Killing is wrong. The generic prohibition against killing, while seemingly univocal, is perplexing. Most people agree that taking human life is wrong, yet there are clearly cases where killing is justified. Morality demands that we not kill others, yet we generally agree that considerations of self-defense override this demand. Acts of terrorism strike us as deplorable, yet similar destructive acts in the midst of war seem permissible. Millions of animals are killed in the United States each year for culinary purposes, yet the lives of similarly cognitively deficient humans are seen as inviolable. While all people agree that killing infants is wrong, many believe that killing humans in the initial stages of gestation is permissible. How should we reconcile these apparently conflicting condemnations and approvals? What makes killings immoral, when they are? This course will explore a cluster of such questions, all related to issues of life and death, in the service of addressing the central question of this course: What makes killing wrong?

Instructors:

Lecturer
Chris Vogel
1128 Skinner Building
email: cavogel@umd.edu

Textbook:
Various articles posted online on ELMS (http://elms.umd.edu)

Assessment:
Each student’s success in learning the material for this course will be evaluated based on their performance on three(3) “take-home” exams, two(2) Writing Assignments, and participation in online forum discussions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam One</td>
<td>Jan. 11th</td>
<td>20% of grade</td>
<td>Part I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Two</td>
<td>Jan. 18th</td>
<td>25% of grade</td>
<td>Part II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Three</td>
<td>Jan. 26th</td>
<td>25% of grade</td>
<td>Part III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum Discussion</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>20% of grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment #1</td>
<td>Jan. 5th</td>
<td>5% of grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment #2</td>
<td>Jan. 15th</td>
<td>5% of grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading and Evaluation
Assignments and exam questions will (generally) be graded on a ten (10) point scale, with grades assigned as following:

Fail: &lt;2; ‘D’: 2-3.99; ‘C’: 4-5.99; ‘B’: 6-7.99; ‘A’: 8-10

with a third of each grade range devoted to +/- grading (e.g. ‘B-’: 6-6.66).
Late Assignments
Assignments are due on the dates indicated (above and) in the Course Schedule by 11:59pm EST. Late assignments will NOT be accepted. A student’s late assignment will only be accepted if the student demonstrates that the circumstances that caused the assignment to be late were both unexpected and unduly burdensome, which will be determined by the course instructor.

Course Conduct:
Academic Honesty
Each student is responsible for their own work. While students are encouraged to discuss course material both inside and outside class, each assignment/exam should be the product of the student’s own thinking. Any apparent improper use of the intellectual work of others will be submitted to the Student Honor Council. Students are encouraged to review the university’s Code of Academic Integrity (http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii100a.html), as the policies stipulated in that code will be exceptionlessly adhered to during this course.

Discussion Participation
Students are expected to read the course material in keeping with the Course Schedule, and are also expected to contribute to online discussions of this material daily. This is a significant portion of each student’s grade and is a mandatory component of the course. Each student is expected to post twice, either in the form of a discussion question or as a reply to a question thread, for each day of the course. By the end of the course you should have at least thirty(30) posts on the discussion forums. The questions and responses should be related to the reading, but need not be explicitly about the reading. They may be, for example, about the general theme of that week’s readings, or about how some particular line of reasoning bears on morality generally. But all students are expected to contribute routinely and consistently during the three weeks of the course. The quality of a given response will not be evaluated, so students need not be overly concerned that their contribution will not be given credit. However, this is a University course, and all discussions should be conducted with civility and respect. So the content of a given post should accord with this standard.

Missed Classes
Though this course is online, the following provisions apply to the due date of assignments:

- Due to Illness

Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the course material. However, in the event that a class must be missed due to an illness, the policy in this class, in conformity with the University’s Attendance Policy (http://president.umd.edu/policies/v100g.html) is as follows:

For every medically necessary absence from class, a reasonable effort should be made by the student to notify the instructor prior to class. When returning to class, students should bring a note identifying the reason for the absence in order to inform their instructor that the absence was due to illness (as opposed to, say, laziness).

