

THE ETHICS OF PEACE, WAR, AND DEFENSE

PHIL 272.001/PWAD 272.001/POLI 272.001

SS2 2025

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



COURSE INFORMATION

Credit Hours: 3

Target Audience: all undergraduates

Prerequisites: none

Meeting Pattern: TBD—but there are no synchronous *required* meetings besides our final exam, July 28th from 3-6pm

Instructional Format: remote asynchronous

Classroom or Location: N/A

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Myraeka d'Leeuwen (please call me Myraeka! pronounced Muh-rah-kuh)

Email: myraeka@unc.edu

Office Location: Zoom — <https://unc.zoom.us/j/5846707841>

Office Hours: Tuesdays 9 am-11 am on Zoom ^ or by appointment

COURSE CONTENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

War, by its nature, seems to involve the transgression of some of our most fundamental moral convictions. This course investigates the nature of and possible justifications for those transgressions through the lens of concepts such as autonomy, responsibility, agency, and the right to self-defense. We will attempt to answer questions including: Is war ever permissible? What, if anything, distinguishes terrorism from war? Is military intervention justified when done in the name of defending human rights? What are our duties towards refugees? How does the involvement of emerging technologies in warfare impact the justification for surveillance and deadly force? What distinguishes a civilian from a militant? We will also consider what feminist and post-colonial philosophers have to say about the moral status of war and its participants, and will apply many of these conversations to contemporary conflicts.

COURSE TEXTS & MATERIALS

Required Texts:

The Ethics of War and Peace: An Introduction by Helen Frowe (available online via the UNC libraries)

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (40%)

You will be required to write two papers for this class, each of which will be roughly 3-5 pages double spaced (or 750-1200 words) and worth 20% of your final grade. This totals 6-8 pages of writing.

For each paper, you will pick one of the *argumentative* papers assigned (AKA do not pick something from Helen Frowe's introductory textbook!!) and develop a paper with the following format.

- a) Summarize the position taken by the author on some topic.
- b) Provide an objection to this position or your own, competing take on the topic.
- c) Respond to this objection on behalf of the author.
- d) Respond to this criticism to strengthen your own position or objection.

72 hours before the paper is due, you will be required to turn in a Four Sentence Summary of the paper. This is, as the title suggests, four sentences. It follows the format:

- (1) They say _____.
- (2) I say _____, because _____.
- (3) One might object that _____.
- (4) I reply that _____.

You will notice that this is just a very condensed version of the final paper's format 😊 Within 24 hours (so, at least 48 hours before your paper is due), I will provide brief feedback on this Four Sentence Summary, letting you know if you are on track or if there are areas to work on or think more about. Provided that you turn in the Four Sentence Summary on time and that it reflects a minimal level of effort, this assignment is ungraded. If you do not turn in a Four Sentence Summary, you lose 2 points out of 20 on the paper grade. All due dates for Four Sentence Summaries and final papers are in the syllabus schedule, and a guide for this assignment can be found on Canvas.

FINAL PRESENTATION (20%)

Students will be divided into groups of 4-5 for their final presentations. During the final exam period, each group will give a 10-15 minute presentation followed by a brief Q&A or comment period. Groups will pick a real world conflict, analyze one aspect of the conflict through the lens of one of the authors discussed in class, and then develop their own take on whether they find this analysis sound. A group might, for instance, might analyze the permissibility of the US torturing terrorists during the Iraq War according to Allhoff, and then develop their own view on whether they find Allhoff's stance on this issue compelling. 1% of your grade on the final presentation comes from asking a question about another presentation during the final exam period.

READING ANNOTATIONS (20%)

You must complete **20** reading annotations throughout the summer semester, each worth **1%** of your final grade. The annotations will be completed through Perusall, where I will upload each required reading. There are slightly more than 20 readings assigned (23, to be exact), so this equates to doing an annotation almost every day but with some opportunities to skip one.

Each reading annotation consists in one comment of your own directly on the reading, as well as one comment responding to one of your classmate's annotations. Both comments should be roughly 75-100 words, though you are welcome to write more. Over the course of the semester, this equals 6-8 pages of writing. These must be done by **11:59 pm** on the day *after* the reading is listed on the course schedule (i.e., you must read and annotate Chap. 3 of Helen Frowe's book, assigned June 23rd, by 11:59 pm on June 24th).

