KS Applied Ethics

University of Graz | Department of Philosophy | Spring Term 2019

Time:	Tuesday, 15:15 – 18:15 (May and June)
Venue:	SR 34.K1, Attemsgasse 25/K, 8010 Graz
Lecturers:	Dr. Annika Böddeling; Dr. Thomas Pölzler, MA
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Office hours:	By appointment

Description

The course introduces students to applied ethics through a topic-based approach. After a general introduction (addressing the place of applied ethics within ethics, normative ethics, and the methods of applied ethics) we will exemplarily consider ethical issues from the following areas: environment, medicine, and poverty and overpopulation. Students will be expected to discuss these controversial topics and to engage philosophically with a range of views.

Aims

Having completed the course, students should be able to:

- explain the place of applied ethics within ethics;
- name, explain and critically assess the main theories in normative ethics;
- distinguish, identify and critically assess various methods in applied ethics;
- name and discuss ethical issues that arise with regard to environment, medicine, new technologies and overpopulation;
- develop, analyze and assess arguments for ethical conclusions in these and other areas.

Schedule and Topics

04/09/2019, 15:15 – 16:45: **Preliminary Discussion**

04/30/2019, 15:15 – 18:15: **Introduction 1**
- Fieser, J.: Ethics
- Mill, J.: Utilitarianism

05/07/2019, 15:15 – 18:15: **Introduction 2**
- Tomlinson, T.: The Limits of Principles

05/14/2019, 15:15 – 18:15: **Environment: Animal and Climate Ethics**
- Singer, P.: All Animals are Equal
- McShane, K.: Anthropocentrism in Climate Ethics and Policy

05/21/2019, 15:15 – 18:15: **Medicine: Abortion**
- Thomson, J.: A Defense of Abortion
- Marquis, D.: Why Abortion is Immoral

05/28/2019, 15:15 – 18:15: **Poverty: Global Justice and Overpopulation**
- Brock, G.: Needs and Global Justice
- Hickey, C.; Rieder, T.; Earl, J.: Population Engineering and the Fight against Climate Change

06/04/2019, 15:15 – 18:15: **Medicine: Cognitive Enhancement**
- Adler, J.: Erasing painful memories: The caustic imprint of a traumatic memory may fade or vanish with new drug and behavioral therapies
- Erler, A.: Does Memory Modification Threaten Our Authenticity?

06/18/2019, 15:15 – 16:45: **Final Discussion**

Assessment

Seminar Paper

Your seminar paper should answer a specific and interesting research question in the area of applied ethics. For example, you may compare the arguments of two or more authors, criticize the arguments of a particular author, or defend a thesis of your own. You can choose your research question freely. Make sure that your paper involves sound arguments that support your answer to this question.

The language of your seminar paper should be clear, succinct and intelligible. Its structure should be logical and aid understanding. In particular, you should motivate and explicitly state your research question in an introductory section, and summarize your thesis and most important arguments in a concluding section.

Your seminar paper should be between 2.000 and 3.000 words (excluding title page, contents, footnotes, bibliography, etc.), and refer to at least three relevant sources. These

sources can be texts that we discussed in class, additional texts provided on the course's Moodle page or texts that you researched yourself. Your seminar paper must be submitted via Moodle by September 30, 2019.

Your seminar paper grade will be primarily based on the following criteria: (1) the adequacy and interestingness of your research question, (2) the soundness and relevance of your arguments, (3) your compliance with the rules of academic writing (citation, style, etc.), (4) the clarity, succinctness and intelligibility of your language, and (5) the adequacy of your paper's structure.

Further recommendations for writing a philosophy seminar paper can be found at: http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html.

Comments/Questions

In our course we will discuss eleven texts. For at least nine of these texts you should formulate two comments or questions that we may then consider in class. Your contributions should either address how to understand certain aspects of the text or critically reflect on it. For example, you may ask how an author uses a certain key concept, or whether a particular argument is based on a problematic tacit assumption. Your comments/questions should be ca. 3 to 5 sentences long. For each session they should be submitted via Moodle by Monday 15:15.

Class Participation

Please do all readings and actively participate in our discussions; for example, ask questions, raise objections or point out interconnections.

General Policies

Attendance

Given the unexpected change of dates, we will allow missing two double sessions without explanation. In case you miss three double sessions we ask for an explanation (e.g., a doctor's confirmation) and some compensatory task (e.g., an additional short essay or summary). To successfully complete the course you must not miss four or more double sessions.

Deadlines

Late submissions of seminar papers and comments/questions will not be considered.

Academic Honesty

Violations of academic honesty (e.g., using others' ideas without citing them) will automatically lead to a negative assessment of the seminar paper or comment/question in which they occur.

Discussion Rules

For our course to succeed it is essential that we treat each other politely and with respect (even when our opinions on some matter diverge).

Laptops, Smartphones, etc.

Please limit the use of electronic devices as much as possible (except for note-taking).