

USC Summer Programs

SUMMER PROGRAMS 2019

CORE-195: Ethics in the 21st Century - Business, Politics, and Technology

Location: Vivian Hall (VHE) 214

Instructors: David Clark

Office: Mudd Hall of Philosophy B5C

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30-2:00

Email: clarkdj@usc.edu

Phone: (860) 836-0929

Pronouns: he/him/his

Andrew Stewart

Mudd Hall of Philosophy B5B

Wednesdays 12:30-2:00

stew772@usc.edu

(216) 906-8548

he/him/his, they/them/theirs

We will respond to emails within two business days (48 hours).

Teaching Assistant: Brooke Helstrom

Office: Mudd Hall of Philosophy B5C

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:00-2:00

Email: helstrom@usc.edu

Phone: (862) 812-8382

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Course Description

The world has undergone a social and technological revolution in the 21st century. How ought we live in this new world? We are employees, managers, citizens, patients, caregivers, consumers, family members, and — not least — human beings. Given the complexity and rapid change of the modern world, it is far from obvious what these roles morally demand of us.

In this course we will apply traditional methods of philosophical inquiry and critical thinking to some of the most pressing moral questions of life in the 21st century. Among the questions this course will explore: What do businesses morally owe their employees, customers, and competitors? Are corporations agents, and what sorts of rights should they have? Are there moral limits to capitalism? How should we respond to globalization? Is democracy the best form of government? What do doctors owe their patients? How does social media alter our relationships with one another? Should self-driving cars be programmed to make decisions based on a particular moral theory? Is there such a thing as too much technology? How much of the work that has normally been done by humans should be done by machines or artificial intelligence? What duties do we have to future generations?

Learning Objectives

This course will prepare students to be more reflective (and we hope, more ethical) members of society. It will also equip them with skills in critical thinking, discourse, and writing that are highly sought after in the academic, legal, and business world.

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

- reconstruct arguments from complex philosophical texts;
- assess arguments for their soundness and validity, and identify potential weaknesses and objections;
- apply traditional ethical theories and philosophical methodology to contemporary moral problems;
- compose a college-level argumentative essay.

Prerequisite(s): None

Recommended Preparation: None

Course Notes

Grading Type: letter grade for credit. Readings, handouts, slides, and assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Students will need access to a computer with a PDF viewer, word processor (Word, Pages, etc.), and access to Blackboard and email.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Readings will be provided in the course reader, in class, and/or on Blackboard. Also provided will be a copy of G.A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

Description and Assessment of Assignments

- **Quizzes (10%).** Students will take a short quiz each day, consisting of a mix of multiple-choice and short answers.
- **Precis (10%).** For select readings, students will be asked to write a concise summary of around 300 words.
- **Group presentation (10%).** Students will be assigned to groups, and each group will present on one of the course readings.
- **Individual presentation (10%).** Each student will also do an individual presentation on their term paper in progress.
- **Short Paper (10%).** Each student will submit a short, argumentative essay, due June 30 at 11:59 PM via Blackboard. (About 1000 words.)
- **Final Paper (20%).** At the end of the course each student a term paper, ideally a longer version of their short paper--due July 14 at 11:59 PM via Blackboard. (About 2000 words.)
- **Final Exam (10%).** Each student will take a brief in-class final exam (short answer and one essay) on the last day of class.
- **Participation (10%).** Students are expected to regularly participate in class discussion.
- **Attendance (10%).** Students are expected arrive on time and attend class each day.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Final Grade
Quizzes	150 (10 each)	10%
Précis	120 (10 each)	10%
Group Presentation (no précis that day)	100	10%
Individual Presentation	100	10%
Short Paper	100	10%
Final Paper	100	20%
Final Exam	100	10%
Participation	10	10%
Attendance	18	10%

Attendance/Tardiness Policy:

Students are required to abide by the attendance policies put forward by USC Summer Programs. Students will also be penalized in the participation and attendance categories for unexcused absences and tardiness.

