

**IBH 2BD3
Moral Issues
Winter 2023 Course Outline**

**DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University**

COURSE OBJECTIVE

By the end of the course you will have acquired and developed:

1. A basic understanding of some of the most important moral issues in today's world (e.g. dehumanization or relativism).
2. The ability to discuss and analyze moral issues that arise from the political, technological, and economic developments of our time (e.g. our responsibilities towards animals).
3. Critical awareness that detects moral issues in social practices, business contexts, and technological changes.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Johannes Steizinger

Instructor

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Class Location: DSB AB102

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Tutorial Location: BSB 138

Course website:

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	No	IT skills:	No	Global view:	Yes
A2L:	Yes	Ethics:	Yes	Numeracy:	No	Written skills:	Yes
Participation:	Yes	Innovation:	No	Group work:	Yes	Oral skills:	Yes
Evidence-based:	Yes	Experiential:	No	Final Exam:	Yes	Guest speaker(s):	No

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We discuss current moral issues that arise from our interactions with other people (1), with other cultures (2), and with other forms of life (3) in a globalized and technological world. 1) *In the first part*, we will examine the troubling issue of dehumanization. We address the significance of dehumanization for justifying mass violence and discuss whether work conditions can have dehumanizing effects. We also examine the role of dehumanization in the *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. 2) *In the second part*, we will discuss corporate social responsibility and examine the problem of relativism that arises from the plurality of ethical contexts in a globalized world, focusing on the conflict between Western and indigenous ways of life. 3) *In the third part*, we will explore moral issues that arise from the technologization of the biological world, focusing on emergence of synthetic biology and its approach to life as well as our relationship to animals.

DISCLAIMER: This course discusses examples (e.g. Nazi concentration camps) and material (e.g. Nazi propaganda) that students could experience as offensive or harmful.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to complete the following key tasks:

- Reflecting critically on current moral issues.
 - Connecting ethical theories with concrete examples.
 - Reading complicated texts carefully and critically.
 - Writing focused reflections on moral issues.
 - Developing moral arguments on their own.
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COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

All course materials will be made available on A2L.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

For each week we will assign a core reading. These weekly readings are the heart of our course and we will discuss them critically in our sessions. We believe that discussions are an important aspect of both learning and philosophizing. There will be different opportunities to participate in a fruitful dialogue with your colleagues and us. But, at the end, it is up to you how well we will engage with each other and, thus, how successful our class will be. The class will meet twice a week. The two hour session on Tuesdays will focus on introducing new material through a combination of lecture and discussion. You are expected to have done the reading in advance and to have some initial views and questions on the issues we will be dealing with. The one hour session on Fridays is a tutorial, lead by the teaching

assistant, and will be dedicated to discussion and in-class work. Required readings will be moderate in length, averaging around 30 pages per week.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

GRADE COMPONENT	WEIGHT	DESCRIPTION
Reading reflection 1	20%	Submitted via A2L; 1000-1500 words long ; graded in % Focused on the readings of a specific week
Reading reflection 2	20%	Submitted via A2L; 1000-1500 words long; graded in % Focused on the readings of a specific week
Best reading reflection	5%	The reading reflection with the better grade counts 5 % more.
Participation	10%	You can gain credits (up to 100%) for the participation grade by: a. Attendance: Each attendance earns you 3% of the grade. b. Contributions to in-class discussions: Each reasonable contribution earns you 7% of the participation grade. c. Contributions to the discussion boards on A2L: Each reasonable contribution earns you 7% of the participation grade.
Group work: podcast	10%	Creating a podcast (18 to 23 min) about a topic of the course in a group of 5 The group work grade is a pass/fail grade
Final Exam	35%	Take-home; submitted via A2L; choice of 4 out of 6 long-answer questions

Policy on Missed Work, Extensions, and Late Penalties

1. Reading reflections

The reading reflections have to be focused on a week's reading. It is thus important to submit them before Saturday night (11:59 pm) of the respective week. Late reading reflections will be penalized 5% as soon as the deadline passes on Saturday. We won't accept reading reflections that focus on the reading of the respective week after Sunday, 11:59 pm. If you use a MSAF for a reading reflection, you will be assigned the next week's readings.

