

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen Organisation page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM

Dr Stephan Torre (Course Coordinator)

Office: CB501 College Bounds

Email: stephan.torre@abdn.ac.uk

Tel: 01224 272769

Dr Ulrich Stegmann

Office: CB504 College Bounds

Email: u.stegmann@abdn.ac.uk

Tel: 01224 273679

Dr Paula Sweeney

Office: CB104, 50-52 College Bounds

Email: p.sweeney@abdn.ac.uk

Tel: 01224 272357

Discipline Administration:

Mr Warwick Brown
50-52 College Bounds
Room CB001
01224 272366
philosophy@abdn.ac.uk

Students are asked to make themselves familiar with the information on key institutional policies which been made available within MyAberdeen (<https://abdn.blackboard.com/bbcswebdav/institution/Policies>). These policies are relevant to all students and will be useful to you throughout your studies. They contain important information and address issues such as what to do if you are absent, how to raise an appeal or a complaint and how seriously the University takes your feedback.

These institutional policies should be read in conjunction with this course guide, in which School specific policies are detailed. Further information can be found on the [University's Infohub webpage](#) or by visiting the Infohub.

TIMETABLE

Please see your Student Portal or MyTimetable for the class timetable.

Students can view their university timetable at

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will be examining a wide-ranging series of controversial questions:

- Is being a good or a bad person a matter of luck? And if being bad is just a matter of (bad) luck, are we justified in punishing bad people?
- Is science objective?
- Do we have immaterial souls?
- Do we live in a post-truth world? What does that even mean?
- Should we be able to modify the genes of our offspring in order to avoid the transmission of genetic disease? Should we be able to modify genes responsible for

appearance, intelligence or athletic ability?

- Do you have a moral obligation to help those who are worse-off than you, even if this means donating a lot—or even most—of your money to charity?

-Is euthanasia morally wrong or should it be permitted?

- Do animals have rights? If so, is eating animals immoral? And can we ever be justified in using them for experiments?

- What makes a sexual preference or act perverted?

INTENDED AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will acquire knowledge of central debates in contemporary philosophy and of key philosophical questions about animal rights, the objectivity of science, the immortality of the soul, euthanasia, immigration, moral luck and other controversial topics. Students will understand the main ideas in each of these debates and will be able to explain differences between various positions in these debates. Students will critically engage with primary texts and will articulate the results of their learning clearly and systematically in written form and in discussion.

LECTURE/SEMINAR PROGRAMME

There will be two lectures per week and, beginning from Week 2, one tutorial per week. It is your responsibility to sign up to one of the available tutorial slots. Once you have chosen your slot, please attend only the tutorial in that slot: not attending your chosen tutorial can create difficulties for your lecturers and fellow students. Here is a schedule of lectures (subject to change)

Week 1	10 Sep 2018 - 14 Sep 2018	Is it morally wrong to eat meat? Reading: Singer, P. (1976) "Chapter 1: All Animals are Equal" in his <i>Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for our Treatment of Animals</i> , New York: New York review/Random House.
Week 2	17 Sep 2018 - 21 Sep 2018	Should Animal Experimentation be Permitted?

		Reading: Tom Regan, “Empty Cages: Animal Rights and Vivisection”, <i>The Ethics of Animal Research: Exploring the Controversy</i> , Jeremy Garrett, ed. MIT Press, 2012.
Week 3	24 Sep 2018 - 28 Sep 2018	Do we live in a post-truth world? * Julian Baggini (2017): “Is this really a post-truth world?”, <i>The Guardian</i> , 17 September 2017 https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/sep/17/is-this-really-a-post-truth-world * Paul Feyerabend (1975): <i>Against Method</i> . London: NLB. [chapter 1]. Optional: Maria Baghramian (2008): “Relativism about science”. In S. Psillos and M. Curd (eds.): <i>The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Science</i> , p. 236-247 (ch. 22).
Week 4	01 Oct 2018- 05 Oct 2018	Do we have immaterial souls? * Richard Taylor (1992): <i>Metaphysics</i> . 4th edition. Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ. [pp. 10-15 and 33-34 (page numbers in other editions may be different!)]. Optional: John Heil (2004): <i>Philosophy of Mind – A Contemporary Introduction</i> . Routledge: New York. 2nd edition. [ch. 2 “Cartesian Dualism”].
Week 5	08 Oct 2018- 12 Oct 2018	Do animals have feelings? * Michael Tye (2018): “Do fish have feelings?” In K. Andrews and J Beck (eds.): <i>The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Animal Minds</i> , p. 169-174 (ch. 15). Optional: Robert Lurz “Animal Minds”. <i>Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> . http://www.iep.utm.edu/ani-mind/
Week 6	15 Oct 2018 - 19 Oct 2018	What do we owe to those in extreme poverty? Reading: Singer, P. (1972). 'Famine, Affluence and Morality' <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> 1(3): 229-243.
Week 7	22 Oct 2018 - 26 Oct 2018	Should we be permitted to affect the genetic make-up of our offspring?

