

## ETHICS AND SOCIETY

PROFESSOR: Dr. Blake Hereth (“Dr. H”)

PRONOUNS: they/them

EMAIL: [blake.hereth@txstate.edu](mailto:blake.hereth@txstate.edu)

OFFICE: Comal Building (CMAL) 1XX

CLASS MEETINGS: MWF 12-1pm in Classroom Hall 202

STUDENT HOURS: TTh 12-1pm and by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

“If we are to *live* together and not *die* together, we must learn a kind of charity and a kind of tolerance which is absolutely vital to the continuation of human life on this planet.” So said the great British philosopher Bertrand Russell in 1959. His words were prescient: We now face immense global crises like human-caused climate change, global poverty and income inequality, a refugee crisis in Ukraine, and deep political discord with our closest family, friends, and neighbors. Together, we will examine these and other ethical issues that dominate current social discussion. This course is writing-intensive, meaning you will be expected to write for course credit.

### COURSE GOALS:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify and explain major views in applied ethics and social philosophy and their proponents
- Speak and write intelligently about major issues addressed in the course, the history of those ideas, and their contemporary importance
- Ask critical questions each week that closely engage the assigned readings
- Work with their groups to design a new and original constitution
- Develop original, philosophically creative arguments about applied ethics and social philosophy

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- **Critical Reading Questions (20%):** All students should prepare a critical question for each reading/video/podcast. Each class, I will call upon several random students to share their critical questions for that day’s reading with the rest of the class. Each critical question should be substantive and reflect strong familiarity with the reading and will serve as a starting point for class discussions. If you are called on and *don’t* have a substantive critical reading question, you won’t receive credit for that day. If you are called on and *do* have a substantive critical reading question, you will receive full credit for that day. If you *aren’t* called on, you must submit your question by the end of that day via Blackboard.

- **Humility Journal (15%)**: Cultivating epistemic humility is important, especially in college (and *especially* especially in philosophy). Each week, students will write in class about something they learned about applied ethics or social philosophy that was epistemically humbling for them. That doesn't necessarily mean 'embarrassed'. Rather, it means that the student has made an *important realization* that has changed their way of thinking about ethical principles, including (possibly) about their own. Your final entry should reflect on the trajectory of your humility progress throughout the course. The entire journal portfolio is due Monday, May 3rd, at 5pm via Blackboard.
- **Social Contract Group Project (20%)**: Most of us abide by an implicit, and sometimes explicit, social contract: don't steal, don't murder, help others in need, care for your children, etc. But the ethical issues discussed in this course complicate simple obedience to the social contract. In groups of 3-5, students will develop a *new* social contract for society that addresses one major course topic. Each group's social contract should answer four basic questions in detail: (1) What are the most basic rules of the existing social contract? (2) How does the issue you're addressing complicate simple obedience to the existing rules? That is, why do the existing rules not 'cover' or 'answer' the moral question your group is addressing? (3) How can the social contract be amended to satisfactorily govern all members of society regardless of race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, political affiliation, etc.? (4) Once the social contract is amended, how can it be permissibly enforced? The polished social contract is due Wednesday, May 5th, at 5pm via Blackboard.
- **Draft Paper (15%)**: Each student should write a 3,000-word draft paper (exclusive of notes and bibliography) where they make an original, creative argument on a relevant course topic. (See the Blackboard rubric for further details.) The Draft Paper is due Wednesday, March 23, at 5pm on Blackboard.
- **Final Paper (30%)**: Each student should write a 4,000-word paper (exclusive of notes and bibliography) in which they revise their Draft Paper in light of my feedback. The idea is to polish, and add to, the Draft Paper. The Final Paper is due Friday, May 7th, at 5pm on Blackboard.