2. Take-home exam

The take-home exam is due on Wednesday, April 19, 11:59 pm. This is a hard deadline. If you need an extension, you have to contact your academic advisor.

3. Group work: podcast

The podcast is due on Thursday, **March 12**, 11:59 pm. If the podcast is not submitted on time, your group has failed the assignment.

4. Plagiarism

Please be aware that we use turnitin.com to collect and check all written work in this class. Turnitin.com is a tool that compares your paper with every written word available online, and with every written word submitted to turnitin.com. We will never use the turnitin.com report to automatically trigger a charge of plagiarism. Instead, we refer to the turnitin.com report to help us finding source material that might have been copied in the event of a suspected case of plagiarism. If you do not wish to submit your work to turnitin.com, please contact us. No penalty will be assigned to you, if you do not submit work to Turnitin.com. For details see Turnitin.com

policy: <https://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/turnitin/students/index.html>

To learn more about plagiarism:

<https://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/students/typeofad/plagiarism/index.html>

COURSE DELIVERABLES

1. Reading reflections

Depending on the number of participants, we assign a certain number of reading reflections to each week's readings. You have to submit 2 reading reflections, the first one until week 7 (for your early feedback) and the second after week 7. You select the weeks in which you submit your reading reflections via a Doodle survey in week 1 (first-come-first-serve-basis).

Submission format: Reading reflections should be 1000 to 1500 words long, written in 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1.5 spacing, and have regular sized margins. Please submit in MS Word and number all pages. You have to submit your reading reflection by Saturday night (11:59 pm) of the respective week. All reading reflections should be submitted electronically through the designated folders on A2L.

Assessment: You should pick a key issue of one of the texts and analyze the main argument of the author regarding this issue. You are also required to evaluate this claim and provide a justification for your evaluation. An excellent reading reflection will recognize a central issue of a text, summarize the argument of the author faithfully, and provide a thoughtful justification for the evaluation of that argument. We will explain our expectations and assessment criteria thoroughly in week 1.

2. Participation

The participation part of your grade reflects your engagement in our classroom discussion. There are three ways for earning credits for the participation grade (up to 100%) and it is up to you how you collect credits:

Attendance: We take attendance in each classroom session. If you show up for a week's sessions (all of them), you earn a 3% credit for your participation grade.

Contributions to classroom discussions: We keep a log where we record, after each session, the contributions to the discussion. You can earn a 7% credit for your participation grade, if you participate reasonably productively, which means being prepared and engaging in the conversation in a respectful and sincere way (e.g. by asking good questions). I will explain in week 1 how a reasonable contribution to our classroom discussion looks like.

Contributions to discussion boards: We will have weekly discussion boards on A2L. You can earn credits for the participation grade by contributing to the online discussion. A contribution earns you a 7% credit for the participation grade, if it meets certain qualitative and quantitative standards (e.g., engagement with the topic, length, timeliness). We will release a guideline for online discussions in week 1, including a rubric that explains how a reasonable contribution looks like.

3. Group work: podcasts

We use the group tool on A2L to organize group work. We divide the class in random groups of 5 who should create a podcast about a topic of the course. The group submissions are assessed on a pass/fail basis. If the podcast fulfills the quantitative and qualitative criteria, each member receives 100%. We will release a rubric in week 1 that explains the criteria for a sufficient submission.

Submission format: You should submit a podcast (18 to 22 minutes long) by **March 12**, 11:59 pm, to the designated folder on A2L. The podcast should engage with a topic of the course. It can be an in-depth explanation, a critical commentary, or a discussion with different opinions. The presentation should include more than one member of the group but you can choose the form yourself. A more detailed rubric will be released in week 1.

4. Take-home exam

We will finish the term with a take-home exam. You will get the instructions for the take-home exam on Monday, April 16, 9:00 am. You will have until Wednesday, April 19, 11:59 pm to submit the take-home exam on A2L. You have to submit the take-home exam in a certain format: MS Word, numbered pages, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1.5 spacing, regular sized margins.