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments are to be submitted on Blackboard.

Grading Timeline

All assignments will typically be graded and returned within a week.

Additional Policies

Late Assignment Policy: There will be a 10 point per day deduction for late (unexcused) assignments.

Electronics Policy: Use of electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, tablets) is not permitted in class except in circumstances announced ahead of time by the instructors.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

All course readings are listed with the day that they are due.

Week	Date	Class Topic / Agenda / Activities	Assignment
Week 1 June 17-June 21	Mon. June 17	Introductions, course policies, and introduction to philosophy.	No reading
	Tues. June 18	Arguments, logic, and philosophical writing.	Distributed at first class session Reconstructing Arguments assignment

	Wed. June 19	Ethical theories and the history of ethics.	John Stuart Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapters 1 and 2 Précis
	Thur. June 20	Corporate responsibility and the ethics of selling.	Andrew Piker, "Strict Product Liability and the Unfairness Objection" Précis
	Fri. June 21	What corporations are and what they owe their employees. <i>*Possible Guest Lecture: Amber Kavka-Warren*</i>	Jason Brennan, "Should Employers Pay a Living Wage?" Précis
Week 2 June 24-June 28	Mon. June 24	Freedom, equality, and distributive justice. <i>Group 1 Presentation</i>	G.A. Cohen, <i>Why Not Socialism?</i> Précis (unless in Group 1)
	Tues. June 25	Democracy and voting. <i>Group 2 Presentation</i>	Elizabeth Anderson, "Democracy: Instrumental vs. Non-Instrumental Value" Précis (unless in Group 2)
	Wed. June 26	Disagreement and political polarization. <i>Group 3 Presentation</i>	Stephen Macedo, "Liberal Civic Education and Religious Fundamentalism: The Case of God v. John Rawls?" Précis (unless in Group 3)
	Thur. June 27	Criminal law, punishment, and historical injustice. <i>Group 4 Presentation</i>	Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations" https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/

			Précis (unless in Group 4)
	Fri. June 28	War and borders. <i>Group 5 Presentation</i>	Thomas Nagel, "War and Massacre" Précis (unless in Group 5) SHORT PAPER DUE ON BLACKBOARD BY JUNE 30 at 11:59 PM
Week 3 July 1-July 5	Mon. July 1	Privacy and social media. <i>Group 6 Presentation</i>	Jessica Pepp, Eliot Michaelson, and Rachel Katharine Sterken, "What's New About Fake News?" Précis (unless in Group 6)
	Tues. July 2	Abortion and other topics in bioethics. <i>Group 7 Presentation</i>	Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" Précis (unless in Group 7)
	Wed. July 3	Artificial intelligence and automation. <i>Group 8 Presentation</i> <i>*Possible Guest Lecture: Gabrielle Johnson*</i>	Eric Schwitzgebel and Mara Garza, "A Defense of the Rights of Artificial Intelligences" Précis (unless in Group 8)
	Thur. July 4	NO CLASS	
	Fri. July 5	NO CLASS	
Week 4 July 8-July 12	Mon. July 8	<i>*Field Trip - Hike*</i>	No reading
	Tues. July 9	The moral status of nonhuman animals.	Alastair Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases"

			Précis
	Wed. July 10	Conservation and climate change.	Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" Précis
	Thur. July 11	What we owe to future generations. <i>*Possible Guest Lecture: Nicola Kemp*</i>	Timothy Mulgan, <i>Ethics for a Broken World</i> , Introductory Lecture No Précis
	Fri. July 12	Final exam, writing workshop, and concluding discussion.	No reading FINAL PAPER DUE ON BLACKBOARD BY JULY 14 AT 11:59 PM

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <https://titleix.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response.

<https://titleix.usc.edu/reporting-options/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <https://dsp.usc.edu/>

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu>

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. <https://emergency.usc.edu>

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. <https://dps.usc.edu>