### **GRADING SCALE:**

I use a standard grading scale for this course:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89.99%
- C = 70-79.99%
- D = 60-69.99%
- F = 59.99 or below

### **TEXTBOOK(S):**

- Jessica Flanigan and Lori Watson, *Debating Sex Work* (Oxford University Press, 2019)
- Daniel Groll, *Conceiving People: Genetic Knowledge and the Ethics of Sperm and Egg Donation* (Oxford University Press, 2021)

### **SCHEDULE:**

WEEK 1 (JAN 11, 13, 15): COURSE INTRODUCTION & THE UKRAINE CRISIS

Readings:

- Syllabus
- Serena Parekh, “On Refugees” (*UnMute Podcast*)
- Michelle Panchuk, “Ukraine, Russia, and Philosophy” (*YouTube*)

WEEK 2 (JAN 18, 20, 22): TAINTED MONUMENTS

Readings:

- Michelle Moody-Adams, “On Monuments and Memorials” (*UnMute Podcast*)
- Ten-Herng Lai, “Political Vandalism as Counter-Speech: A Defense of Defacing and Destroying Tainted Monuments” (Blackboard)
- Dan Demetriou, “Ashes of Our Fathers: Racist Monuments and the Tribal Right” (Blackboard)

WEEK 3 (JAN 25, 27, 29): SPORTS

Readings:

- Veronica Ivy and Aryn Conrad, “Including Trans Women Athletes in Competitive Sport” (Blackboard)
- Jonathan Pugh and Christopher Pugh, “Neurostimulation, Doping, and the Spirit of Sport” (Blackboard)
- Phillip Zema, “Should Student-Athletes Be Paid?” (Blackboard)

WEEK 4 (FEB 1, 3, 5): CLIMATE CHANGE

Readings:

- Kyle Whyte, “On Indigenous Resilience and Environmental Change” (*UnMute Podcast*)
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, “It’s Not My Fault: Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations” (Blackboard)
- Cheryl Cox Macpherson, “Climate Change is a Bioethics Problem” (Blackboard)

WEEK 5 (FEB 8, 10, 12): SEX WORK

Readings:

- Lori Watson, “A Sex Equality Approach to Prostitution,” chapters 2-3 (*Debating Sex Work*)

WEEK 6 (FEB 15, 17, 19): SEX WORK

Readings:

- Jessica Flanigan, “In Defense of Decriminalization,” chapter 4 (*Debating Sex Work*)

WEEK 7 (FEB 22, 24, 26): THE SCOPE OF LIBERTY

Readings:

- John Corvino, “Religious Belief, Discrimination, and the Law” (Blackboard)
- Ryan T. Anderson and Sherif Girgis, “Pluralism, Fairness, and Debates About Discrimination” (Blackboard)

WEEK 8 (MAR 1, 3, 5): GLOBAL JUSTICE

Readings:

- Edwin Etieyibo, “Political Reparationists and the Moral Case for Reparations to Africa for Colonialism” (Blackboard)
- Nicole Hassoun, “The Case for Foreign Aid” (Blackboard)

- Jason Brennan, “International Aid” (Blackboard)

WEEK 9 (MAR 8, 10, 12): BLACK LIVES MATTER

Readings:

- Ashley Atkins, “Black Lives Matter or All Lives Matter? Color-Blindness and Epistemic Injustice”
- Nora Berenstain, “‘Civility’ and the Civilizing Project”

WEEK 10 (MAR 15, 17, 19): ANIMALS

Readings:

- Bob Fischer and Burkay Ozturk, “Facsimiles of Flesh” (Blackboard)
- Hilary Bok, “Keeping Pets” (Blackboard)
- Deborah Slicer, “Your Daughter or Your Dog? A Feminist Assessment of the Animal Research Issue” (Blackboard)

WEEK 11 (MAR 22, 24, 26): PUBLIC HEALTH

Readings:

- Jason Brennan, “A Libertarian Case for Mandatory Vaccination” (Blackboard)
- Richard Yetter Chappell and Peter Singer, “Pandemic Ethics: The Case for Risky Research” (Blackboard)
- Sarah Clark Miller, “The Invisibility of Gender: A Feminist Commentary on Age-Based Healthcare Rationing” (Blackboard)

WEEK 12 (MAR 29, 31, APR 2): MARKETS

Readings:

- Nneka Logan, “Corporate Personhood and the Corporate Responsibility to Race” (Blackboard)
- Daniel J. Hurst, “Restoring a Reputation: Invoking the UNESCO Universal Declaration of Bioethics and Human Rights to Bear on Pharmaceutical Pricing” (Blackboard)

WEEK 13 (APR 5, 7, 9): DISABILITY

Readings:

- Nancy S. Jecker, “Nothing to Be Ashamed Of: Sex Robots for Older Adults with Disabilities” (Blackboard)
- Eva Feder Kittay, “The Ethics of Care, Dependence, and Disability” (Blackboard)
- Joel M. Reynolds and Laura Guidry-Grimes, “Against Personal Ventilator Reallocation” (Blackboard)

WEEK 14 (APR 12, 14, 16): SPERM DONATION

Readings:

- Groll, *Conceiving People*, chapters 1-3

WEEK 15 (APR 19, 21, 23): SPERM DONATION (CONT.)

Readings:

- Groll, *Conceiving People*, chapters 4-6

WEEK 16 (APR 26, 28, 30): SPERM DONATION (CONT.)

Readings:

- Groll, *Conceiving People*, chapters 7-8

WEEK 17 (MAY 3, 5, 7): FINALS WEEK!

## THE ETHICS OF SELF-DEFENSE

PROFESSOR: Blake Hereth

EMAIL: [sbhereth@uark.edu](mailto:sbhereth@uark.edu)

OFFICE: Old Main 311

CLASS MEETINGS: Tuesday 3:30-5:45pm in the Conference/Seminar Room

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday/Thursday 2-3pm and by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Most people think that harming people in self-defense is justifiable. If someone breaks into your home to kill you because they want to face zero resistance while acquiring your TV, it seems you're permitted to kill them. But there's little consensus beyond this basic picture. Is it necessary that the killer is culpable, or would a less culpable attacker also be liable? If culpability is required, then are we allowed to kill nonhuman animals? Are you obligated to attempt an escape first, or are you permitted to stand your ground in your home? If there are multiple attackers, may you kill them all? When some battered partners can save themselves only before an attack begins, is it permissible for them to do so? We'll explore questions like these and others in this course, probing deeply into both longstanding and new problems in the ethics of self-defense.

### COURSE GOALS:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify the major issues in the ethics of self-defense discussed in the course.
- Identify the major thinkers in the ethics of self-defense and their views.
- Write an original, high-quality paper in the ethics of self-defense.

### CONTENT WARNING:

Domestic abuse, violence in war, home invasions, harming nonhuman animals, and sexual assault are issues we'll discuss. We're thinking critically about these things because they're important, if for no other reason than they deeply affect people's lives. We owe them, each other, and ourselves good answers to morally vital questions. But because these issues are disturbing and students should know about them in advance, I'll avoid using examples and discussing cases that are needlessly problematic. (I also ask that students avoid doing so.) If any student finds it difficult to attend or participate in class because of something we're discussing, the student should let me know and I'll modify the discussion as best I can. But if I can't do so to the student's satisfaction, they're free to excuse themselves from class without penalty. Any student who excuses themselves should follow up with me later.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Participation (10%): Do the reading carefully and come prepared to discuss it. Then, when in seminar, discuss it.

- Weekly Reading Responses (30%): Reading responses are due each week and should include (a) a reconstruction of the central argument of a reading from that week and (b) an analysis of the central argument. Reading responses should be 2-3 pages in length.
- Long Abstract (10%): Each student will write a 1,000-word abstract of their Term Paper. Your abstract needs to outline an original contribution to the self-defense literature and should indicate some sources you intend to cite. The purpose of the abstract is to jumpstart your thinking and allow me to provide early feedback. This is due Friday, October 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Literature Review Presentation (15%): You'll be responsible for a presentation that reviews the literature the topic for that week. For example: If you choose to present on the internalist/externalist debate, you'll need to summarize a sampling of the literature that explains the major philosophical positions and arguments that have been put forward. Your review doesn't need to be exhaustive, but it should be substantial. In the first or second week of class, students will sign up for a presentation topic and date.
- Term Paper (35%): The culmination of this course should result in a highly polished term paper of ~4,000 to 5,000 words (not including notes or works cited). Your job is to develop a substantial, creative, and interesting line of philosophical argument about some issue in the ethics of self-defense. Ideally, this should be something you can submit to quality conferences or peer-refereed journals. You can choose something we've discussed or can branch out on your own and develop a new problem. Just be sure you run your topic by me first. Your paper is due Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, by 5pm.

