INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
Instructor: Mathieu Doucet
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Office Phone: 519-888-4567 ext. 32824
Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:30 - 3:30 or by appointment

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
The University of Waterloo is located on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River. Further, the University of Waterloo is located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. Find out more about the Haldiman Tract, and about why I and other members of the University make territorial acknowledgements as part of our academic work, at https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/about-arts/territorial-acknowledgement
COURSE DESCRIPTION
Moral philosophy is the systematic attempt to provide an answer to what is perhaps the most important question of all: how should we live our lives?

The first three sections of the course use a combination of historical and contemporary texts to survey three of the major moral theories in the Western philosophical tradition: utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics. Each theory articulates a very different vision of the good life, of the nature and value of happiness, and of what makes an action or a person morally good.

In the final section of the course, we will take up a range of very different skeptical challenges to the project of moral philosophy, including: can philosophical theorizing really help us with morality? How (if at all) are race and gender relevant to our moral thinking? Is morality really all that important, anyway?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
I hope you get a lot out of this class. I have two broad goals for every student in the course: First, I hope that by learning about moral philosophy, you reflect on some difficult and important ethical questions— questions that are of enormous importance to our lives. By the end of the course, I hope you find that ethical questions are more common, and more difficult to answer, than you did at the outset. Second, I hope the course equips you with a range of philosophical skills and concepts with which to navigate these ethical challenges, and that these skills and concepts prove useful in studying topics other than ethics. These are very broad goals. In order to achieve them, I have several more specific learning objectives, which can be roughly grouped in three categories.

Some of learning objectives are related to specific course content. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

• Summarize and explain the key elements of three influential moral theories: utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics.
• Summarize, explain, and apply some of the main objections to these moral theories.
• Critically evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, implications, and assumptions of core arguments in moral theory.

The second category of learning objectives relates to general academic skills that apply in all of your courses. This course will help you develop the skills to:

• Read, summarize, and critically evaluate primary philosophical texts from distinct historical periods.
• Write clear, well-structured explanations and critical assessments of philosophical arguments.
• Critically assess the plausibility of philosophical arguments, and identify potential objections to those arguments.
• Advance, in clear and well-structured prose, your own well-reasoned moral arguments.
• Apply course content to real-world cases.
• Discuss and debate complex philosophical issues, arguments, and texts with peers in small groups and in full classroom discussion.
The final category of learning objectives has to do with your attitudes or dispositions toward moral questions. I hope that this class will help you to:

- Recognize the importance of many moral questions, and of moral theory to answering those questions.
- Appreciate the complexity of moral problems, and the difficulty of solving them.
- Be more fallible about moral judgements—that is, be more willing to recognize the ways in which your initial judgment might be mistaken or misguided.
- Identify, using philosophical tools and concepts, previously overlooked or poorly understood real-world moral issues.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES
In order to achieve these goals, I'll ask you to do a lot of different things. We'll read a range of philosophical texts from different time periods, of course. I'll also ask you to write in a range of formats, from short in-class opinions to brief discussion posts to traditional philosophy essays. And I'll ask you to be a consistent and constructive contributor to discussion in a range of formats, from small groups to full class debates to online discussions. These activities will go best if everyone aims to:

- Treat your classmates with respect.
- Do the readings prior to class. Most of the readings are relatively short, but they can be difficult. You will get the most out of the class if you read them carefully and more than once, both before and after the class.
- Be an active and engaged participant in the LEARN Ethics Discussion Forums—put thought into your posts and engage critically and respectfully with your classmates’ posts.
- Bring a copy of the text to class.
- Be in your seat ready to participate at the beginning of class, and remain until the end of class (just let me know if you need to arrive late or leave early).
- Participate actively in class discussion.
- Ask questions when you are unclear about concepts (if you're unclear, chances are your classmates are as well).
- Put serious thought into your written assignments.
- Finally, come to class ready to fully participate in a discussion about interesting and important questions about the nature of the good life.

REQUIRED TEXTS
- J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*
- Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
- All other required readings are available online through the course LEARN site.

