

## IBH 1BC3 Fundamentals of Ethics Fall 2020

### COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course is a general introduction to ethical theory and to thinking systematically about ethical problems. In the first part of the course, we will consider general questions about the nature and status of morality and its relationship to culture, religion, and self-interest. In the second part of the course, we will examine some influential normative ethical theories: theories that aim to guide us on how to act and live, from a moral point of view. In the third and final part of the course, we will consider a small selection of concrete moral issues.

The specific objectives of this course are to:

1. Familiarize students with a range of theories about the basis of morality, and about the nature and scope of our moral obligations.
2. Help students to think reflectively for themselves about complex ethical issues.
3. Help students learn how to critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of arguments.
4. Help students learn how to effectively articulate and defend their own views in writing.
5. Help students to understand and appreciate unfamiliar ideas and points of view.
6. Help students learn how to engage constructively with those with whom they disagree.

### INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**Name:** Mark Johnstone

**E-Mail:** [mjohnst@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mjohnst@mcmaster.ca)

**Class Times:** Thursdays 10:30-11:20

**Virtual Office Hours:** Mondays 10:30-11:20 (exclusive to students in this course), or by appointment. More virtual office hours to be added, especially in the lead-up to the essays (times TBC).

### COURSE DELIVERY

LEARNING ACTIVITIES	DELIVERY	DESCRIPTION	TOOL(S)
<b>Self-Study</b>	Asynchronous	Assigned readings. Instructor-prepared video recordings tied to each week's assigned readings.	Avenue to Learn with links to videos on MacVideo.
<b>Virtual Class</b>	Synchronous	One weekly 50-minute live meeting with interactive elements (esp. polls, student questions, discussions using breakout rooms).	Zoom during scheduled class time.
<b>Online Discussion</b>	Asynchronous	Structured, instructor-moderated online written discussions of each week's topic and assigned readings	Discussion boards on Avenue to Learn

EVALUATIONS	WEIGHT	DESCRIPTION
<b>Essays</b>	50%	Essay 1 (maximum 1,200 words): 20% Essay 2 (maximum 1,500 words): 30% Submitted through Avenue to Learn
<b>Participation</b>	15%	Participation in weekly online asynchronous written discussions on Avenue. Contributions will be graded based on quantity, quality, timeliness and communication proficiency (rubric to be provided).
<b>Take-home final exam</b>	30%	Open-book, one full week to complete. The first part will cover the whole course; the rest will focus on material introduced in the final weeks of the course, which will not be covered by the essays.
<b>Other</b>	5%	Submission of a draft introduction and outline for the first essay (2%). Attending and participating in the weekly live classes (2%). Attending at least one virtual office hour over the course of the term (1%).