

“... the ability to form one’s beliefs in a way that is responsive to evidence is not at all the same as the ability to present reasons for one’s beliefs, either to others or to oneself. Reason-giving requires a wide range of skills that need not be present in the reasons-responsive person. One thing the skeptic about reason-giving may be responding to is the recognition that some people are terrifically adept at providing prima facie reasonable arguments for their beliefs, quite apart from whether those beliefs are correct. Just as a reasonable person might willfully ignore the appeals of a gifted speaker in order to avoid being misled, an intelligent person who recognizes his own weakness in distinguishing apparently good but mistaken reasoning from the genuine item might also willfully ignore detailed and subtle appeals to reason.”

- Hilary Kornblith, *Distrusting Reason*, Midwest Studies in Philosophy (1999), 184.

“The greatest orator, save one, of antiquity, has left it on record that he always studied his adversary’s case with as great, if not still greater, intensity than even his own. What Cicero practised as the means of forensic success requires to be imitated by all who study any subject in order to arrive at the truth. He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion. The rational position for him would be suspension of judgment, and unless he contents himself with that, he is either led by authority, or adopts, like the generality of the world, the side to which he feels most inclination. Nor is it enough that he should hear the arguments of adversaries from his own teachers, presented as they state them, and accompanied by what they offer as refutations. That is not the way to do justice to the arguments, or bring them into real contact with his own mind. He must be able to hear them from persons who actually believe them; who defend them in earnest, and do their very utmost for them. He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form; he must feel the whole force of the difficulty which the true view of the subject has to encounter and dispose of; else he will never really possess himself of the portion of truth which meets and removes that difficulty . . . So essential is this discipline to a real understanding of moral and human subjects, that if opponents of all important truths do not exist, it is indispensable to imagine them, and supply them with the strongest arguments which the most skilful devil’s advocate can conjure up.”

- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Blackwell Publishing, 2003, pp. 115-116

Philosophy 143: Applied Ethics, Ethics Bowl

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 12:00-1:05

Social Science 1, 110

Instructor: Kyle Robertson (kxrobert@ucsc.edu)
Office Hours: Monday and Friday, 1:30-2:30 (Stevenson Café;
A107 in the Philosophy Annex, if raining)

Course Description: This is an intensive applied ethics course taught with a focus on the fifteen cases created by the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics for regional ethics bowl competitions each year. Each student will be given 2-4 of these cases to prepare for written and oral argument. In the context of this preparation, we will cover major modern ethical theories, areas of applied ethical theory relevant to this year’s cases, and oral advocacy skills.

This course serves as preparation for UCSC’s Ethics Bowl team for the California Regional Ethics Bowl competition. The competing teams of students (at most 2 teams of 5 students each) will be drawn from students enrolled in this course. While no prior experience with moral philosophy is required to take the course, such prior experience may be used in determining which students represent UCSC

at the Ethics Bowl competition. There will be a selection process during week 2 to designate students preparing to represent UCSC at the Ethics Bowl competition.

All students will be split into teams of five, and the cases will be divided among the students so that each team has a student with primary responsibility for each case. The students will be responsible for preparing the team's ethical position on that case, and for presenting the team's position on that case during the course of the quarter.

All students, whether representing UCSC at the Ethics Bowl competition or not, are expected to be prepared to present and participate in class debates and are responsible for being prepared to give at least one formal case presentation during the course of the quarter.

Note Re Nationals: If the UCSC Ethics Bowl team does well at the CA Regional competition, we may qualify for the national Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl during Winter quarter.

What is Ethics Bowl?:

Ethics Bowl is a team debate competition where student teams examine case studies that demonstrate ethical dilemmas drawn from a wide range of areas (environmental ethics, biomedical ethics, business ethics, institutional ethics, personal ethics, etc.). The students determine a morally defensible resolution to the dilemmas, which they then defend before a panel of judges and a competing team. After a team presents a case and is challenged by a competing team and responds to that challenge, judges question the team to elicit more detail, raise issues not addressed in the original answers, or further challenge them. Judges evaluate the team's performance in terms of the coherence of the argument, propriety of reason, and response to challenges.

