

“The greatest orator, save one, of antiquity, has left it on record that he always studied his adversary’s case with as great, if not still greater, intensity than even his own. What Cicero practised as the means of forensic success requires to be imitated by all who study any subject in order to arrive at the truth. He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion. The rational position for him would be suspension of judgment, and unless he contents himself with that, he is either led by authority, or adopts, like the generality of the world, the side to which he feels most inclination. Nor is it enough that he should hear the arguments of adversaries from his own teachers, presented as they state them, and accompanied by what they offer as refutations. That is not the way to do justice to the arguments, or bring them into real contact with his own mind. He must be able to hear them from persons who actually believe them; who defend them in earnest, and do their very utmost for them. He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form; he must feel the whole force of the difficulty which the true view of the subject has to encounter and dispose of; else he will never really possess himself of the portion of truth which meets and removes that difficulty . . . So essential is this discipline to a real understanding of moral and human subjects, that if opponents of all important truths do not exist, it is indispensable to imagine them, and supply them with the strongest arguments which the most skilful devil’s advocate can conjure up.”

- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Blackwell Publishing, 2003, pp. 115-116.

“... the ability to form one’s beliefs in a way that is responsive to evidence is not at all the same as the ability to present reasons for one’s beliefs, either to others or to oneself. Reason-giving requires a wide range of skills that need not be present in the reasons-responsive person. One thing the skeptic about reason-giving may be responding to is the recognition that some people are terrifically adept at providing prima facie reasonable arguments for their beliefs, quite apart from whether those beliefs are correct. Just as a reasonable person might willfully ignore the appeals of a gifted speaker in order to avoid being misled, an intelligent person who recognizes his own weakness in distinguishing apparently good but mistaken reasoning from the genuine item might also willfully ignore detailed and subtle appeals to reason.”

- Hilary Kornblith, *Distrusting Reason*, Midwest Studies in Philosophy (1999), 184.

Philosophy 143: Applied Ethics: Ethics Bowl

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:40 -11:45 pm.

Kresge 327

Instructor: Kyle Robertson (kxrobert@ucsc.edu)

Office Hours: Friday 9 - 10 a.m., tables in front of McHenry Library/Global Village Cafe, or by appointment. I’m often available after class.

I’m also often available before class, and happy to meet with you then. Please email me at kxrobert@ucsc.edu if you would like to meet before class!

Course Description: This is an intensive applied ethics course taught with a focus on the cases created by the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics for regional ethics bowl competitions each year. Each student will focus on one of these cases to prepare for written and oral argument. In the context of this preparation, we will cover major modern ethical theories,

areas of applied ethical theory relevant to this year's cases, and oral advocacy skills.

This course has historically served as preparation for UCSC's Ethics Bowl team for the California Regional Ethics Bowl competition. This year, there are two extra-curricular activities associated with this class: the Ethics Bowl Team and the High School Ethics Bowl. Participation in either of these activities may substitute for some of the required work for this class.

Further details on both of these extra curricular activities discussed below and the first day of class.

What is Ethics Bowl?:

Ethics Bowl is a debate competition where teams examine case studies that demonstrate ethical dilemmas drawn from a wide range of areas (environmental ethics, biomedical ethics, business ethics, institutional ethics, personal ethics, etc.). The students determine a morally defensible resolution to the dilemmas, which they then defend before a panel of judges and a competing team. After a team presents a case and is challenged by a competing team and responds to that challenge, judges question the team to elicit more detail, raise issues not addressed in the original answers, or further challenge them. Judges evaluate the team's performance in terms of the coherence of the argument, propriety of reason, and response to challenges.

Further information about ethics bowl, and past teams, is available at:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~appe/ethicsbowl.html>

<http://philosophy.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/2011%20Ethics%20Bowl%20.html>

http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/localnews/ci_13988140

Work Expectation:

This course, and the associated grading, are all directed at helping the student grapple with the ethical issues in their cases and to present an excellent argument, one which fully reflects their level of understanding.

The course will be graded as follows:

Individual Work:

- Two short writing assignments + Peer feedback: 10%
- Final Paper/Presentation Draft: 10%
- Final Paper or Oral Examination: 30%

Group work:

- Classroom Participation: 25%
- Case Presentations/team participation: 25%

Extra Credit Opportunities

Individual Work:

Written Work: (50%) Students are responsible for producing an argument on their chosen case. This can take the final form of a paper or oral argument. For a final paper, there is no hard word limit; however, it is difficult to cover your case in sufficient depth in less than 3000 words. For a final oral argument, I will schedule 30 minute blocks during finals week for you to present your argument and engage in dialogue and discussion with me about your case.