Format: We give you 6 long answer questions and you have to answer 4 of them. The questions relate to the topics of the entire course (week 2 to week 14). The exam is thus cumulative. We will release instructions for the take-home exam that explain our expectations and assessment criteria thoroughly in week 1.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Area Administrative Assistants. All students must receive feedback regarding their progress prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.

- For Level 1 and Level 2 courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 20% of the final grade.
- For Level 3 courses and above, this feedback must equal a minimum of 10% of the final grade.

Instructors may solicit feedback via an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work” and the link below;

<http://ug.degrootemcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS

All researchers conducting research that involves human participants, their records or their biological material are required to receive approval from one of McMaster's Research Ethics Boards before (a) they can recruit participants and (b) collect or access their data. Failure to comply with relevant policies is a research misconduct matter. Contact these boards for further information about your requirements and the application process.

McMaster Research Ethics Board (General board): <https://reo.mcmaster.ca/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrolment in IBH 2BD3 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

COURSE SCHEDULE

IBH 2BD3 Moral Issues Winter 2021 Schedule

WEEK	DATE	ASSIGNMENT
1	Jan 9-15	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Introduction to course structure- Explanation of assignments and expectations- Overview of topics and aims of the course- Doodle Survey: sign up for date of your reading reflections <p><i>No Readings</i></p>
2	Jan 16-22	What is dehumanization? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Introduction to the phenomenon of dehumanization- The psychology of dehumanization- Examples of dehumanization: refugees and genocide <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- N. Haslam 2006. Dehumanization: An Integrative Review, <i>Personality and Social Psychology Review</i> 10:3, pp. 252–264.- V. Esses, S. Medianu, A. Sutter 2021. The dehumanization and rehumanization of refugees. In <i>The Routledge Handbook of Dehumanization</i>, pp. 275-287.- D.L. Smith 2011. Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others, pp. 142-154. <p><i>Case: the dehumanization of refugees, dehumanization and genocide</i></p>
3	Jan 23-29	Dehumanization and mass violence <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dehumanization in the context of National Socialism- The debate on the paradox of dehumanization

		<p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - D.L. Smith 2016. Paradoxes of Dehumanization, <i>Social Theory and Practice</i> 42:2, pp. 418–433. - J. Steizinger 2018. The Significance of Dehumanization: Nazi Ideology and its Psychological Consequences, <i>Politics, Religion & Ideology</i> 19:2, pp. 139–157. <p>Cases: Nazi racism, Nazi Concentration Camps</p>
4	Feb 30-5	<p>Dehumanization and mass violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forms of dehumanization in the context of colonialization - Dehumanization of indigenous women in Canada <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - M. Good 2018. A Tradition of Violence: Dehumanization, Stereotyping, and Indigenous Women. In <i>Keetsahnak: Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters</i>, pp. 89–102. - Passages from <i>Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls</i>, https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/ <p>Cases: racism, violence against indigenous women in Canada</p>
5	Feb 6-12	<p>Dehumanization and exploitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Kantian approach: the respect-for-persons principle - Dehumanizing experiences at the workplace: sweatshops <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - N.E. Bowie 2017. <i>Business Ethics: A Kantian Approach</i>, pp. 41-53. - D. G. Arnold, N.E. Bowie, 2003. Sweatshops and Respect for Persons, <i>Business Ethics Quarterly</i> 13:2, pp. 221-242. <p>Case: sweatshops</p>
6	Feb 13-19	<p>Dehumanization and exploitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Marxian approach: alienation and modern working conditions - Working conditions in Amazon warehouses <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A. Wood 2004. <i>Karl Marx</i>, pp. 7-10, 13-30. - K. Marx 1844, Estranged Labour. In <i>Collected Works</i>, vol. III, pp. 270-282. - M. Sainato, “We are not robots:” Amazon warehouse employees push to unionize, <i>The Guardian</i>, Jan 01,2019. - Noam Scheiber, Inside an Amazon Warehouse, Robots’ Ways Rub Off on Humans, <i>New York Times</i>, March 09, 2019. - Marc Kagan, Giving Amazon’s Side of the Story, <i>The Jacobin</i>, July 2019. <p>Cases: Amazon warehouses</p>
7	Feb 20-26	<p>Mid-term recess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No class - No assignments

