

PHIL3073: Advanced Ethics, Social, and Political Philosophy Course Outline (Subject to Revision)

Lecturer:

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Office hours and location: To be determined (and by appointment)

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Course Description: The Ethics of Procreation and Parenting

The relationship between parents and children is unique in a number of respects. Parents exert a profound kind of control over the children they raise, without children consenting to that control. Parents and children often share biological ties, as well as (we hope) ties of intimacy and care that are not present together in other relationships. And parents are usually responsible for bringing about their children's existence.

These distinctive features of the parent-child relationship give rise to serious moral problems concerning how we should bear and rear children. In this course we will consider the following questions: Under what conditions is it permissible to procreate?; Who should be allowed to parent? What rights do parents and children have?; What are the grounds of these rights?; Who should pay for the bearing and rearing of children? Our focus will be on the morality of procreation and parenting, but we will also consider some political questions in these areas.

Course Website

We will use Wattle for everything connected with the course. Readings will be posted there, and all written work should be submitted there (and only there, you won't need to hand in a hard copy). Marked work will be returned to you via your ANU e-mail address (all communication relating to the course will also be sent via this address: if you use another e-mail address, make sure that your ANU e-mail address is linked to it: the technical people in the Chifley Library can assist with this).

Mode of delivery and Workload

The Course is consists of 26 hours of seminar (13 meetings).

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand and explain some general questions in moral and political philosophy.
2. Understand and explain questions surrounding the morality of procreation and parenting.
3. Understand and evaluate some rival answers to the questions discussed in 1. and 2.
4. Carry out advanced research in philosophy
5. Verbally present and communicate philosophical ideas clearly and at a high level, and engage in productive discussion with philosophical interlocutors.

Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1 7/23	Introduction	Have a look at Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on parenting and procreation ethics http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/parenthood/
Week 2 7/30	Permissibility of Procreation I: Wrongful Life	Seanna Shiffrin " Wrongful Life, Procreative Responsibility, and the Significance of Harm "
Week 3 8/6	Permissibility of Procreation II: Is All Procreation Problematic?	Thomas Young, " Overconsumption and Procreation: Are they Morally Equivalent? " David Benatar, <i>Better not to Have Been</i> , Chapter 2 ("Why Coming Into Existence is Always a Harm")
Week 4 8/13	Grounding the Entitlements of Parents	Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, " Parents' Rights and the Value of the Family " Sarah Hannan and Richard Vernon, " Parental Rights: A Role-Based Approach "

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 5 8/20	The Rights of Children I	<p>Joel Feinburg, "The Child's Right to an Open Future" (pdf posted on wattle)</p> <p>Claudia Mills "<u>The Child's Right to an Open Future?</u>"</p>
Week 6 8/27	Rights of Children II	<p>Matthew Clayton "<u>The Case Against the Comprehensive Enrollment of Children</u>"</p> <p>Christina Cameron "<u>Clayton on Comprehensive Enrollment</u>"</p>
Week 7 9/3	Right to Parent a Particular Child: The Significance of Genetics and Reproductive Labor	<p>David Archard, "<u>What's Blood Got to Do With It</u>"</p> <p>Anca Gheaus, "<u>The Right to Parent One's Biological Baby</u>"</p>
Week 8 9/10	Teaching Break Short Paper Due Friday, Sept. 12, by midnight (submit on wattle)	No Readings
Week 9 9/17	Teaching Break	No Readings
Week 10 9/24	The Child's Right to be Loved?	<p>Matthew Liao "<u>The Right of Children to be Loved</u>"</p> <p>Luara Ferracioli "The State's Duty to Ensure Children are Loved" (To be posted on wattle)</p>
Week 11 10/1	Who Should Pay For Child-Rearing?	<p>Paula Casal and Andrew Williams, "Equality of Resources and Procreative Justice" (To be posted on wattle)</p> <p>Patrick Tomlin, "<u>Should Kids Pay Their Own Way?</u>"</p>

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 12 10/8	Parental Partiality	Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, " <u>Legitimate Parental Partiality</u> " Niko Kolodny " <u>Which Relationships Justify Partiality?</u> "
Week 13 10/15	Student Paper Presentations	No Readings
Week 14 10/22	Students Choose Final Topic	To Be Determined
Week 15 10/29	Wrap Up	No Readings Long Paper Due

Assessment Details:

Seminar Participation (10%): Full credit requires attendance and active participation in the seminar. Contribution must be of good quality. It should be thoughtful, the product of careful reading of the materials and thought about them before coming to class. It should also be responsive to the ideas advanced by fellow students. Each student should be contributing something at each meeting, but more is not always better! (Addresses learning outcomes 1-5.)

