

# Syllabus: 20415

## Meats, Markets, Medicines, and Other Moral Issues

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### Course Leader

Dr Jessica Isserow,  
Associate Professor  
in Philosophy

### Email

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### Office Location

Room 208,  
Malloy Hall

### Office Hour

Monday 4-5pm, or  
by appointment if  
you can't make  
that time.

### Assessment

Attendance &  
Participation (20%)

Mid-Term Essay of  
2,000 words (40%)

Final Essay of  
2,000 words (40%)

Optional: quiz for  
extra credit (5%)

### Class Structure

Monday:  
Primer Session

Wednesday:  
Discussion Session

### Course Description

This course introduces students to important concepts, issues, and debates in applied ethics. It begins with a brief overview of normative ethics, familiarizing students with two major approaches in this area: consequentialism and deontology. The remainder of the course tackles real-world issues, and proceeds in four parts.

PART I: We engage with questions concerning our duties to non-human animals, as well as related questions concerning their moral status. Do non-human animals have moral rights? Do they matter less from the moral point of view than human beings? We'll also be engaging with some important questions about the ethics of eating meat.

PART II: We consider the moral challenges raised by certain kinds of markets, including commercial surrogacy, sweatshops, and the black market in human organs. On the one hand, these practices seem objectionably exploitative. On the other hand, we might think that these individuals' choices—to sell their organs, rent out their wombs, or undertake risky labor—should be respected.

PART III: We investigate ongoing controversies in the ethics of medicine. One such controversy concerns the shape that a state's organ donation system ought to take: should such systems be 'opt-in', or 'opt-out'? Another important issue is how we ought to conceive of disabilities: are disabilities neutral differences—as opposed to good or bad ones? We'll also look into related controversies surrounding human enhancement and genetic engineering. Finally, we'll explore the ethics of voluntary Euthanasia.

PART IV: The course concludes by examining matters of justice. Among these are matters of global justice raised by widespread poverty; what duties do those of us living in affluent countries have to the global poor, and why? Another such issue is justice in the distribution of educational opportunities. Does justice require that all children receive *the same* quality education? Or does it simply require that all children receive a *good enough* education?

## Course Schedule

Week	Subject	Required Reading(s)
Week 1 Jan-13	Introduction to Normative Ethics	Judith Jarvis Thomson: "The Trolley Problem". · <u>Note</u> : Please read the whole syllabus before Wednesday's session.
Week 2 Jan-20	The Moral Status of non-Human Animals	Leslie P. Francis and Richard Norman: "Some animals are more equal than others". · <u>Note</u> : Monday Jan 20 is Martin Luther King Day (no classes). Please also read the 'Topic Notes' in preparation for Wednesday's session.
Week 3 Jan-27	The Ethics of Eating Meat	Alastair Norcross: "Puppies, Pigs, and People".
Week 4 Feb-03	Meat Consumption & Collective Harm	Julia Nefsky: "Consumer Choice and Collective Impact".
Week 5 Feb-10	Sweatshops	Matt Zwolinski: "Structural Exploitation". · <u>Note</u> : Extra homework this week! Please mark the two sample essays.
Week 6 Feb-17	Surrogacy	Susan Dodds and Karen Jones: "Surrogacy and Autonomy".
Week 7 Feb-24	Selling Organs	Debra Satz: "The Moral Limits of Markets".
Week 8 Mar-03	Donating Organs	Michael B. Gill: "Presumed Consent, Autonomy, and Organ Donation". · <u>Note</u> : Mid-term Essay Due Thursday March 6 by 5pm.
BREAK Mar-10		<u>Note</u> : University's Mid-Term Break: No Classes
Week 9 Mar-17	Disability	Elizabeth Barnes: <i>The Minority Body</i> (Chapter 5: 'Causing Disability')
Week 10 Mar-24		<u>Note</u> : Jess is away: No Classes.
Week 11 Mar-31	Designer Babies & Human Enhancement	Frances Kamm: "What Is and Is Not Wrong with Enhancement?"
Week 12 Apr-07	Euthanasia	David Velleman: "Against the right to die".
Week 13 Apr-14	Global Justice I	Peter Singer: "Famine, Affluence, and Morality."
Week 14 Apr-21	Global Justice II	Pablo Gilibert: "The duty to eradicate global poverty: positive or negative?" · <u>Note</u> : Final Essay Due Thursday April 24 by 5pm. · <u>Note</u> : Monday April 21 is Easter Monday (no classes). Please also read the 'Topic Notes' in preparation for Wednesday's session.
Week 15 Apr-28	Justice in Education	Shlomi Segall: "If you're a luck egalitarian, how come you read bedtime stories to your children?" · <u>Note</u> : Extra Credit Quiz!