All students will complete two short writing assignments, two peer feedback writing assignments, and a complete written draft of their arguments (even if you choose to do a final oral argument, you will need to submit a written draft!). Final projects need to take into account the feedback you receive.

All written work will be due via Canvas, to manage grading and peer review.

Written Work for IEB Team: students who compete on the UCSC IEB team will have an alternative schedule for their individual written work, which I will discuss with them. In general, individual work expectations are **increased** for competition team members.

Group Work:

Participation: (25%) This is a course in argument, debate, and applied ethics, and there is no substitute for active, engaged participation in our class discussions.

Attendance is mandatory, and **all students** are expected to come to every class prepared to actively participate in classroom discussions. I am understanding about students needing to miss a small number of classes for good reasons, but please communicate with me before you miss a class, if you are able. Excused absences will not affect your grade. Unexcused absences may affect your grade.

Other Group Work: (25%) there are two ways to satisfy the further group work expectation: in-class presentations (the default) or competing with the UCSC IEB team.

1. Most students will give an in-class (possibly group) presentation

on their chosen case and positions and help lead a facilitated discussion. Details of the case presentations are to be worked out with your fellow students sharing your case (if any) and the instructor.

2. The UCSC Ethics Bowl team will be made up of students enrolled in this course. The team requires substantial additional time commitments, including:
 - a. An extra weekly meeting to practice.
 - b. 1-2 scheduled practice rounds with other university teams before the regional.
 - c. Participation in the CA Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl Regional (December 3rd, we are hosting!)
 - i. If we do well enough here (top 3), we may earn a bid to the National IEB, which will be in Portland, OR during winter quarter. I've coached this team about 13 times (I think) and we've made nationals 6 times.
 - d. This team also generally participates in an ethics bowl round with a team of incarcerated students at San Quentin State Prison. I'll provide updates throughout the semester on the status of this event.

Extra Credit Opportunities: We are hosting an unusually large number of ethics bowl events this fall, and I'm planning to ask for your help/support. My hope is that your primary motivation is to support a great community event, but I'm also planning to offer some extra credit for participation because we're going to need the support. I'll give more details on these opportunities in the next few weeks...

Academic Misconduct Policy:

I take potential academic misconduct very seriously. If you ever have concerns or questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please do not hesitate to contact me. You might also find the information you are seeking in the following documents:

The student handbook discusses academic misconduct in sections 102.01 - 102.016 and 105.15. The handbook is available at <https://deanofstudents.ucsc.edu/student-conduct/student-handbook/pdf/100.0-code-of-student-conduct.pdf>.

I plan to follow the official undergraduate academic misconduct policy, available here: <https://ue.ucsc.edu/academic-misconduct.html>.

Academic Accommodations Statement:

If there are any academic accommodations I can make to support your learning, please come speak with me. You can seek more information and support from the Disability Resource Center:

<https://drc.ucsc.edu/index.html>.

Covid-19 Guidance and In-Person Instruction: The mask and badge requirements are no longer in place at UCSC. I encourage each of you to take steps that help you feel comfortable attending this course and participating. I intend to mask if any student masks, in order to help every student feel comfortable approaching me for discussions. I will try to hold most or all of my office hours outdoors, and I will generally not be masked if meeting outdoors (If you prefer me masked in an outdoor meeting, just let me know! I'm happy to accommodate). If at any point you feel uncomfortable with in-person instruction, please access additional campus resources:

- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#): For mental-health concerns related to being in-person.
- [Student Health Center](#): For health concerns related to being with others.
- [Disability Resource Center](#): For disability-related concerns related to in-person instruction.
- keeplearning.ucsc.edu: For additional campus resources on living and learning well.

Reading List (texts available for purchase at the bookstore, or online)

- **required:** Scott Aiken and Robert Talisse, *Why We Argue (And How We Should)* [Also available online through the library]
- **optional:** Michael Sandel, *Justice: A Reader*
 - I use this as a source of primary readings for the course. You should be able to get access to all the primary texts through the library and/or online, so you do not have to purchase this text. I provide it as a single purchase that will have all the required readings, should you want it.
- Supplementary readings available on Canvas.

Week 0:

Sep. 23: **Overview of course and EB programs; overview of this year's cases.**

- Ethics Bowl Cases for 2022-2023 Season
- Please check out 2 videos about our ethics bowl programs:
 - San Quentin Ethics Bowl: <https://vimeo.com/274161189>
 - High School Ethics Bowl: <https://vimeo.com/237478260>

Week 1: Introduction to Argument and Debate

Sep. 26: **Argument and debate.**

- Aiken and Talisse: please read the Introduction, Part I, and the Conclusion.