Short Paper (25%): A short (~1500 word) critical response piece to something you've encountered in the readings. Due 9/3. (Addresses learning outcomes 1-4.)

Longer Paper (55%): A longer (~3500 word) paper, due 10/29, displaying an engagement with the course materials, which develops and argues for a particular perspective and responds to possible alternative views or objections to the view that is advocated. In order to receive credit on the paper, you **MUST** discuss your topic with me in office hours. I will set aside special meetings for this purpose. (Addresses learning outcomes 1-4.)

Paper Presentation (10%): A brief, in-class presentation of your argument in the longer essay, followed by a brief Q&A period with the class. (Addresses learning outcomes 4, 5.)

Marking

Here are some indications of what kinds of essays and written work get different marks. These comments relate particularly to the large essay.

HD

- A. The author has read widely, and covers the field. They have a good understanding of the material that they have read, and it is critically digested and made good use of in the development of an argument, rather than just reproduced.
- B. The author offers a clear and interesting response to the question, and presents compelling and well-ordered argument that explains and makes a good case for the author's perspective, as well as characterizing correctly and doing justice to viewpoints with which the author disagrees. A range of relevant viewpoints will be considered. Doing justice to other viewpoints does not mean not expressing disagreement with them. Rather, a good essay will have its own point of view, for which the author argues. What is needed is that the author is fair to other views, such that someone who holds a view with which the author disagrees would have to admit that the author's account of their viewpoint was fair, and that the author had considered the kinds of response that that person would make to the author's views, even though they would not have put things quite as did the author. The author will thus anticipate and answer what would be likely to be the obvious come-backs to their critics from those whom they are criticizing, and will produce an argument that even someone who disagrees with them will have to admit is telling. The author will make good use of the (limited) space available, and there will be no padding.
- C. The material will be well-presented. It will be made clear to the reader what is being argued, and what role each element of the discussion, or each quotation from some other author - which will be brief and to the point - is playing in the overall argument, which itself is clearly a response to the question as set. The author should always be in command of the material that they are using, and be using it to develop their own response to the question. It should always be clear to the reader what point is being drawn by the author from what source.
- D. The essay will use a good, clear system of referencing which will allow the reader to identify what is being referred to; quotations will be accurate, there will be a clear and accurate bibliography, and the author will typically have both run a spell check and have read through the essay (ideally, out loud as punctuated, to someone else), before it is handed in.
- E. A really first-rate piece of argument may be able to obtain an HD even if it is at odds with some of these recommendations. (E.g. I recall material getting an HD that was highly sophisticated, and offered a strong and original line of argument, but which was unfair to some of those whom it was criticizing, and rather sloppy in its referencing. However, such a piece would not get as high a grade as it would have done, had it met these recommendations, and however good the work could well be marked down to a D for failing to meet them.)

Distinction

If an essay is to obtain a distinction, it should:

- A. Offer a solid engagement with the subject-matter of the essay, doing justice to a range of points of view. It will make full use of the space available.