One day of class, I have assigned a podcast as opposed to a reading—for this day, I will post a "discussion board" instead of requiring in-text annotations. The assignment is otherwise the same, one comment of your own and one comment responding to another student's comment.

Reading annotations are graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

WEEKLY QUIZZES (20%)

At the end of each week, you will be required to submit a quiz by 11:59 pm (the course schedule indicates on which day the weekly quiz is due—we do not have Friday classes the second nor last week, so the weekly quiz is due on *Thursday* those weeks). These are open note quizzes (8 questions each) which cover content from both readings and lectures. All of the questions will be either multiple choice or requiring very short answers (such as fill in the blank). You have 30 minutes to complete them. Each quiz is worth 4% of your final grade.

LATE WORK

Late reading annotations and late weekly quizzes will not be accepted. For writing assignments, unexcused late papers receive a 5% penalty per 24 hours they are late. Please let me know immediately if you need an extension on a paper, as I am often happy to work something out as long as you communicate. The final presentation is during our final exam period—you must be present and available to give your presentation at that time. If you are absent, you will receive a 0 unless extenuating emergency circumstances prevent you from being there.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	To Read By Date	To Do	To Turn In
Unit 1: Is war ever permissible?			
June 23	Chap. 3 of Frowe , “The conditions of <i>jus ad bellum</i> ”	Watch Lecture 1 Perusall	N/A
June 24	McMahan , “Just Cause for War”	Watch Lecture 2 Perusall	N/A
June 25	Thompson , “Self Defense”	Watch Lecture 3 Perusall	N/A
June 26	Rodin , “The Myth of National Self Defense”	Watch Lecture 4 Perusall	N/A
June 27	Abu-Lughod , “Do Muslim Women Need Saving”	Watch Lecture 5 Perusall	1st Four Sentence Summary 1st Weekly Quiz
Unit 2: What, if anything, is permissible in war?			
June 30	Chap. 5 of Frowe , “The conditions of <i>jus in bello</i> ”	No Lecture Perusall	1st Paper
July 1	Nagel , “War and Massacre”	Watch Lecture 6 Perusall	N/A
July 2	McMahan , “On the Morality Equality of Combatants”	Watch Lecture 7 Perusall	N/A
July 3	Lee , “The Third Revolution in Warfare”	Watch Lecture 8 Perusall	2nd Weekly Quiz
July 4—Holiday			

Unit 3: What is terrorism? Is it ever defensible?			
July 7	Chap. 9 of Frowe , “The Moral Status of Terrorism”	Watch Lecture 9 Perusall	N/A
July 8	Allhoff , “Terrorism and Torture”	Watch Lecture 10 Perusall	N/A
July 9	Hosein , “Selections for Admission”	Watch Lecture 11 Perusall	N/A
July 10	Radiolab , 60 Words	No Lecture Perusall	N/A
July 11	Walzer , “Even the Oppressed Have Obligations”	Watch Lecture 12 Perusall	2nd Four Sentence Summary 3rd Weekly Quiz
Unit 4: What are the consequences of war? What do we owe to those displaced by war?			
July 14	Parekh , “Reframing the Refugee Crisis: From Refuge to Interconnection”	Watch Lecture 13 Perusall	2nd Paper
July 15	Kling , “Who Owes What to War Refugees?”	Watch Lecture 14 Perusall	N/A
July 16	Sanneh , “Untangling the Immigration Debate”	No Lecture Perusall	N/A
July 17	Arendt , “We Refugees”	Watch Lecture 15 Perusall	N/A
July 18	Solomon & Ahmad , “Gazan Children Go Hungry and Patients Die”	No Lecture Perusall	4th Weekly Quiz
Unit 5: Are there alternatives to war? Should we be pacifists?			
July 21	McMahan , “Pacifism and Moral Theory”	Watch Lecture 16 Perusall	N/A

July 22	MLK Jr. , “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”	Watch Lecture 17 Perusall	N/A
July 23	Tufekci , “How the Powerful Outmaneuvered the American Protest Movement”	No Lecture Perusall	N/A
July 24 LDOC	Collins , Chap. 14-15, <i>Mockingjay</i>	No Lecture Perusall	5th Weekly Quiz
July 28	Final Exam: July 28th 3-6 pm Final Project Presentations		