### **GRADING SCALE:**

I use a standard grading scale for this course:

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89.99%

C = 70-79.99%

D = 60-69.99%

F = 59.99 or below

### **TEXTBOOK(S):**

- *The Ethics of Self-Defense*, ed. Christian Coons and Michael Weber (Oxford University Press, 2016).
- Helen Frowe, *Defensive Killing* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

### **READING SCHEDULE:**

WEEK 1 (AUG 27<sup>TH</sup>): WHAT IS SELF-DEFENSE AND WHY DO WE CARE?

#### Readings:

- Syllabus
- Frowe, "Self-Defense" (Blackboard)
- Coons and Weber, "The Ethics of Self-Defense: The Current Debate" (*The Ethics of Self-Defense*)
- Tyler Doggett, "Recent Work in the Ethics of Self-Defense" (Blackboard)

WEEK 2 (SEP 3<sup>RD</sup>): WHAT IS MORAL LIABILITY?

#### Readings:

- *Defensive Killing*, chapter 3
- Kimberly Ferzan, “Culpable Aggression: The Basis of Moral Liability to Defensive Killing” (Blackboard)
- Seth Lazar, “Responsibility, Risk, and Killing in Self-Defense” (Blackboard)
- Victor Tadros, “Causation, Culpability, and Liability” (*The Ethics of Self-Defense*)

WEEK 3 (SEP 10<sup>TH</sup>): IS MORAL LIABILITY INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL?

Readings:

- Jonathan Quong & Joanna Firth, “Necessity, Moral Liability, and Defensive Harm” (Blackboard)
- Helen Frowe, “The Role of Necessity in Liability to Defensive Harm” (*The Ethics of Self-Defense*)

WEEK 4 (SEP 17<sup>TH</sup>): MUST THERE BE A REASONABLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS?

Readings:

- Daniel Statman, “On the Success Condition for Legitimate Self-Defense” (Blackboard)
- *Defensive Killing*, 109-115
- Suzanne Uniacke, “Self-Defense, Just War, and a Reasonable Prospect of Success” (Blackboard)

WEEK 5 (SEP 24<sup>TH</sup>): WHAT IF YOU CAN ESCAPE THE THREAT?

Readings:

- Helen Frowe, “The Role of Necessity in Liability to Defensive Harm” (*The Ethics of Self-Defense*)
- Heidi M. Hurd, “Stand Your Ground” (*The Ethics of Self-Defense*)
- Ian Fishback, “Necessity and Institutions in Self-Defense and War” (*The Ethics of Self-Defense*)

WEEK 6 (OCT 1<sup>ST</sup>): IS THE IMMINENCE REQUIREMENT SEXIST?

Readings:

- Marcia Baron, “The Imminence Requirement” (Blackboard)
- Fiona Leverick, *Killing in Self-Defense*, chapter 5 (Blackboard)
- Kimberly Ferzan, “Defending Imminence: From Battered Women to Iraq” (Blackboard)

WEEK 7 (OCT 8<sup>TH</sup>): CAN JUSTIFIED THREATENERS BE LIABLE?

Readings:

- Jeff McMahan, “Self-Defense Against Justified Threateners” (Blackboard)
- Adam Hosein, “Are Justified Aggressors a Threat to the Rights Theory of Self-Defense?” (Blackboard)
- Helen Frowe, “Lesser-Evil Justifications for Harming: Why We’re Required to Turn the Trolley” (Blackboard)

WEEK 8 (OCT 15<sup>TH</sup>): IS DESERT A GOOD BASIS FOR SELF-DEFENSE?