Further information about ethics bowl, and past teams, is available at:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~appe/ethicsbowl.html>

<http://philosophy.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/2011%20Ethics%20Bowl%20.html>

http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/localnews/ci_13988140

Work Expectation: This course, and the associated grading, are all directed at helping the student to grapple with the ethical issues in their cases and to present an excellent argument, one which fully reflects their level of understanding.

All work expectations apply to all students, regardless of whether they are competing at the CA regional. Students actively coaching a HS Ethics Bowl team may be able to use that work to satisfy their participation/competition grade, with the instructor's approval on a case-by-case basis.

The course will be graded as follows:

Papers:

- First Paper Drafts: 10%
- Final Papers: 40%

Participation/Competition:

- Classroom Participation: 30%
- Final Oral Argument: 20%

Papers: Please note that your first paper draft is 10% of your grade. This grade will largely reflect the apparent amount of *effort* put into thinking broadly and deeply about your cases. I will not expect refined and polished writing in a first draft, though of course the more clearly you can express your arguments, the better. Students who turn in poor first drafts will have great difficulty receiving an A in this course.

Students are responsible for producing papers that articulate and defend their team's positions on the cases for which they have primary responsibility (2-3 cases per student). There is no hard word limit; however, it is difficult to cover cases in sufficient depth in less than 1500 words.

These papers are not intended to be written as normal philosophy papers. In particular, it is unacceptable to wait until the second half of the quarter to begin doing this written work. Ethics Bowl is an extemporaneous debate competition, and students must be prepared to speak without notes. Preparing a good Ethics Bowl case involves developing a position substantially before the competition so that it may be practiced and refined. Accordingly, I encourage students to see these papers as a living document, begun as soon as the cases are assigned and constantly updated as the student's understanding of their case deepens or changes and they gather more support for their position.

To this end, students will submit their papers as drafts once for comments, at the beginning of Week 6. Please submit them to me by email (kxrobert@ucsc.edu) by 5:00 p.m. on October 31. I will provide substantial feedback on all of these papers.

Given the constraints of my schedule, and the size of enrollment this year, I will return comments on a rolling basis. Those competing for UCSC on December 2nd will receive comments first, within a week, while non-competing students will receive feedback within two weeks.

Final papers for everyone are due Wednesday, December 7, by email.

Papers will be graded according to the quality standards of an upper division philosophy class, but with an eye toward their use in preparing students to perform in an extemporaneous debate setting. An excellent paper would therefore not involve things like a close textual analysis or engagement with a narrow philosophical issue, but would rather construct a comprehensive ethical stance on a case along with a broad consideration of counter-arguments and alternative

ethical stances the team has rejected. We will discuss a formal paper grading rubric in class.

Participation: Classroom participation is an integral part of this course. All students are expected to come to every class prepared to actively participate in classroom discussions.

Final Oral Arguments: All students, along with their team, will present a final oral argument on at least one of their cases. This will take place at the end of the quarter in an abbreviated Ethics Bowl competition format, where each student will present their 10 minute case and respond to approximately 10 minutes of questioning from the instructor and class. The total length of this examination, therefore, will be roughly the length of an Ethics Bowl round (one hour and forty-five minutes). 80% of a students' score during this round will be on their presented case, 20% of the score will be a team score for how well the team as a whole performed, particularly during the question and answer period.

This requirement will be waived for students who compete at the California Regional Ethics Bowl competition, and may be waived for students actively coaching a HS Ethics Bowl team.

Attendance: Attendance at all meetings is mandatory. Unexcused absences may affect your grade; excused absences will not affect your grade. Any absence may be grounds for removing a student from a competition team.

Reading List (texts available for purchase at the Literary Guillotine, or online)

- **Summer Reading:**
 - Michael Sandel, *Justice*.
 - James Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. [OPTIONAL]
- **Fall Readings:**
 - Michael Sandel, *Justice: A Reader*
 - Scott Aiken and Robert Talisse, *Why We Argue (And How We Should)*
 - Ethics Bowl Cases, rule documents, etc. [eCommons]
 - Other suggested readings are included under each substantive topic below. Each student is encouraged to do supplemental readings on theories they wish to use in their arguments. **Please Note:** it is *not* expected that students would do all the supplemental reading listed under a particular day before class that day. The supplemental reading is intended to jump start further theoretical research for case preparation purposes.

Week 0:

Sep. 23: Overview of course; overview of this year's cases; preferences sheet, etc.