Sep. 28: **Argument and debate continued**

- Aiken and Talisse: please skim Part II, reading any parts that interest you about specific dialogic fallacies.
- Jon Ellis and Francesca Hovagimian, "Are School Debate Competitions Bad for Our Political Discourse?" *NY Times*, Oct 12, 2019.
- Me, "Argument Programs for Good Citizenship"

Sep. 30: **Thinking About Ethics**

- Peter Singer (1972). "Famine, Affluence, and Morality", *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 229-243. [Canvas]

Week 2: Basic texts/ideas in 'Western' philosophical ethics.

Oct. 3: **English Utilitarianism**

- Reader, 9-47.
 - Bentham, J. *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (excerpts)
 - Mill, J.S. *Utilitarianism* (excerpts)

Oct. 5: **Kant's Deontology**

- Reader, 158-201.
 - Kant, I. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*

Oct. 7: **Aristotelian Virtue Ethics**

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I – Book III, 5. [Canvas]
- ***** Paper 1 due on Canvas today*****

Week 3: Taking these theories seriously today.

Oct. 10: **Utilitarian feminism.**

- Julia Driver (2005). "Consequentialism and Feminist Ethics", *Hypatia*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 183-199. (on Canvas)

Oct. 12: **Racism in philosophy.**

- Emmanuel Eze, "The Color of Reason: The idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology", *The Bucknell Review*, Jan 1, 1995 [Canvas].

Oct 14: **Using theories in applied arguments.**

- Rosalind Hursthouse (1991). "Virtue Theory and Abortion", *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 223-246.
- ***** Peer Review of Paper 1 due on Canvas today*****

Week 4: Political theories; justice

Oct. 17: **Liberal egalitarian notions of justice** (aka Rawls)

- Reader, 203-221, 343-358.
 - Rawls, J. *A Theory of Justice*.
 - ---. *Political Liberalism*.
- *****Paper 2 due on Canvas today*****

Oct. 19: **Libertarian notion of justice** (aka Nozick)

- Reader, 60-82.
 - Nozick, R. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*
- Supplemental reading ideas:
 - Robert Nozick (1997). "On the Randian Argument"

Oct. 21: **Non-ideal theories of Justice**

- Charles Mills, C. (1997), *The Racial Contract*. [Canvas]

Week 5: A few other approaches to ethics

Oct. 24: **Buddhist Ethics**

- *****Peer Review of Paper 2 due on Canvas today*****
- Jay Garfield, "Ethics" chapter from *Engaging Buddhism: Why It Matters*

for Philosophy (posted on Canvas)

- TBD text on Buddhist Ethics

Oct. 26: **Aztec Virtue Ethics + African Ethical Systems**

- Please read two Aeon articles by Sebastian Purcell:
 - “Life on the Slippery Earth”,
<https://aeon.co/essays/aztec-moral-philosophy-didnt-expect-anyone-to-be-a-saint>
 - “What the Aztecs can teach us about happiness and the good life”
<https://aeon.co/ideas/what-the-aztecs-can-teach-us-about-happiness-and-the-good-life>
- African Philosophy - Excerpts from *A Companion to African Philosophy* (on Canvas)
 - “Some African Reflections on Biomedical and Environmental Ethics”
 - “Ethics and Morality in Yoruba Culture”
- Secondary African Philosophy reading: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on “African Ethics”, by Kwame Gyekye.

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- From here through the end of the quarter, we will be discussing specific cases.
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Oct. 28: Case 2 - Student presentations.

- *****Full paper drafts due on Canvas today*****

Week 6:

Oct. 31: Case 3 - Student presentations.

Nov. 2: Case 4 - Student presentations.

Nov. 4: Case 5 - Student presentations.

Week 7:

Nov. 7: Case 6 - Student presentations.

Nov. 9: Case 7 - Student presentations.

Nov. 11: *** No Class - Veteran’s Day ***

Week 8:

Nov. 14: Case 8 - Student presentations.

Nov. 16: Case 9 - Student presentations.

Nov. 18: Case 10 - Student presentations.

Week 9:

Nov. 21: Case 12 - Student presentations.

Nov. 23: *** No Class! Thanksgiving Holiday ***

Nov. 25: *** No Class! Thanksgiving Holiday ***

Week 10:

Nov. 28: Case 13 - Student presentations.

Nov. 30: Case 14 - Student presentations.

Dec. 2: Case 15 - Student presentations.

Finals Week: No class meetings.

- If your final work product is a paper, it is due by the end of the day (5 p.m.) of our scheduled final: Thursday, December 9th.
- If your final work product is an oral argument given to the instructor, then all your work is due at the time of your presentation. These sessions will be scheduled throughout finals week, and sign-ups will happen mid-quarter.