- B. Show signs of wide reading, with good coverage of the field; the author will take a critical attitude towards the material that he or she has read. A textbook may well have been used to obtain an initial orientation upon the course material; but this will have been used as a ladder which can be cast aside, once the author has got to grips with more specialized sources.
- C. Offer a clear perspective on the material with which it is dealing, providing an argument for that viewpoint, by way of critical engagement with other perspectives, not least those in reading material that it has consulted.
- D. Be clearly organized, so that the reader discovers at the outset what the author will be arguing, and how. It should also be clear, at any point in the essay, just how the material that is being read contributed to the overall argument that the author is presenting. The material will have a clear structure, relating to the overall argument that is being developed, and the reader will be able to understand why the material is being presented as it is
- E. The material will be well-presented, with clear referencing and a bibliography from which the reader can obtain easily the information that he or she needs.
- F. A distinction will typically differ from an HD by virtue of either consisting, to a greater extent, of a survey of different perspectives (from which will emerge, more briefly, an argument for the view which the author favours), or it will present the view which it favours in a manner that is not fully adequate in the way in which it characterizes other views, or does not anticipate and answer the responses that their proponents might make. In comparison with an HD, the argument may be a bit heavy-handed; the range of views considered somewhat limited, and what is said about them either a little obvious, or rather idiosyncratic. However, a distinction is a good piece of work, and a grade to be proud of.

Credit

- A. An essay that obtains a credit will be a reasonably solid piece of work. But it will typically get to grips with fewer of the issues than will an HD or a Distinction. Its coverage of the relevant material may be patchy. The author may not have made full use of the space that was available to him or her, or may have included material that was not strictly relevant, or simply have written at too great a length about things that could have been conveyed more briefly, thus crowding out more interesting material
- B. This, in turn, is likely to reflect the fact that the author has not undertaken as much reading as has someone who has obtained a Distinction, or that their coverage of the field is limited; they may also restrict themselves to exposition of the views of other people, with only limited critical appraisal of the reading. The perspective that is offered by a textbook or by some other introductory material may be strongly in evidence.
- C. The argument should be clear, and there should be a perspective on the subject-matter for which argument is presented. There should also be critical evaluation of the material that is being dealt with; but in an essay that obtains a Credit, one tends to get more presentation than criticism, so that the material often amounts to a

précis with brief critical comments, rather than a re-working of the material to the author's own purposes, as one would find in the higher grades. The author may have more difficulty in giving a good account of their material, or in making good use of it. The overall argument will often be less sophisticated than in the higher grades, and the author may not appreciate the full ramifications of the views under discussion.

- D. The organization of the material should be clear, and there should be a structure to the essay. In work that obtains a Credit, however, all this is often rather wooden, and comes over as driven by the material, rather than by what the author wants to do with it.
- E. Referencing and bibliography must be adequate, and the material should be well-presented, but an essay that obtains a credit may fall down on this, as compared to a distinction.

Pass

- A. If an essay is to pass, it must engage with the question, and contain material that is pertinent to it. But an essay that obtains a pass will often contain information the overall point of which is not made clear, and which will seem to the reader to be beside the point (e.g. it may contain surveys of historical material, where these are not called for). It will often not cover important material with which the essay should be engaged, and what it chooses to discuss or not discuss may be idiosyncratic. Sometimes, the essay will not make full use of the space available.
- B. The student who receives a pass would typically have been limited in the reading that he or she consulted, and been over-influenced by a textbook, or by one particular source that they consulted. They will typically take an uncritical attitude towards the materials that they are using, and may not have read sufficiently widely in other things to understand fully what the perspectives are from which the authors to whom they are referring, are writing.
- C. The argument that is offered is often simplistic. While the author will have a viewpoint on the material he or she will often show signs of not having thought about its cogency. The author may have misunderstood some of the material with which he or she is dealing, or may represent some viewpoints in ways which would elicit howls of protest from those who hold them, and criticism, when it is offered, may be much less telling than the author thinks it is.
- D. The organization and structure of the essay may be poor. It may often not be too clear to the reader where the essay is going, or we may be given a narrative the structure of which has little connection with the structure of the argument that the author is making.
- E. Presentation is often poor, or odd. The author of an essay that is a poor pass may sometimes seem to have given more attention to the fonts that they have chosen than they have to whether what they are writing really holds water. There may be defects in referencing and bibliography.

