

KILLING THINGS

PHIL 145

Section A: MW 8-9:15 in Lafayette L107

Section B: MW 4:05-5:20 in Lafayette L100

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Office: 208 70 S. Williams St•Office hours: W 9:30-11:30 and by appointment

The course Blackboard site is at bb.uvm.edu

Almost everyone thinks it is sometimes morally permissible to kill some things, some of the time; you can kill a mosquito that's biting you, for example. What else is it permissible to kill? Under what circumstances? This course takes up these questions.

Requirements

- There will be three exams. You have to pass all of them in order to pass the course. But, if you do pass them all, only the last two count towards your final grade. (The first is, essentially, practice.) Those two comprise 80% of your grade.
- You have to come to class *for at least the first three weeks*. You *cannot* miss one session during those three weeks without a good excuse—I will disenroll you or flunk you if you do. (The standards for what counts as a good excuse are lower in the early class than in the late one.) After the first three weeks, we will collectively re-evaluate the attendance policy.
- *If* you come to class you have to pay attention: no chatting, no texting, no bathroom breaks, no laptops, no sleeping, etc.
- This is an onerous policy and I will be a jerk about enforcing it. If you can't concentrate on philosophy for 75 straight minutes, if your bladder is too small, if you just can't bear to be off your Blackberry for that long, whatever, you need to drop this class.
- I strongly encourage you to ask questions. It is very hard to learn philosophy without doing so. If you are uncomfortable asking in class, email me or meet with me. I will regularly give you opportunities to email me with questions if you are too shy (or whatever) to take the initiative. Participation will be worth 20% of your grade.
- You should check the Blackboard site and your email every day. All important announcements will be emailed to you or posted on Blackboard.
- If you need accommodation due to a disability, please let me know.
- If you will miss class because of a religious holiday or sporting event or other university-sanctioned activity, please let me know within the first two weeks of classes.

Schedule of readings

- Readings are all on e-reserve or posted on our Blackboard site.
- The readings tend to be short and difficult. Read them at least twice.
- There is a 0% chance that we will stick to this schedule. Changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard.

Basic Terminology

James Pryor, <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/index.html>

James Pryor, <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

Killing Non-human Animals for Food

Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal"
R.M. Hare, "Why I Am Only a Demi-Vegetarian"

Readings We Won't Discuss In Class But That You Might Be Interested In: Thomas Nagel, "Death"; Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, chapter 17; Roger Scruton, "The Conscientious Carnivore"; Singer, "Reply to Hare"; Singer and Jim Mason, *The Ethics of What We Eat*, chapter 17.

Abortion

Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral"
Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

Readings We Won't Discuss In Class But That You Might Be Interested In: Nancy Ann Davis, "Abortion and Self-Defense"; David Boonin, *A Defense of Abortion*; Jane English, "Abortion: Beyond the Personhood Argument"; Elizabeth Harman, "Creation Ethics"; Frances Myrna Kamm, *Creation and Abortion*; Thomson, "Abortion"

Self-Defense

Thomson, "Self-Defense"
Michael Otsuka, "Killing the Innocent in Self-Defense"

Readings We Won't Discuss In Class But That You Might Be Interested In: Helen Frowe, "Threats, Bystanders, and Obstructors"; Jeff McMahan, "Self-Defense and the Problem of the Innocent Attacker"; Jonathan Quong, "Killing in Self-Defense"

War

Thomas Nagel, "War and Massacre"
Celia Fabre, "Guns, Food, and Liability to Attack in War";

Readings We Won't Discuss In Class But That You Might Be Interested In: G.E.M. Anscombe, "Mr. Truman's Degree"; Anscombe, "War and Murder"; David Rodin, *War and Self-Defense*; Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War*

The Trolley Problem

Philippa Foot, "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect"
Shelly Kagan, selections from *The Limits of Morality*
Thomson, "Turning the Trolley"

Readings We Won't Discuss In Class But That You Might Be Interested In: Alexander Friedman, "Return of the Trolley;" Thomson, "The Trolley Problem"

Famine

Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
Colin McGinn, "Our Duties to Animals and the Poor"

Readings We Won't Discuss In Class But That You Might Be Interested In: Dan Moller, "Should We Let the Starving Children Die (For Now)?"; Liam Murphy, "Beneficence and Fairness"; Garrett Cullity, selections from *The Moral Demands of Affluence*