Readings:

- *Defensive Killing*, pp.106-109
- Victor Tadros, *The Ends of Harm*, pp.175-177 (Blackboard)
- John Gardner and Francois Tanguay-Renaud, “Desert and Avoidability in Self-Defense” (Blackboard)

WEEK 9 (OCT 22<sup>ND</sup>): FALL BREAK!

WEEK 10 (OCT 29<sup>TH</sup>): WHAT ABOUT PACIFISM?

Readings:

- Cheyney Ryan, “Self-Defense, Pacifism, and the Possibility of Killing”
- Saba Bazargan-Forward, “Varieties of Contingent Pacifism in War”
- Sara Ruddick, “Preservative Love and Military Destruction: Some Reflections on Mothering and Peace”

Optional Reading:

- Victoria Davion, “Pacifism and Care”

WEEK 11 (NOV 5<sup>TH</sup>): WHAT ABOUT SYMMETRICAL THREATS?

Readings:

- Timothy Campbell, “The Problem of Symmetrical Threats” (Blackboard)

Optional Readings:

- Kerah Gordon-Solmon, “Self-Defense Against Multiple Threats” (Blackboard)
- Jeff McMahan, “Liability, Proportionality, and the Number of Aggressors” (*The Ethics of Self-Defense*)
- David Rodin, “The Lesser Evil Obligation” (*The Ethics of Self-Defense*)

WEEK 12 (NOV 12<sup>TH</sup>): WHAT ABOUT KILLING ANIMALS?

Readings:

- Tatjana Visak, “Do Utilitarians Need to Accept the Replaceability Argument?” (Blackboard)
- Cheryl Abbate, “The Search for Liability in the Defense Killing of Nonhuman Animals” (Blackboard)
- Blake Hereth, “Animal Rights Pacifism” (Blackboard)

WEEK 13 (NOV 19<sup>TH</sup>): CAN PUNISHMENT BE JUSTIFIED VIA SELF-DEFENSE?

Readings:

- David Boonin, *The Problem of Punishment*, 192-207 (Blackboard)
- David Alm, “Self-Defense, Punishment, and Forfeiture” (Blackboard)
- Zac Cogley, “Fortifying the Self-Defense Justification of Punishment” (Blackboard)

WEEK 14 (NOV 26<sup>TH</sup>): HOW DOES SELF-DEFENSE RELATE TO WAR?

Readings:

- Christopher Kutz, “The Difference Uniforms Make: Collective Violence in Criminal Law and War” (Blackboard)
- Helen Frowe, *Defensive Killing*, chapter 5
- Seth Lazar, “Complicity, Collectives, and Killing in War” (Blackboard)
- Holly Lawford-Smith, *Not in Their Name*, chapter 5 (Blackboard)

WEEK 15 (DEC 3<sup>RD</sup>): HEALTHCARE JUSTICE FOR COMBATANTS?

Readings:

- Richard Arneson, “Luck Egalitarianism—A Primer” (Blackboard)
- Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen, “Noncombatants and Liability to Be Attacked in Wars” (Blackboard)
- Blake Hereth, “Reductive Individualism and Healthcare Justice” (Blackboard)

WEEK 16 (DEC 10<sup>TH</sup>): MAY WE KILL NON-COMBATANTS?