The University Bookstore stocks inexpensive (each under $15) editions of the required texts. You are free to use other editions of any of the texts if you have them. I have also provided links to free ebook editions of the texts on the course LEARN site, though I do strongly recommend buying paper editions of the books.
## Course Requirements and Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethics Discussion Posts</td>
<td>Throughout the term</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Class Activities</td>
<td>Throughout the term</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument Summary</td>
<td>Friday, Sept. 28th</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Theory Review</td>
<td>Tuesday, Nov. 13th</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Outline</td>
<td>Sunday, Dec. 2nd</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>Monday, Dec. 10th</td>
<td>35%</td>
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### Submitting Assignments
- Ethics Discussion Posts must be submitted to the relevant Discussion Forum on LEARN by the posted deadline.
- The Online Theory Review will be completed using LEARN’s Quiz function.
- The Argument Summary, Term Paper Outline, and Term Paper must be submitted online via LEARN in the relevant Dropbox. Hard copies will not be accepted.
  - Assignments submitted to the Dropboxes must be prepared for anonymous review. This means that you should not include your name anywhere on the paper, or in the file name of the document you submit to the Dropbox.

### Ethics Discussion Posts
Two of the central aims of this class are (a) to improve your ability to use the tools philosophy to analyze difficult moral issues, and (b) to improve your writing skills. These aims are connected, since clear analysis requires clear writing and vice versa.

The best way to use philosophy to analyze difficult moral issues is together, in conversation: philosophy works best as a discussion among peers. And the best way to improve your writing is to practice by writing frequently. The Ethics Discussion Posts on LEARN serve both aims: they’re where you’ll engage in group discussions about moral theory by writing for each other. Here’s how it will work:
- Every student is a member of two Discussion Forums: one for the entire class, and one for a smaller group.
- Throughout the term, I’ll post Discussion Questions to these Discussion Forums. The questions are aimed at prompting debate and engagement with the readings. Your will be asked to write short (mostly 1-2 paragraph) answers to the questions.
- There are a total of 8 Discussion Questions.
- For Discussion Questions posted to your small group Discussion Forum (6 of the 8), you’ll also be responsible for reading all of your group members’ posts and for writing a brief response to at least one of your classmates’ posts.
- In total, then, you are responsible for posting 14 times to the Discussion Forums: 2x to the Class Discussion Forum, 6x to your Group Discussion Forum, and 6x in response to a classmate’s post on the Group Discussion Forum.
• Posts are typically due at least 24 hours before the beginning of class, so that you have a chance to read and respond to others’ posts.
• Responses to classmates’ posts are due before the beginning of the relevant class.
• One of the aims of the Ethics Discussion Posts is to generate in class discussion, and so we will sometimes begin class by discussing your posts.
• Ethics Discussion Posts are graded generously: provided that they show some evidence that you engaged with the question, you will earn the full 10% if you write a post and (where applicable) a response to a classmate’s post in response to every question. There are 14 total posts, and your total grade on 10 is the proportion of posts you submit that meets the standard of ‘showed evidence of engaging with the question.’ (For example: if you submit 12/14, you will earn 8.5/10. If you submit 10/14, you will learn 7.1/10)

In Class Activities
• Throughout the term, we'll frequently dedicate class time to specific structured activities. Examples might include structured debates, small group discussions of Ethics Discussion Posts, collaborative argument analyses, and short written arguments.
• Attendance and participation in these activities earns you credit toward the ‘In Class Activity' portion of the grade.
• Your grade is the proportion of activities that you attend and participate in. There are no ‘make up’ grades for missed activities, though you can miss one In Class Activity with no penalty. (For example, if there are 10 activities and you attend 8, you will earn 9/10. If there are 10 and you attend 7, you will earn 8/10.)

Argument Summary
• In approximately 3 pages, you will be asked to summarize, in your own words, one of the main arguments encountered in the readings.
• Due Sunday, Sept. 30th. Specific instructions will be posted by Friday, Sept. 14th.