		Reading: Savulescu J and Kahane G. “The moral obligation to create children with the best chance of the best life”. <i>Bioethics</i> . 2009 Jun;23(5):274-90.
Week 8	29 Oct 2018 - 02 Nov 2018	Is euthanasia morally permissible? Reading: Rachels, J. (1975) ‘Active and Passive Euthanasia’, reprinted in Singer, P . (ed.) (1986), <i>Applied Ethics</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Week 9	05 Nov 2018 - 09 Nov 2018	Is being a good/bad person a matter of luck? Reading: Thomas Nagel, “Moral Luck” <i>Mortal Questions</i> , Cambridge University Press, 1979. Video: Kumar, V. ‘The Problem of Moral Luck’, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvqJ-s26ol4
Week 10	12 Nov 2018 -16 Nov 2018	Are We Implicitly Biased against other genders or ethnic groups?
Week 11	19 Nov 2018 - 23 Nov 2018	Controversial Questions in Philosophy

ASSESSMENT

1st Attempt: One 1000-word essay (50%) and one take-home exam (50%).

Resit: One 1500-word essay (100%). In line with School Policy, failure to submit a component piece of assessed work, or submitting a token piece, will result in the withdrawal of the class certificate (students are not eligible for resit).

To view the CGS Descriptors please go to **MyAberdeen- Organisations-Divinity, History, & Philosophy Student Information for Undergraduates**. The link to the CGS Descriptors is on the left hand menu.

PLEASE NOTE: In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a Common Grading Scale (CGS) mark of at least E3 on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CGS E1 for the course as a whole.

If you submit your work on time, you can expect that feedback will **normally be provided within three working weeks** (excluding vacation periods) of the submission deadline.

ESSAYS

Your essay should be 1000 words long plus or minus 10% (i.e. strictly between 900 and 1100 words), including quotations and footnotes but not including bibliography. You will be penalised for work whose word count falls outside of this range. Essays are due by 3pm on Friday October 19th. Extensions will be granted on medical grounds only and proof of grounds will be required. To ask for an extension, please contact Dr Torre before the essay deadline. **Barring extraordinary circumstances, no extensions will be given if you ask after the deadline.** Please note that late submission will be penalized in accord with the rules set out in the Undergraduate Handbook.

Essay topics will be provided in due course and will be available on the MyAberdeen pages of the course.

ASSESSMENT DEADLINES

The deadline for the essay is 3pm on Friday 19th October.

The deadline for the take-home exam is to be determined. You will be notified of the take-home deadline in lecture and via MyAberdeen.

SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Submit a .doc or .docx file and include the word count.

Submit by the due date through [MyAberdeen](#). No hard copy will be required unless directly requested by the course coordinator.

In advance of uploading, please save the assignment with your student id number listed in the filename, i.e. 59999999 PHxxxx Essay 1.

When asked to enter a title for the assignment, please enter a title identical to the name of your saved assignment, i.e. 59999999 PHxxxx Essay 1. To help us comply with our anonymous marking policy, please remove any immediately identifying information (e.g. your name) from your work.

Please note: failure to submit by the due date (unless a prior arrangement has been made) will result in a deduction of marks. Where no submission is received, this will result in a mark of zero.

Please note: *Safeassign* text matching software will be used, however the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy reserves the right to also submit material to *TurnitinUK* when deemed necessary.

EXAMINATION

This course has a take-home exam (50%) that will require short essay responses to two questions. Further details about the take-home exam will be made available in lecture and through MyAberdeen.

Past exam papers can be viewed at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/learning-and-teaching/for-students/exam-papers/>.