Readings:

- *Defensive Killing*, chapters 6-8
- Saba Bazargan-Forward, “Non-Combatant Immunity and War-Profitteering” (Blackboard)
- Seth Lazar, *Sparing Civilians*, chapter 5 (Blackboard)

WEEK 17 (DEC 17<sup>TH</sup>): FINALS WEEK

**POLICIES:**

- Academic Integrity: As a core part of its mission, the University of Arkansas provides students with the opportunity to further their educational goals through programs of study and research in an environment that promotes freedom of inquiry and academic responsibility. Accomplishing this mission is only possible when intellectual honesty and individual integrity prevail. Each University of Arkansas student is required to be familiar with and abide by the University’s ‘Academic Integrity Policy’ which may be found at [provost.uark.edu](http://provost.uark.edu) Students with questions about how these policies apply to a particular course or assignment should immediately contact their instructor.
- Selling Notes: There are companies that will try to lure you into selling the notes you take in this class. Don’t let these companies take advantage of you. Selling my notes to any commercial service I will consider a violation of my intellectual property rights and/or copyright law as well as a violation of the U of A’s academic integrity policy. Continued enrollment in this class signifies intent to abide by the policy. Any violation will be reported to the Office of Academic Initiatives and Integrity.
- Respect of Self and Others: Respect of Self and Others: As a (mostly) consistent Kantian, I expect everyone in this course to maintain a certain level of self-respect. This means taking yourself seriously (although not *too* seriously) and avoiding excessive self-deprecation. You are valuable and an important part of the philosophical community. I also expect everyone in this course to maintain respect for others. Philosophical engagement is often aggressive and it’s easy to see why: Sometimes you develop a devastating objection to someone’s argument and you want to deliver it in epic fashion. But we won’t indulge those impulses here. It’s okay to care about the material and to discuss it passionately, but *don’t* interrupt others, *do* be equitable with your speaking time (and be aware that we’re often bad judges of when we’ve exceeded our equitable speaking time), *do* aim to help someone identify any flaws in their view *and* make suggestions for how they might improve it, and *do* respect others’ pronouns.
- Attendance: Education at the university level requires active involvement in the learning process. Therefore students have the responsibility to attend classes and to actively engage in all learning assignments or opportunities provided in their classes. Instructors have the responsibility to provide a written policy on student attendance that is tied to course objectives and included in a course syllabus. There may be times, however, when illness, family crisis, or university-sponsored activities make full attendance or participation impossible. In these situations students are responsible for making timely arrangements with the instructor to make up work missed. Such arrangements should be made in writing and prior to the absence when possible. Examples of absences that should be considered excusable include those resulting from the following: (1) illness of the student, (2) serious illness or death of a member of the student’s immediate family or other

family crisis, (3) University-sponsored activities for which the student's attendance is required by virtue of scholarship or leadership/participation responsibilities, (4) religious observances (see Students' Religious Observances policy below), (5) jury duty or subpoena for court appearance, and (6) military duty. The instructor has the right to require that the student provide appropriate documentation for any absence for which the student wishes to be excused.

- Weather: When the University of Arkansas declares that the inclement weather policy is in effect, we won't meet for seminar. In such cases, and in any other case when class is cancelled, you will be notified via email or Blackboard. In cases of questionable whether, please check the university website.
- Disability Related Accommodation: University of Arkansas Academic Policy Series 1520.10 requires that students with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact me privately at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through the Center for Educational Access (contact 479-575-3104 or visit [cea.uark.edu](http://cea.uark.edu) for more information on registration procedures).
- Reminder About Concealed Carry on Campus: Handguns are only allowed on campus (including all classrooms) to the extent specifically authorized by state law. Each individual who lawfully possesses a handgun and an enhanced carry permit is required to keep the handgun concealed from public view at all times and is responsible for carrying the handgun in a safe manner. If an individual carries a concealed handgun in a personal carrier such as a backpack, purse, or handbag, the carrier must remain within the individual's immediate vicinity (within arm's reach). During this course, you may be required to engage in activities that may require you to separate from your belongings such as taking a quiz or examination, and thus you should plan accordingly. Any student who violates the concealed carry laws while on campus may be subject to criminal prosecution and/or discipline by the University, up to and including dismissal. If you observe someone displaying a handgun or other weapon on campus, it should be reported to the University of Arkansas Police Department. For more information, please go to [safety.uark.edu](http://safety.uark.edu).
- Problems with the Course: If you have concerns or suggestions regarding this course, I encourage you to speak to me directly about them. If you would prefer to speak with someone else, however, you may contact:

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