

# PHIL 2304: GLOBAL ETHICS

Virginia Tech. Spring 2018. CRN: 17013.

Smyth Hall 232. **MWF 11:15-12:05.**

Course website on [Canvas](#)  (click link)

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## OVERVIEW

How should we behave justly as global citizens? How do our beliefs and actions affect the lives and deaths of distant strangers? How do we dismantle the oppressive structures that some of us try to uphold?

This course discusses these and other questions that matter (or *should* matter) to 21<sup>st</sup>-century global citizens like you and me. At the end of PHIL 2304 you will:

Learn ethical and political theories from the Anglo-American, European, and East-Asian traditions and refine your grasp of the concepts of morality, rights, duties, freedom, power, oppression, and justice.

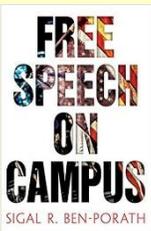
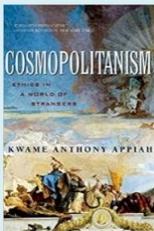
Be able to interpret concepts and events through the lens of moral philosophy, including social media, news, books, music, movies, TV shows, and documentaries.

Understand how historical power relations (especially of race, gender, class, ability) influence or determine many moral and ethical features of public life around the world.

PHIL 2304 is a CLE **Area 2 or Area 7** class. It teaches analytical argumentation and it demands meticulous work. As such, the critical thinking skills that you learn here are highly transferable to other fields.

<b>READINGS</b>	<b>1-2 readings</b> are assigned for each class day. You must finish each reading before coming to class on the day it is assigned for. Readings include articles for general audiences as well as scholarly papers written for philosophers. Most readings are about <b>10-15 pages long</b> .	<b>MATERIALS</b>
<b>MOVIES</b>	You will watch <b>five movies</b> at home on your own and discuss them in class. You may rent some from Newman Library circulation desk or stream them online from paid services. They will also stream for free on our Canvas site, but only on weekends before they are due. Read the movie guides on Canvas before watching. <b>Movies are included on exams.</b>	
<b>BOOKS</b>	Alternative editions and electronic versions of the required books are acceptable. Whatever you buy, you <b>must</b> have the book with you whenever we discuss it in class. I will check.	

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

	<p><b>Sigal Ben-Porath</b></p> <p><i>Free Speech on Campus</i></p> <p>ISBN: 0812250079</p>		<p><b>Kwame Appiah</b></p> <p><i>Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers</i></p> <p>ISBN: 9780393329339</p>
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<b>ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>TESTS: 30%</b>	Three, online, timed. Multiple-choice and other objective questions. 10% each.
	<b>RESPONSES: 15%</b>	For each class day you must turn in <u>either</u> a half-page bulleted outline of the assigned reading <u>or</u> two 50-word discussion questions to bring up in class.
	<b>ACTIVITIES: 15%</b>	Five in-class, group-based activities. You must attend and participate to earn credit.
	<b>FINAL EXAM: 20%</b>	Online, take-home, mostly essay-based. You may use your books and notes.
	<b>DISCUSSION: 20%</b>	Both frequency and quality count. Your attendance is factored in as well.

<b>OUTLINES</b>	Each class day you will turn in a reading response. This may be <u>either</u> <b>a half-page outline</b> or <u>instead</u> <b>two discussion questions</b> (50+ words each). Read the Response Guide on Canvas under “Files.”
	Each response is due on Canvas under “Assignments” before class on the day that the reading is due.
	You will turn in a total of 33 responses from <b>January 29 to April 20</b> . On days with more than one assigned reading, you may pick which reading to do. You may not do more than one reading per class day.
	Book chapters may be used for responses, but movies and videos cannot.
	<b>No late submissions accepted:</b> the goals of this assignment are timeliness and regularity.
Each response is graded as “Complete” or “Incomplete.” Bad, late, or missed responses are Incomplete. You are allowed 3 “free” Incompletes out of 33 responses. After that: 30-28 = <b>A</b> . 27 = <b>A-</b> . 26 = <b>B+</b> . etc.	

I don't curve grades. “B” is often the mean and mode in my classes and also my go-to grade. Don't expect to receive an “A” just because you did everything right: doing everything right is a minimum requirement.

**A = exceptional**, above and beyond the requirements: this is reserved only for top students and is **rare**  
**B = standard**, meeting all requirements satisfactorily but not exceptionally: this is the **most common**  
**C = substandard**, meeting some requirements but not others: this is for passable to mediocre work  
**D = unsatisfactory**, meeting few requirements, and poorly: this is for all-around bad assignments  
**F = failure** to meet most requirements in most assignments: I have not failed anyone in this class so far

**All grades are final.** I reject all grade change requests based on your opinion without some evidence of a demonstrable mistake of mine. I will, however, always answer your questions and explain my reasons.

