

# PHIL1444 PPE First Year Seminar

## Module Description & Week-by-Week Schedule

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### Module Leader

Dr Jessica Isserow

### Email

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### Office Location

Room 2.05,  
Botany House

### Office Hours

Wed. 12-2pm  
By appointment.

### Formative Assessment

Essay plan:  
1,000 words  
(Optional)

### Summative Assessment

Essay: 2,000 words

### Learning Structure

1 X 1.5-hour  
discussion-based lecture  
per week  
+  
1 X 1.5-hour seminar  
per week

### Module Description

This module introduces students to important concepts, positions, and debates in moral and political philosophy and in applied ethics, and proceeds in three parts:

PART I: We will first consider two major views in normative ethics (consequentialism, deontology) critically examining what makes our actions right or wrong, and what we owe to one another, morally speaking. Following that, we'll engage with a well-known critique of normative ethical theories: the so-called 'friendship critique'. Can familiar moral theories incorporate our duties to our friends and our loved ones in a satisfying way? If not, what might that suggest to us about the scope or usefulness of those moral theories?

PART II: We will investigate core issues that arise in political philosophy. We will begin by asking questions about social justice, and critically contrast two families of approaches to this issue: libertarianism and liberal egalitarianism. Building upon this knowledge and the conceptual tool-kit that we'll have gotten together by this stage, we'll then move on to examine two important debates that arise within political philosophy. The first of these pertains to freedom of expression; what is the value of free speech, and what sorts of restrictions (if any) can we justify placing upon it? The second debate concerns justice in education; we will be asking questions about educational opportunities and people's (especially children's) differential access to learning resources.

PART III: In the final part of the module, we will explore three topics in applied ethics. The first of these is the ethics of eating meat. We'll ask: is a non-vegan lifestyle morally defensible? The second topic is the black market in organs. Many people living in poverty sell their organs out of desperation. While the surrounding practices often seem exploitative, can a moral case perhaps be made for facilitating such choices? Finally, we'll consider moral questions surrounding marriage, and engage with critiques and defences of the institution.

## Course Schedule

Week	Subject	Required Reading(s)
Week 1	Consequentialism	Williams, B. "A Critique of Utilitarianism." In N. Warbuton (ed.), <i>Philosophy: Basic Readings</i> . London: Routledge, (2005): 156-169.  Ashford, Elizabeth. "Utilitarianism, Integrity and Partiality." <i>Journal of Philosophy</i> 97, no.8 (2002): 421-439.
Week 2	Deontology	Thomson, Judith Jarvis. "The Trolley Problem." <i>The Yale Law Journal</i> 94, no.6 (1985): 1395-1415.
Week 3	The Friendship Critique of Moral Theories	Railton, Peter. "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality." <i>Philosophy &amp; Public Affairs</i> (1984): 134-171. · (Please read until the end of page 163.)
Week 4	Libertarianism	Nozick, Robert. "Chapter 7: Distributive Justice." In his <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> . Oxford: Blackwell, (1974): 149-213. · (Please read pages 149-164 and 169-173.)  Cohen, Gerald A. "Robert Nozick and Wilt Chamberlain: How Patterns Preserve Liberty." <i>Erkenntnis</i> 11, no.1 (1977): 5-23.
Week 5	Reading Week	No Classes
Week 6	Liberal Egalitarianism	Rawls, John. <i>Justice as Fairness: A Restatement</i> . Harvard University Press, 2001. (Please read Section 27 to Section 40.)
Week 7	Freedom of Expression	Levin, Abigail. "Pornography, Hate Speech, and their Challenge to Dworkin's Egalitarian Liberalism." <i>Public Affairs Quarterly</i> 23, no. 4 (2009): 357-373.
Week 8	Justice in Education	White, John. "Justifying Private Schools." <i>Journal of Philosophy of Education</i> 50, no. 4 (2016): 496-510.  Kidd, Ian James, and Mark Jago. "Private Schools and Queue-jumping: A reply to White." <i>Journal of Philosophy of Education</i> 54, no. 5 (2020): 1201-1205.
Week 9	The Ethics of Eating Meat	Driver, Julia. "Individual Consumption and Moral Complicity." In Bramble, Ben, Bob Fischer, and Robert William Fischer (Eds.), <i>The Moral Complexities of Eating Meat</i> (2015): 67-79.  Norcross, Alastair. "Puppies, pigs, and people: Eating meat and marginal cases." <i>Philosophical Perspectives</i> 18 (2004): 229-245.
Week 10	The Black Market in Organs	Satz, Debra. "The Moral Limits of Markets: The Case of Human Kidneys." <i>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society</i> 108, (2008): 269-288.
Week 11	Moral Questions about Marriage	Card, Claudia. "Against Marriage and Motherhood." <i>Hypatia</i> 11, no. 3 (1996): 1-23.  Callahan, Joan. "Same-Sex Marriage: Why it Matters—at Least for Now." <i>Hypatia</i> 24, no. 1 (2009): 70-80.