8	Feb 27-Mar 5	<p>Cultural relativism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The case for cultural relativism: the phenomenon of moral ambivalence - A challenge for cultural relativism: foreign assignment in a sexist context <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - D. Wong 2006. Chapter 1: Pluralism and Ambivalence, in <i>Natural Moralities: A Defense of Pluralistic Relativism</i>. - T. Dunfee, D. Robertson, Case 10.2. Foreign Assignment, in <i>Honest Work: Business Ethics Reader</i>, 2018, pp. 374 f. <p>Cases: foreign assignment, sexism</p>
9	Mar 6-12	<p>Cultural relativism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSR in the global context: the ethical company vs. the political company - The case of Apple and Foxconn: whose responsibility? <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - T. Donaldson 2018. Values in Tension: Ethics Away from Home, in <i>Honest Work: Business Ethics Reader</i>, pp. 346-353 - A.G. Scherer, G. Palazzo 2018. The New Political Role of Business in a Globalized World, pp. 15-40 (reprint from <i>Journal of Management Studies</i> 48 [2011], 899–931). - E. Black, M. Eapen 2018. Suicides at Foxconn, in <i>Honest Work: Business Ethics Reader</i>, pp. 379-381. <p>Cases: suicides at Foxconn</p>
10	Mar 13-19	<p>Cultural relativism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultures in conflict: business activities on indigenous land - The conflict about the Coastal GasLink pipeline in British Columbia <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S.B. Banerjee 2003. The Practice of Stakeholder Colonialism: National Interest and Colonial Discourses in the Management of Indigenous Stakeholders, in <i>Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis</i>, pp. 255-279. - W. LaDuke 2017. In the Time of the Sacred Places, in <i>The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Ecology</i>, pp. 71-83. - C. Bellrichard, J. Barrera What you need to know about the Coastal GasLink pipeline conflict, CBC, Feb 11, 2020. https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/wet-suwet-en-coastal-gaslink-pipeline-1.5448363 <p>Cases: mining and pipeline projects on indigenous land, Coastal GasLink pipeline</p>
11	Mar 20-26	<p>Other forms of life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is life? - Synthetic biology (SynBio) and the debate on the concept of life <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dilthey, W. (1927), The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences, pp. 218-223. - A. Deplazes-Zemp, N. Biller-Andorno 2012. Explaining Life. <i>EMBO reports</i> 13:11, pp. 959-962. - Opinion page “Life after the synthetic cell”, <i>Nature</i> 465, 27 May 2010. - C. K. Chapple 2013. Ethics of Synthetic Life: A Jaina Perspective, <i>Worldviews</i> 17, pp. 77-88. <p><i>Videos</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch Craig J. Venter, Future Biology, TEDxCaltech, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdqfzdlqUHW <p>Cases: SynBio</p>

12	Mar 27-Apr 2	<p>Other forms of life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessing the empirical risks of SynBio - Different religious perspectives on synthetic biology <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - M. Engelhard et al 2016. Old and New Risks in Synthetic Biology: Topics and Tools for Discussion. In <i>Synthetic Biology Analysed</i>, pp. 51-62. - H. van den Belt 2009. Playing God in Frankenstein's Footsteps: Synthetic Biology and the Meaning of Life, <i>NanoEthics</i> 3:3, pp. 257–268. <p>Cases: SynBio</p>
13	Apr 3-9	<p>Other forms of life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship between humans and animals and its ethical consequences - Critical discussion of a utilitarian argument for the equal moral status of all animals <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - P. Singer 2002. <i>Animal Liberation</i> (1975). Chapter 1. - Animal Rights: debate between Peter Singer & Richard Posner. <i>Slate</i>, June 2001; https://web.archive.org/web/20150509122917/http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/interviews-debates/200106--.htm <p>Cases: animal rights</p>
14	Apr 10-12	<p>Preparation time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No class and no readings - Time for preparing for the take-home exam