**GRADES**

<b>POLICIES</b>	<b>HONOR SYSTEM</b>	<b>Students enrolled in this course are responsible for abiding by the Honor Code.</b> Students who have doubts about how the Honor Code applies to any assignment are responsible for obtaining specific guidance from the course instructor before submitting the assignment for evaluation. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the University community from the requirements and expectations of the Honor Code. For additional information, please visit: <a href="https://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/">https://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/</a> 📄
	<b>COMMUNITY</b>	Be punctual, articulate, and polite. Abide by the <a href="#">VT Principles of Community!</a> 📄
	<b>SSD</b>	Present your <a href="#">SSD documentation</a> 📄 by <b>Jan. 29</b> for me to sign. Let's talk in person and figure out the best arrangements for tests and exams. Note-takers are welcome! <b>SSD accommodations are not valid until your accommodation letter is signed.</b> I must be able to sign it with “reasonable notice,” so please bring it up by Jan. 29.
	<b>TIMELINESS</b>	I don't take attendance, but if you are absent often I will notice. Late assignments incur a one-letter grade penalty per day, unless you can prove a debilitating illness.

<b>FORMAT</b>	A typical class is <b>half lecture and half discussion</b> . I call on 2-3 students to summarize the day's readings. During lecture, write down questions to ask during discussion.	<b>HOW TO DO WELL</b>
<b>DIFFICULTY</b>	This course demands engagement, patience, and <b>nuanced understanding</b> . Skimming, guessing, and ballpark answers are insufficient. Be dedicated or drop the class.	
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	You earn credit by attending regularly, looking attentive and engaged, asking questions, giving your opinion, and posting to the forums on Canvas. Failure to be prepared when called upon affects your participation grade negatively.	
<b>THE FIRST RULE</b>	<b>Keep an open mind, but not so open that your brain falls out!</b>	

<b>LINKS</b>	<a href="#">Why study philosophy?</a> 📄	To be successful and make \$\$\$\$. Surprised? Read this article.
	<a href="#">How to e-mail a professor</a> 📄	So you don't sound rude by starting your emails with “hey” or “hello.”
	<a href="#">Claudio's website</a> 📄	More links to music, videos, and readings of interest for this class.
	<a href="#">Philosophy experiments</a> 📄	Some thought experiments to test your philosophical intuitions.

## READING SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES

Most readings are on Canvas under Files. Some are on the internet: click [links](#)  to access them.

Movie viewing options are represented by clickable logos next to each title. For example,  indicates that the movie is available for rental at VT's Newman Library or may be streamed from Netflix or Amazon.

All required movies may be watched for free on Canvas under "Files"  the weekend before they are due.

MORALITY AND JUSTICE			
Introduction	Syllabus day		W 1/17
	D'Amato: Basics of morality and justice		F 1/19
Ethics	Pojman: Strengths and weaknesses of utilitarianism		M 1/22
	O'Neill: A simplified account of Kant's ethics		W 1/24
	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book II, sections 1-5		F 1/26
Politics	Carter: <a href="#">Positive and negative liberty</a>  (read only part 1) <span style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">FIRST RESPONSE DUE</span>	M 1/29	
	Hobbes: <i>Leviathan</i> , Chapters XIII-XIV	W 1/31	
	Rawls: <i>A Theory of Justice</i> <span style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">ACTIVITY</span>	F 2/2	
Geography	Basics of geography (PDF on Canvas/Readings)	watch for Monday <b>Which country does the most good?</b>  	M 2/5
	Danforth: <a href="#">How the north ended up on top of the map</a> 		W 2/7
	No class. Work on the test instead.		F 2/9
<b>Mandatory: test #1 due under "Quizzes" on Canvas  by midnight</b>			<b>S 2/11</b>

GLOBAL INEQUALITIES			
Gender	Haslanger et al.: <a href="#">Topics in feminism</a>  (read only parts 2.1 and 2.2)		M 2/12
	Hirschmann: <i>The Form of Liberty</i> (read only pp. 1-3 and 30-39)		W 2/14
	Jaggar: Global justice for women and intercultural dialogue		F 2/16
Race	Hodson: <a href="#">Be anti-racist, not non-racist</a>  + <a href="#">video</a> 		M 2/19
	Clark: <a href="#">The global privileges of whiteness</a>  + <a href="#">video</a> 		W 2/21
	Cole: <a href="#">The white-savior industrial complex</a> 		F 2/23
Class	Hirschler: <a href="#">8 people as wealthy as half of humanity</a>  Smith: <a href="#">Meet the world's 8 richest men</a>  <span style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">ACTIVITY</span>	watch for Monday <b>The End of Poverty?</b>  	M 2/26
	Nagel: Poverty and food: why charity is not enough		W 2/28
	No class.		F 3/2
<b>Mandatory: test #2 due under "Quizzes" on Canvas  by midnight</b>			<b>S 3/4</b>

## Spring Break (March 3-11)

GLOBAL "DEVELOPMENT"			
Humanitarianism	<b>Miller:</b> Distributing responsibilities		M 3/12
	<b>Weiss:</b> Principles, politics, and humanitarian action	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	W 3/14
	<b>Kapoor:</b> <a href="#">Celebrity humanitarianism: the ideology of global charity</a> 📺		F 3/16
Development	<b>Sen:</b> Equality of what?		M 3/19
	<b>Sen:</b> The concept of development	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	W 3/21
	<i>No class.</i> Response still due (reading: <b>Nussbaum</b> ). Discuss on Canvas!		F 3/23
Labor	<b>O'Laughlin:</b> Corporate social responsibility	watch for Friday <b>Matewan</b> 	M 3/26
	<b>Ross:</b> A tale of two factories		W 3/28
	<i>No reading. Guest lecture and movie discussion.</i>		F 3/30