Week 1:

Sep 26: Ethics Bowl Background, rules, norms, etc.

- Ladenson, B. "The Educational Significance of the Ethics Bowl", *Teaching Ethics*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (on eCommons)
- Aiken and Talisse, Introduction and Conclusion (xi-xvi, 143-148).
- Ethics Bowl Rules Documents – Championship Rules (pages 1-3 in particular), Judges Score Sheet, Judges Guidelines, and Ethics Bowl Etiquette (all on eCommons).

Sep. 28: The role of argument in democracy.

- Aiken and Talisse, Chapters 1-3 (1-56).

Sep. 30: **Utilitarianism** – excerpts in Reader, 9-47.

- Bentham, J. *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (excerpts)
- Mill, J.S. *Utilitarianism* (excerpts)
- Supplemental reading ideas:
 - Julia Driver (2005). "Consequentialism and Feminist Ethics", *Hypatia*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 183-199.
 - Peter Singer (1972). "Famine, Affluence, and Morality", *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 229-243.
 - --- (1980). *Practical Ethics*, Cambridge University Press.

Week 2:

Oct. 3: **Deontology** – excerpts in Reader, 158-201.

- Kant, I. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*
- Supplemental reading ideas:
 - Onora O'Neill (1985). "Consistency in Action", *Universality and Morality: Essays on Ethical Universalizability*, Dordrecht: Reidel.
 - Christine Korsgaard (1986). "Skepticism about Practical Reason", *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 83, No. 1, 5-25.

Oct. 5: **Virtue Ethics**:

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I – Book III, 5. [eCommons]
- Supplemental reading ideas:
 - Julia Annas (2009). *Intelligent Virtue*, Oxford University Press.
 - G.E.M. Anscombe (1958). "Modern Moral Philosophy", *Philosophy*, Vol. 33, No. 124, 1-19.
 - Rosalind Hursthouse (1991). "Virtue Theory and Abortion", *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 223-246.
 - --- (1999). *On Virtue Ethics*, Oxford University Press.
 - Alasdair MacIntyre (1981). *After Virtue*, University of Notre Dame Press.

Oct. 7: **Justice** – excerpts in Reader, 203-221, 343-358.

- Rawls, J. *A Theory of Justice*.
- ---. *Political Liberalism*.
- Supplemental reading ideas:
 - Elizabeth Anderson (1999). “What is the Point of Equality?” *Ethics*, v. 109, issue 2, 287. (available at <http://www.forum2.org/mellon/lj/anderson.html>)
 - Amartya Sen (2009), *The Idea of Justice*, Harvard University Press.

Week 3:

Oct. 10: ***Libertarianism*** – excerpts in Reader, 60-82.

- Nozick, R. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*
- Hayek, F. *The Constitution of Liberty*.
- Supplemental reading ideas:
 - Robert Nozick (1997). “On the Randian Argument” (available at <http://www.nowandfutures.com/large/On-the-Randian-Argument-Nozick.pdf>)

Oct. 12: 5-minute talks.

Oct. 14: 5-minute talks.

Week 4:

Oct. 17: Dialectical Fallacies: Aiken and Talisse, Chapters 4 and 5 (59-84).
Teams assigned; cases assigned.

Oct. 19: Case Discussions.

Oct. 21: Case Discussions.

Week 5:

Oct 24: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Oct 26: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Oct. 28: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Week 6:

Oct 31: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

***Paper drafts due to kxrobert@ucsc. by 12:00 p.m.

Nov. 2: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Nov. 4: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Week 7:

Nov. 7: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Nov. 9: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Nov. 11: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Week 8:

Nov. 14: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Nov. 16: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Nov. 18: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Week 9 (Thanksgiving Week):

Nov. 21: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Nov. 23: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Week 10:

Nov. 28: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Nov. 30: Practice Presentations/Rounds.

Dec. 2: Travel to CSU Chico for our competition! No normal class. Those travelling will meet a shuttle service mid-day for transit to Cabrillo. The CA Regional takes place on Saturday, Dec. 3rd, and we will return the evening of the 3rd after we compete.

Finals Week: Final papers due by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, December 7th, our scheduled Final date. No in-class final. Please email them to me at kxrobert@ucsc.edu.