

PHIL 3780/7120 — The Ethics of Procreation and Parenting

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Office hours: by appointment

The relationship between parents and children is unique in a number of respects. Parents exert a profound kind of control over the children they raise, without children consenting to that control. Parents and children often share biological ties, as well as (we hope) ties of intimacy and care that are not present together in other relationships. And parents are usually responsible for bringing about their children's existence.

These distinctive features of the parent-child relationship give rise to serious moral problems concerning how we should bear and rear children. In this course we will consider the following questions (plus others):

- Under what conditions is it permissible to procreate?
- Who should be allowed to parent?
- Who should adopt, and how should adoption be regulated?
- What rights do parents and children have, and what are the grounds of these rights?
- How much can parents permissibly help their children to "get ahead" of others?
- Who should pay for the bearing and rearing of children?

Our focus will be on the morality of procreation and parenting, but we will also consider some political questions in these areas. Course readings will be 1-2 papers per week, available online. Some readings will be the same as those scheduled in [this course](#), but we'll read more, and some different stuff.

Evaluation for 3780:

Weekly short (~1 page) response papers, posted to UMLearn by each Saturday, 30%

At least 1 comment/week on other people's response papers, written by Monday morning, 10%

In class participation: 10%

Two papers (5-6 pp each) for 25% each, one due at midterm, one at end of classes.

Evaluation for 7120:

Same as 3780 except that students in 7120 substitute a draft (15%) and revision (35%) of one longer paper (≥ 10 pp.), due by the last day of classes.

Marking scale: A+: 90-100; A: 80-89; B+ 75-79; B: 70-74; C+: 65-69; C 60-64; D: 50- 59; F: 0-49.

Voluntary Withdrawal Deadline: November 23, 2020

Plagiarism¹:

Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, exam personation, ("Personation at Examinations" (Section 5.2.9) and "Plagiarism and Cheating" (Section 8.1)) and duplicate submission by reading documentation provided at the Arts Student Resources web site at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student/index.html>. Ignorance of the regulations and policies regarding academic integrity is not a valid excuse for violating them.

Plagiarism occurs when someone uses an article, book, or website in his/her work without citing the source in a footnote. Plagiarism is a form of cheating because the plagiarist takes the writing of another and treats it as his/her own. The work of another is stolen. Plagiarism is a serious offense.

To avoid being prosecuted for plagiarism you should be sure that you include a footnote whenever you rely on someone else's work. If you are quoting (using someone else's words) you must indicate that the prose is a quotation either by the use of quotation marks, or (for long quotations) by offsetting the quotation from the rest of your text. Each quotation must be followed by a footnote. If you are paraphrasing (i.e., summarizing someone else's text in your own words) the paraphrase must be followed by a footnote. If you do not know how to construct footnotes, you should ask your professor for instructions before you turn in any assignments. There are different forms of acceptable citation. Your professor will indicate which method he/she prefers. Be sure to cite the source on which you relied accurately. If you use a website, you must include the *correct* URL.

If you are suspected of plagiarism, a disciplinary hearing will be conducted by the Philosophy Department. If it is determined that you plagiarized, you will get an F for the assignment, and (in most cases) an F for the course. A note may also be included on your transcript to indicate that the F resulted from plagiarism. If you are suspected a second time, the hearing will be conducted by the Dean's Office and you may be suspended from University. Additionally, some forms of plagiarism

1. Barring the first ¶, the text for this section of my syllabus is copied from Chris Tillman's Introduction to Metaphysics syllabus.

constitute criminal acts under Canadian law.

Here are some common excuses for plagiarism which will not reduce your penalty:

- (1) I forgot to cite the source.
- (2) I was in a rush and left out the footnotes.
- (3) I did not understand how to construct footnotes.

If you are rushed for time, make sure *above all else* that you don't plagiarize. A grade of C on a rough but unplagiarized paper is better for you than an F on the course. If you have any questions about when citation is required or about how to cite, be sure to ask me.

Bottom line: Accidental plagiarism is plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered a very serious breach within the intellectual community and punishment is accordingly severe. It is your responsibility to know what is and is not an instance of plagiarism. If ever you are in doubt, talk to me.

Accessibility and Resources

Your well-being and success in this course are important to me. I encourage students to discuss their learning styles and comprehension requirements with me during my office hours or, if necessary, at another arranged time.

Sometimes problems arise for students during a course. I get this. It's always best to talk to me if you've got special issues that might interfere with your completion of the course, or if you think there's something I could be doing differently to help you learn.

Students with disabilities are strongly encouraged to avail themselves of the services provided by **Student Accessibility Services** (<http://umanitoba.ca/student/saa/accessibility/>). They can arrange for you to receive accommodation or access to resources/services you may need.

The Academic Learning Centre is located in 201 Tier Building (<http://umanitoba.ca/student/academiclearning/index.html>, telephone: 204-480-1481). Advisors provide a wide range of services focused on improvement of academic learning skills. You can get individual consultations with a learning specialist (e.g. on test-taking, time management, or learning strategies). They have writing tutors to work with you on writing assignments. The Centre also offers workshops on test-taking, note-taking, essay and term paper writing, and listening skills. These services are all free to U of M students, and some services are available online.

Class schedule (subject to revision)

1. Introduction

Read: Sarah Hannan "Introduction" to *Permissible Progeny: The Morality of Procreation and Parenting*

Look over SEP article on Parenting and Procreation Ethics

2. Non-Identity and Wrongful Life

David Boonin "How to Solve the Non-Identity Problem"

3. Antinatalism

David Benatar Chaps 2-3 of *Better Never to Have Been*

Erik Magnusson "How to reject Benatar's asymmetry argument"

4. Access to Reproductive Assistance

Emily McTernan "Should Fertility Treatment be State Funded?"

Jurgen de Wispelare and Daniel Weinstock "State Regulation and Assisted Reproduction: Balancing the Interests of Parents and Children"

5. A Right to Parent One's Biological Children?

Anca Gheaus "[The Right to Parent One's Biological Baby](#)"

Elizabeth Brake "Willing Parents: A Voluntarist Account of Parental Role Obligations" in *Procreation and Parenthood* (eds. David Archer and David Benatar)

6. Who Qualifies for the Right to Parent?

Who gets to be a parent?— Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, Excerpts from *Family Values*

Liam Shields "How Bad Can a Good Enough Parent Be?"

7. Children's Rights

Joel Feinberg "A Child's Right to an Open Future"

S. Matthew Liao "A Child's Right to be Loved"

8. Who Pays for Childrearing?

Serena Olsaretti "Children as Public Goods?"

Patrick Tomlin "Should Kids Pay Their Own Way?"

9. Shaping Children's Values

Matthew Clayton "The Case Against the Comprehensive Enrollment of Children"

Tim Fowler "Perfectionism for children, anti-perfectionism for adults."

10. Parental Partiality

Veronique Munoz-Darde "Is the Family to be Abolished Then?"

Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift "Legitimate Parental Partiality"

11. Value of Childhood

Sarah Hannan "Why Childhood is Bad for Children"

Patrick Tomlin "Saplings or Caterpillars?"