GLOBAL DISAGREEMENTS			
Multiculturalism	<b>D'Amato:</b> Why (not) multiculturalism?	watch for Monday <b>Zootopia</b>      	M 4/2
	<b>Taylor:</b> Unforced consensus on human rights		W 4/4
	<i>No class.</i> Response still due (reading: <b>Walzer</b> ). Discuss on Canvas!		F 4/6
<b>Mandatory: test #3 due under "Quizzes" on Canvas 🌐 by midnight</b>			<b>S 4/8</b>
Globalism	<b>Appiah:</b> <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> , chapters 2-3-4		M 4/9
	<b>Appiah:</b> <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> , chapters 5-6-7		W 4/11
	<b>Appiah:</b> <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> , chapters 8-9-10		F 4/13
Activism	<b>Johnson:</b> Letter to the Editor, <i>Collegiate Times</i> , 4-25-2007		M 4/16
	<b>King:</b> Letter from a Birmingham Jail	watch by Wednesday <b>Selma</b>      	W 4/18
	<b>Fanon:</b> On violence ( <i>read only pp. 1-4; rest is optional</i> ) <b>LAST RESPONSE DUE</b>		F 4/20
Speech	<b>Ben-Porath:</b> <i>Free Speech on Campus</i> , chapters 1-2		M 4/23
	<b>Ben-Porath:</b> <i>Free Speech on Campus</i> , chapters 3-4		W 4/25
	<b>Ben-Porath:</b> <i>Free Speech on Campus</i> , chapter 5		F 4/27
Conclusion	<b>Moehler:</b> An unconditional subsistence income?		M 4/30
	<b>Le Guin:</b> The ones who walk away from Omelas		W 5/2
<b>Mandatory: final exam due under "Quizzes" on Canvas 🌐 by midnight</b>			<b>F 5/4</b>

## MOVIES OF PHILOSOPHICAL INTEREST—FEEL FREE TO SUGGEST MORE!

### MEANING OF LIFE

The Seventh Seal	Lord of the Rings saga
I Heart Huckabees	The Tree of Life
The Fountain	The Leftovers (TV)

### NATURE OF REALITY

The Truman Show	Waking Life
Dark City	Inception
The Matrix trilogy	

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

Metropolis	Boys Don't Cry
Fahrenheit 451	Crash
Gandhi	X-Men saga
American History X	Get Out
GATTACA	

### POLITICAL JUSTICE

The Great Dictator	The Dark Knight
Rashomon	The Purge
The Laramie Project	13 <sup>th</sup>
Hotel Rwanda	The West Wing (TV)
V for Vendetta	

### VIOLENCE AND WAR

A Clockwork Orange	Crimson Tide
Dr. Strangelove	The Thin Red Line
Apocalypse Now	Lord of War
Grave of the Fireflies	Apocalypto
Starship Troopers	Ender's Game

### MIND, MEMORY, AND MADNESS

THX 1138	Memento
Solaris (1972 and 2002)	Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind
Videodrome	A Scanner Darkly
The Naked Lunch	Enemy
Fight Club	

### ALIEN CONTACT

2001: A Space Odyssey	District 9
2010	Interstellar
Contact	Arrival (2016)

### LEGAL AND MEDIA ETHICS

Rope	Rollerball
12 Angry Men	Minority Report
The China Syndrome	Black Mirror (TV)

### TIME TRAVEL

Groundhog Day	Donnie Darko
Terminator 2	Primer
Star Trek IV	Looper
12 Monkeys	

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Blade Runner	Battlestar Galactica (TV)
Ghost in the Shell	Rise of the Planet of the Apes
Bicentennial Man	Ex Machina
A.I. Artificial Intelligence	

## VIDEO GAMES WITH VALUABLE PHILOSOPHICAL THEMES

*Bioshock* – consumerism, egoism, individualism, surveillance state, predestination, freedom  
*Braid* – feminist ethics, free will, predestination, nature of reality, nature of time, individualism  
*Half-Life* – fascism, oppression, liberation, surveillance state, nature of reality, individualism  
*Horizon Zero Dawn* – predestination, individualism, collectivism, feminist ethics, family, power  
*Deus Ex* – transhumanism, surveillance state, technological singularity, freedom and justice  
*Dishonored* – class, labor and union solidarity, wealth and poverty, nonviolence, equality, family  
*Mass Effect* – destiny, fate, artificial intelligence, transhumanism, genocide, genetic engineering  
*Portal* – existentialism, consciousness, nature of reality, meaning of life, artificial intelligence  
*The Last of Us* – human exceptionalism, feminist ethics, toxic masculinity, family, collectivism  
*The Stanley Parable* – free will, determinism, business ethics, late-capitalism, individualism  
*The Vanishing of Ethan Carter* – creativity, art, aesthetics, paranoia, homophobia, child abuse