If a student is absent for any ‘Grading Event’ (i.e., any class day with an exam, quiz, or in which an assignment is due) they are required to notify the instructor of their absence as soon as possible (preferably in advance of their absence), and upon returning to class, the student must bring documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional. Failure to do so will result in a considerably lower grade on the relevant exam or assignment.
Due to Religious Observance

Students will not be penalized for missing class sessions due to religious observances. The *Course Schedule* is designed to minimize possible conflicts between students’ academic and religious commitments. However, all students should review the *Course Schedule* within the first two(2) weeks of the term and determine any potential conflicts between their religious commitments and their responsibilities for this course. They should then inform their instructors of any such conflicts. Arrangements should be made between the student and their instructor to enable the student to satisfy their course responsibilities without undermining their religious commitments.

*Correspondence with Instructors*

Electronic mail has become the chief medium for out-of-class communication between university instructors and students. Because of the impersonal nature of this medium, email correspondence between students and instructors should be clear and respectful. A respectful email includes a salutation, the full name of the correspondent, and abides by English grammar rules. Correspondence that is not respectful, in this sense, will likely be ignored by instructors.

*Accommodating Students with Disabilities*

The University is committed to the accessibility of higher education. In light of this commitment, any student with a disability should contact the course instructor so that any needed accommodations can be made to establish an equitable learning environment. Also, any student with a disability is encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services office (http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/) to learn about the resources available to them.
PHIL 140: CONTEMPORARY MORAL ISSUES

Winter 2016

Course Schedule

The following schedule indicates the timeline for viewing of video lectures (🔗), reading articles from the textbook, reading article found on ELMS (🔗), and the release/due dates for assignments/exams (🔗). As this is an online course, all the materials for the course (with the exception of the Morris textbook) are found on ELMS (http://elms.umd.edu). The Course Tutorial linked in the introductory email to this course reviews how to access this various material on ELMS.

Part I: Philosophy and Moral Reasoning

1/4 ................................................. Course Tutorial ⬆️
Lecture I ⬆️
Writing Assignment #1 ⬇️
Due Date: Jan 5th, Noon EST

1/5 ................................................. Lecture II ⬆️
Hare, R.M. “What is Life?” (pp. 5-6)

1/6 ................................................. Lecture III ⬆️
Timmons, M. “A Moral Theory Primer”
§1: (pp. 501-5), §3: (pp. 523-6) & Appendix: (pp. 526-8)

1/7 ................................................. Lecture IV ⬆️
Singer, P. “Famine, Affluence and Morality” (pp. 74-83)

1/8 ................................................. Lecture V ⬆️
Exam I ⬇️
Due Date: Jan. 11th, Noon EST

Part II: Moral Status and the Value of Life

1/11 ................................................. Lecture VI ⬆️
Singer, P. “All Animals are Equal” (pp. 264-73)

1/12 ................................................. Lecture VII ⬆️
Carruthers, P. “Against the Moral Standing of Animals” (pp. 274-84)

1/13 ................................................. On Our Own Terms: A Death of One’s Own, PBS ⬆️
Writing Assignment #2 ⬇️
Due Date: Jan. 15th, Noon EST
(Part II: Moral Status and the Value of Life cont’d)

1/14. .................................................................Lecture VII

John Paul II. “The Tragedy of Euthanasia” (pp. 312-15)
Rachels, J. “Active and Passive Euthanasia” (pp. 315-27)

1/15. .................................................................Lecture IX


Exam II

Due Date: Jan 18th, Noon EST

Part III: Abortion

1/18. .................................................................Lecture X

John Paul II. “The Unspeakable Crime of Abortion” (pp. 381-385)
Warren, M.A. “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion” (pp. 397-402)

1/19. .................................................................Lecture XI

Marquis, D. “Why Abortion is Immoral” (pp. 403-15)

1/20. .................................................................Lecture XII

Thomson, J.J. “A Defense of Abortion” (pp. 386-96)

1/21. .................................................................Lecture XIII


1/22. .................................................................Lecture XIV

Truman, H. “Address to the American People” (pp. 112)
Rawls, J. “Fifty Years After Hiroshima” (pp. 113-18)
Walzer, M. “Supreme Emergency” (pp. 131-41)

Exam III

Due Date: Jan 26th, Noon EST