

# Arguing Ethical Dilemmas

June 7-28, Summer, 2022  
Tuesdays, 1-3 PM, In-person  
Bill Smoot

In this course we will discuss issues in philosophical ethics that are both intellectually challenging and potentially relevant to how we live our lives. Fingers crossed, this will be an in-person course (real people, real talking, real time!). Class time will be divided equally between member discussion and instructor presentation. There are no required readings. Just show up, listen, and discuss.

## Week One

We will begin by discussing classical ethical dilemmas, both real and imagined, that have enlivened philosophical discussions in the past half century. These will include the Dudley-Stephens case and various iterations of the trolley car thought experiments. There will be a short lecture on Kantian ethics and utilitarianism, and a brief foray into cultural relativism.

## Week Two

This week we will discuss some of the feminist criticisms of Kantianism and explore the ethics of care and the recent resurgence of interest in virtue ethics.

## Week Three

We will discuss the freedom-centered ethics of existentialism, focusing on Nietzsche and Sartre's discussion of bad faith.

## Week Four

While ethical thinking generally focuses on the question, *How ought we to act?*, a sometimes under-emphasized question is *Once we have done wrong, how can we make amends?* We will discuss issues of judgment and condemnation, punishment, apology and forgiveness, redemption and rehabilitation. These issues are especially interesting in a society that can seem, both on the left and the right, increasingly moralistic and punitive.