Failure

An essay that fails will typically:

- A. Be limited in its content, and not come to grips with the material that needs to go into an adequate essay. Essays that fail are often very short.
- B. Rely to too great an extent on a textbook or introductory account, or on reading of an idiosyncratic character. (You should start by reading things that are recommended and only then move to other material - not least because, unless you have read the recommended reading, you may have no feel for where other material is coming from.)
- C. Not address the question. I.e. we will have asked one thing in the question, and the answer will go off at a tangent. Or it may make statements about the question for which it offers no argument or evidence. (If you are not sure what is required, ask your tutor in the tutorial on essay writing.) It may also exhibit misunderstandings in what it says about views that it discusses. (If you are not sure that you have understood things, ask for a meeting with Christian.) It may exhibit no feel for the validity or the force of arguments, and convey that the author has no conception of how a critic would react to what he or she was saying.
- D. Be poorly organized. It may be difficult for the reader to work out where the essay is going, and what relation the points that are made have to the claims that the author is making about them.
- E. Be poorly presented. Essays that fail are often gravely defective in referencing or bibliography, in such a way that the reader cannot identify what is being cited or referred to.
- F. Essays that fail badly, typically fail to address the question at all, or misunderstand badly the material with which they are dealing
- G. Plagiarism is a sure way to fail - it is your job to make sure that you know what counts as plagiarism, and that you avoid it.

Penalties and extensions

Any work that is late will be subject to a 2% per working day penalty, unless an extension has been granted. The CASS rules concerning the granting of extensions are as follows:

1. Extensions will not be granted retrospectively, except in medical emergencies or on the advice of the Disability Services Centre.
2. Extensions will be granted only for medical conditions, bereavement, other compelling reasons or on the advice of the Disability Services Centre. Extensions on medical grounds require a medical certificate.
3. Extensions will normally not be granted because of conflicts with other study commitments, work commitments, holidays, family gatherings, competing assessment deadlines, sporting commitments or commitments to student organisations.

4. Even when an extension has been granted, assignments will normally not be accepted beyond the date when the assessment on that question/topic has been returned to other students enrolled in the course. If a student is unable to submit assessment by that time, alternative assessment may be set by the course coordinator.

To request an extension, fill out the extension request form on Wattle, and send it, together with a scanned copy of supporting material (e.g. a doctor's certificate), to your tutor if you are requesting up to 7 days, or to R.J. if you are requesting additional time. For anything that is not straightforward, contact R.J. by email to set up a meeting.

Learning resources

Readings recommended for each tutorial (and as prior reading for lectures) will be posted to wattle, typically as pdf files (download a free Adobe Reader in you don't have one on your own machine from: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>).

Generic skills

The generic skills with which this course is concerned, include:

- critical apprehension of textual material
- development of individual's own perspective on course material, and of skills in presenting it orally and in writing development of skills in argument – and in the receiving of criticism
- teamwork

General information

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

<http://academichonesty.anu.edu.au/index.html>

Academic misconduct can seriously jeopardize your academic career, your future, and, if you are an international student, your ability to stay in Australia to study. It is the responsibility of each individual student to ensure that:

- they are familiar with the expectations for academic honesty both in general, and in the specific context of particular disciplines or courses
- work submitted for assessment is genuine and original
- appropriate acknowledgement and citation is given to the work of others
- they do not knowingly assist other students in academically dishonest practice.

When in doubt about anything, ASK, and ask EARLY. Don't leave it until the assignment due date. Your lecturers, tutors and College administration staff are here to help you. It is the responsibility of everyone at the ANU to uphold and promote fundamental principles of quality and integrity in scholarly work.

Academic Skills and Learning Centre

<https://academicskills.anu.edu.au/>

The Academic Skills and Learning Centre (ASLC) offers ANU students free and confidential help with their academic work through individual consultations, workshops, courses, podcasts and handouts. Our aim is to assist students to develop the academic, critical thinking and communication strategies that are foundational to all scholarly activity. For ANU students, the ASLC offers:

- individual consultations
- workshops/courses
- online and print materials and publications
- the Language Exchange Program
- podcasts
- the Essay and Report Writing File

The ASLC is located on the lower ground floor of the Pauline Griffin Building and is only closed on weekends and public holidays.

Appeals Procedure

<http://cass.anu.edu.au/current-students/rules-and-policies/appeals>

If you genuinely believe you have received an inappropriate or incorrect result, there are steps you can take to have that result reviewed. This must be done within 30 working days of the formal notification of results. Your first point of contact should always be your tutor or the primary instructor.