

**Contemporary Moral Issues
Winter 2016
Syllabus**

Instructor: Dana Kay Nelkin
Office: HSS 8004
Office hours: Wednesday 11-1 and by appointment
Email: dnelkin@ucsd.edu
Website: www.danakaynelkin.com

Course Description: In this course, we will begin by exploring moral puzzles that arise in personal interactions at the level of family and friends, and then examine how they intersect with moral puzzles at the level of larger-scale political and social entities. In particular, we will examine questions about the ethics of forgiveness at both the personal and political levels, and questions about duties we have as parents, friends, and family members and their fit with duties we have as fellow citizens and human beings. Finally, building on our discussion of duties to children, we will explore the question of whether we have duties to (or not to) create certain *kinds* of children using genetic technology, and extend this discussion still further to whether we have obligations to enhance or otherwise alter ourselves in specific ways.

The class will provide an opportunity for you to learn about the issues directly under discussion, and it will also give you practice in honing your reasoning skills and give you tools to bring to a wide variety of moral issues you might encounter in the future.

Course Readings: Two books, *Family Values* by Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, *The Right to Be Loved* by Matthew Liao are available at the bookstore and through websites such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble. All articles and book excerpts are available through the class website (TritonEd).

Date	Readings
1/4	
1/6	Jeffrie Murphy <i>Getting Even</i> (excerpt)
1/8	Pamela Hieronymi, "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness"
1/11	P. Twambley, "Mercy and Forgiveness"
1/13	Charles Griswold, <i>Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration</i> (excerpt)
1/15	Charles Griswold, <i>Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration</i> (excerpt)
1/18	Martin Luther King Day
1/20	Eve Garrard and David McNaughton, "Conditional Unconditional Forgiveness"
1/22	Margaret Holmgren, "A Moral Assessment of Strawson's Retributive Attitudes"
1/25	Charles Griswold <i>Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration</i> (excerpt)
1/27	Susan Moller Okin <i>Justice, Gender and the Family</i> (excerpt)
1/29	Matthew Liao, <i>The Right to Be Loved</i> (excerpt)
2/1	Hugh La Follette, "Licensing Parents"
2/3	Matthew Liao, <i>The Right to Be Loved</i> (excerpt)

2/5	Matthew Liao, <i>The Right to Be Loved</i> (excerpt)
2/8	Matthew Liao, <i>The Right to Be Loved</i> (excerpt)
2/10	Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, <i>Family Values</i> (excerpt)
2/12	Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, <i>Family Values</i> (excerpt)
2/15	President's Day
2/17	Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, <i>Family Values</i> (excerpt)
2/19	Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, <i>Family Values</i> (excerpt)
2/22	Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, <i>Family Values</i> (excerpt)
2/24	No new reading
2/26	Michael Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection"
2/29	Michael Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection"
3/2	Brock, Buchanan, Daniels, and Wikler, <i>Justice and Genetics</i> (excerpt)
3/4	Francoise Baylis "I Am Who I Am: On the Perceived Threats to Personal Identity from Deep Brain Stimulation"
3/7	TBA
3/9	TBA
3/11	TBA

Course Requirements:

- Short reading responses (150-200 words for each class meeting; 20 out of 27 required) 30%
- 1 paper in two drafts (about 2200 words)
 - first draft 10% (Due February 24)
 - second draft, revised after comments 25% (Due March 4)
- 1 take-home final exam (35%) (Due March 18, 11 am)
- up to 5% extra credit for participation in class group assignments and discussion.

Note: A hard copy of your paper must be turned in, and an electronic copy uploaded to turnitin.com on our TED web site.

Note: Each assignment must be turned in order to receive credit for the course.

Notes:

- If accommodations are needed for a disability or other reasons, please notify me as soon as possible during the first week of class.
- **The Academic Honor Code** must be observed in this course.
- Use of electronic devices during class is not allowed, except by permission of the instructor.
- If you find yourself needing help with any aspect of the course, or would simply like to explore some ideas further, please don't hesitate to see me in office hours or make an appointment to talk.