with the discretionary 48-hour extension, creating the possibility of a 72-hour extension. Note however that if you communicate electronically with your professor about the Easter egg at any time (e.g. by email, canvas message or the chat feature on Zoom), the Easter egg will cease to be in effect. It is fine to speak to me about it in person or on Zoom.

Health and Well-being

During your time at UCSD, you may experience a range of issues that can negatively impact your learning. These may include physical illness, housing or food insecurity, strained relationships, loss of motivation, depression, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol and drug problems, feeling down, interpersonal or sexual violence, or grief.

These concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and affect your ability to participate in day-to-day activities. If there are issues related to coursework that are a source of particular stress or challenge, please speak with me, Professor's Lamey, so that I am able to support you. UC San Diego provides a number of resources to all enrolled students, including:

Counselling and Psychological Services (858-534-3755 | caps.ucsd.edu)
Student Health Services (858-534-3300 | studenthealth.ucsd.edu)
CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center (858-534-5793 | care.ucsd.edu)
The Hub Basic Needs Center (858-246-2632 | basicneeds.ucsd.edu)

We care about you at UC San Diego, and there is always help available.