



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**PHILOSOPHY**  
**PHIL 404: Value Theory**

**30 POINTS**  
**TRIMESTERS 1 & 2, 2014**

**Important dates**

**Trimester dates:** 3 March to 16 November 2014  
**Teaching dates:** 3 March to 17 October 2014  
**Easter/Mid-trimester break:** 18 April to 4 May 2014  
**Mid-year break:** 3-13 July 2014  
**Mid-trimester break:** 25 August to 7 September 2014  
**Last assessment item due:** 19 October 2014

**Class times and locations**

Lectures: Wednesdays 10:00am – 12:00 noon  
Venue: Murphy 617

**Names and contact details**

Course Coordinator: Richard Joyce  
Room No: Murphy 713  
Phone: 463 5699  
Email: richard.joyce@vuw.ac.nz  
Office hours: By appointment

Lecturer: Nick Agar  
Room No: Murphy 601  
Phone: 463 5046  
Email: nicholas-agar@vuw.ac.nz  
Office hours: By appointment

Lecturer: Ramon Das  
Room No: Murphy 608  
Phone: 463 5038  
Email: ramon-das@vuw.ac.nz  
Office hours: By appointment

## Communication of additional information

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid myvuw.ac.nz addresses. Please check that this account is active and you have organised email forwarding, if necessary. This course does not have a dedicated Blackboard site, but rather all Philosophy Honours courses have a joint site. Additional information and any changes to the timetable will be advised by email, announced in class, and posted on the Honours section of the Blackboard site.

## Prescription

This course examines several topics relating to moral, political, and aesthetic value.

## Course content

The course is taught over two trimesters, with certain weeks set aside for students to focus on their coursework. It is split into three modules taught by three lecturers: Nicholas Agar, Richard Joyce, and Ramon Das (in that order).

Nick will be teaching Mark Walker's book *Happy-People-Pills for All* (Blackwell, 2013). The book presents an account of human well-being/happiness and argues that we should use a variety of pharmacological means to enhance it. It's available relatively cheaply as a kindle book:

[www.amazon.com/Happy-People-Pills-Blackwell-Public-Philosophy-Series-ebook/dp/B00BP9JT7A/ref=tmm\\_kin\\_title\\_0?ie=UTF8&qid=1389730051&sr=1-3](http://www.amazon.com/Happy-People-Pills-Blackwell-Public-Philosophy-Series-ebook/dp/B00BP9JT7A/ref=tmm_kin_title_0?ie=UTF8&qid=1389730051&sr=1-3)

Students should read chapter 1 of Walker's book for the first class.

Richard will be working through Aaron Zimmerman's book *Moral Epistemology* (Routledge, 2010). This is an introduction to moral epistemology, the dust-jacket blurb of which runs as follows: "How do we know right from wrong? Do we even have moral knowledge? Moral epistemology studies these and related questions about our understanding of virtue and vice. It is one of philosophy's perennial problems, reaching back to Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Locke, Hume, and Kant, and has recently been the subject of intense debate as a result of findings in developmental and social psychology."

It will not be necessary to purchase this book. The entry on moral epistemology in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ([www.iep.utm.edu/mor-epis/](http://www.iep.utm.edu/mor-epis/)) provides a good quick taste of the classical approach to the subject.

Ramon will teach a selection of articles on climate ethics.

## Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students passing the course should be able to:

1. advance their knowledge of several key areas of value theory
2. demonstrate their abilities to undertake logical and critical thinking, especially as it pertains to value theory.
3. practice and improve their critical writing skills.

## Graduate attributes

As with all Philosophy courses, learning objectives of this course contribute to the attainment of specific attributes in the areas of logical and critical thinking, conceptual analysis and rational and ethical decision-making. For more details please consult our website:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/about/overview-of-the-school/phil-overview#grad-attributes](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/about/overview-of-the-school/phil-overview#grad-attributes)

## Teaching format

This course will involve one seminar per week in the first and second trimesters. Seminars will run for one hour and fifty minutes. The weekly meetings will include lecturing and discussion. Students are expected to attend classes regularly, take part in class discussion, and keep up with the reading.

## Mandatory requirements

There are no mandatory requirements for PHIL 404.

## Workload

In accordance with the Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote a total of 300 hours to PHIL 404, including two hours of seminars per fortnight. Over the 24 teaching weeks of the academic year, that is an average of 12.5 hours per week. This includes weekly attendance at lectures and tutorials and revision for and completion of all set assessment tasks. The University's Assessment Handbook stipulates that course outlines should "specify the average time that is notionally assigned to the completion of each assessment task." Notional assignments of completion times appear below (which excludes the times required for attendance at seminars, reading for class and preparation for presentations):

Essay 1: 50 hours

Essay 2: 50 hours

Essay 3: 50 hours

## Assessment

Assessment Item	Weighting	CLOs	Due Date
Essay, 3000-3500 words on Nick's section	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %	1,2,3	5 May, 5.00 pm
Essay, 3000-3500 words on Richard's section	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %	1,2,3	22 July, 5.00 pm
Essay, 3000-3500 words on Ramon's section	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %	1,2,3	19 October, 5.00 pm

PHIL 404 is assessed on the basis of three essays. Each essay is worth 1/3 of the final grade.

These essays will assess your knowledge of the material covered in class and in readings, your capacity to select and develop a viable writing project, your ability to undertake independent research and develop independent ideas, and your skills at critically analysing philosophical arguments relevant to your chosen topics.

## Submission of work

All essays must be submitted in two ways. A copy of the essay must first be submitted digitally via Blackboard. Make sure you save your file as a Microsoft Word document. The title of your file should have the following format: last name, underscore, first name, underscore, essay number, dot, doc/docx (for example: smith\_john\_5.docx). Please also ensure that pages are numbered. A hard copy of the essay must then be submitted to one of the school administrators located in MY518.

Indicative grades and comments will be posted on Blackboard.

## Extensions and Penalties

- All extensions must be obtained directly from the Co-ordinator of Graduate Studies. In 2014 this is Cei Maslen, Murphy 707, [Cei.Maslen@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Cei.Maslen@vuw.ac.nz).
- All extensions must be obtained prior to the deadline for submission of the assessment task unless unforeseeable circumstances prevent this.
- Short extensions of up to 3 days will be automatically granted to any student who requests it with an email prior to the scheduled deadline.
- Longer extensions need to be negotiated and require justification and supporting evidence.
- Any work submitted late without an extension having been obtained is subject to penalties (see below).
- Late essays submitted without extensions having been obtained will receive a penalty of 5 points per day late. No essay will be accepted after November 10.

## Student feedback

No formal student feedback has been sought in previous years. Students will be asked to evaluate the course in 2014. Student feedback on University courses may be found at:

[www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

## Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Aegrotats: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Resolving academic issues: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Special passes: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Student Contract: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library/resources/subjectcontacts.html>
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)