Online Theory Review
• This assignment will assess your understanding of the content of the three main moral theories and of the arguments for and against them. It will also assess your ability to apply the theories in practice.
• The assignment will feature a mix of question formats, including some multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions.
• The assignment will be completed through LEARN’s quiz function.
• The assignment is due Tuesday, Nov. 13th. The questions will be available starting on Monday, Nov. 5th.

Term Paper Outline
• An important part of writing strong essays is planning the essay’s structure. Another important part of good writing is getting feedback from your peers. The Term Paper Outline is meant to help with both of these.
• Our last class on Monday, Dec. 3rd will be dedicated entirely to peer review of one another’s outlines. This will help you to plan the stricture of your paper, and to improve
that structure in light of feedback from your classmates. It will also allow you the chance
to give constructive feedback to your colleagues.

- The Term Paper outline is worth 5% of your grade: you will earn the full 5% if you submit
  an outline to the Dropbox on time and participate in the peer review activity on Dec. 3rd.
- Your outline is due in the relevant Dropbox by Sunday, Dec. 2nd. You should also bring
  a copy to class on Monday, Dec. 3rd. Specific instructions will be posted by Monday,
  Nov. 12th.

**Term Paper**

- You will be asked to write an essay of approximately 5 pages both explaining *and taking
  a stand on* one of the debates encountered in the class.
- **Due Monday, Dec. 10th.** Specific instructions will be posted by Monday, Nov. 12th.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

The final schedule of readings is subject to change, with advance notice. You are responsible
for doing the assigned readings *before* the corresponding class. Class meetings should
supplement, problematize, and clarify the readings, not replace them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri., Sept. 7</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Sept. 10</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Sept. 12</td>
<td>Mill, <em>Utilitarianism</em> Ch. 1</td>
<td>Discussion Post (Class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., Sept. 14</td>
<td><em>Utilitarianism</em> Ch. 2</td>
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<td>Mon., Sept. 17</td>
<td><em>Utilitarianism</em> Ch 2 (cont.)</td>
<td>Discussion Post (Group)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Sept. 19</td>
<td><em>Utilitarianism</em> Ch. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., Sept. 21</td>
<td>Le Guin, ‘The ones who walk away from Omelas’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Sept 24</td>
<td>Smart, ‘Extreme and restricted utilitarianism’; Hooker, ‘Rule consequentialism’</td>
<td>Discussion Post (Group)</td>
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<td>Wed., Sept 26</td>
<td>Singer, ‘Famine, affluence, and morality’</td>
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<td><em>Introduction to Effective Altruism</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., Sept. 28</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Argument analysis due (Sun. 30th)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Oct. 1</td>
<td>Kant, <em>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</em>, Preface and Sect. 1 (393-396)</td>
<td>Discussion Post (Group)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Oct. 3</td>
<td><em>Groundwork</em> Sect. 1 (397-401)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., Oct. 5</td>
<td><em>Groundwork</em> Sect. 1-2 (402-420)</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Mon., Oct. 8</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>Wed., Oct. 10</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>Fri., Oct. 12</td>
<td><em>Groundwork</em> Sect. 2 (420-445)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Oct. 15</td>
<td>O'Neill, ‘A simplified account of Kant’s ethics’</td>
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<td>Wed., Oct. 17</td>
<td>Korsgaard, ‘The right to lie: Kant on dealing with evil’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., Oct. 19</td>
<td>‘The right to lie’ (cont.)</td>
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<td>Mon., Oct. 22</td>
<td>Rawls, <em>Theory of Justice</em></td>
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<td>Fri., Oct. 26</td>
<td>none</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Oct. 29</td>
<td>Annas, ‘Being virtuous and doing the right thing’</td>
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<td>Fri., Nov. 2</td>
<td><em>Nicomachean Ethics</em>, Book II</td>
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<td>Mon., Nov. 5</td>
<td>Aristotle, <em>Nicomachean Ethics</em>, Book III</td>
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<td>Fri., Nov. 9</td>
<td>Cahn, ‘The happy immoralist’ and ‘the happy immoralist: a sequel’</td>
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<td>Kleinig, ‘Happiness and virtue’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Nov. 12</td>
<td>Hume, ‘Of the influencing motives of the will’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Nov. 14</td>
<td>Hume, ‘Moral distinctions not derived from reason’</td>
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<td>Fri., Nov. 16</td>
<td>Held, ‘Feminist transformations of moral theory’</td>
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<td>Mon., Nov. 19</td>
<td>‘Feminist transformations’ (cont.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Nov. 21</td>
<td>None (essay writing workshop)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., Nov. 23</td>
<td>Mills, ‘Ideal theory as ideology’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Nov. 26</td>
<td>‘Ideal theory as ideology’ (cont.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Nov. 28</td>
<td>Wolf, ‘Moral saints’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., Nov. 30</td>
<td>Moral saints (cont.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Dec. 3</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Dec. 10th</td>
<td>Peer review of outlines</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Term paper due</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF READINGS
Note: this list is subject to modification, with notice.


Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. (circa 330 BCE)


Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. (Originally published in 1785)


John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*. (Originally published in 1861)


"Introduction to effective altruism" (June 2016) Retrieved from https://www.effectivealtruism.org/articles/introduction-to-effective-altruism/
COURSE POLICIES

Content Notice
In this course, we will often discuss morally controversial topics about which people feel strongly. Sometimes, this will involve discussing disturbing cases of injustice, and these discussions may be disturbing or even traumatizing to some students. While discussion of morally controversial topics and of injustice is a necessary part of a class on moral philosophy, it is important that these discussions be respectful.

If you feel the need to step outside during one of these discussions—either for a short time or for the rest of the class—you may do so without penalty, though you remain responsible for the material that you miss. You should also feel welcome to discuss your personal reactions to the material with me outside of class time, and I’d consider such discussions an appropriate part of our coursework.

Late Policy
Late work is subject to a penalty of 5% per day, unless you have prior approval (via the Special Arrangements Request Form) or medical documentation. No late submissions will be accepted once graded assignments have been returned to the class.

Special Arrangement Request Form
If circumstances in your life pose an obstacle to your getting your work in on time, you may complete a special arrangements request form (available on the course LEARN site) to propose an alternative arrangement. This form must be submitted 48 hours before the due date for the work. Submitting the form doesn't guarantee that your proposed special arrangement will be approved, but the professor will give all requests serious consideration. Special arrangements requests received after this 48 hour cut-off will not be considered without medical or similar documentation.

Electronic Device Policy
You are not permitted to use your phone during class. This includes sending and/or reading text messages. Simply leave your phone in your pocket or your bag.

Laptops are great. I love my laptop. And used properly, they’re great learning tools. But you should consider restricting your use of your laptop in this class (and most other classes as well). First, there is growing evidence that students who multi-task on laptops during class learn less effectively than those who do not. Unless you can be certain you will use your laptop exclusively for taking notes and reviewing the readings, you are likely to retain more information and understand it better if you take notes by hand.

Even more importantly, the evidence suggests that students who sit within view of someone else’s multi-tasking laptop screen also score lower on subsequent tests than those who did not, even if they did not use laptops themselves. In other words: if you’re on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter during class, you’re not only undermining your own efforts to learn, but those of your classmates as well. So: if you’re going to use a laptop, please confine your use of it to course-related activities such as taking notes and reviewing readings. If you feel like simply you can’t do that, then choose a seat (at the back or sides of the class) where your screen will not be a distraction to others.
LEARN site and email

The course LEARN site is an important part of the class. It is where you will find readings, participate in the Ethics Discussion Forums, submit assignments, and track your grades. It is also where I will post course news and links to relevant news stories.

I will occasionally send important emails concerning readings, assignments, updates to the schedule, or last-minute emergencies. Emails will automatically go to your University of Waterloo email account. It is your responsibility to either regularly check your UW email, or arrange to have your UW emails forwarded to your preferred account (gmail, outlook, etc…) To do so, log onto WatIAM, click “Update Profile”, and select the “Email Configuration” tab.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND DISCIPLINE

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [Office of Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Check the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

**Note for students with disabilities:** The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.
Mental Health Support
All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

On Campus
- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext 32655
- MATES: one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7
- Good2Talk: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
- Here 24/7: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- OK2BME: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS website
Download UWaterloo and regional mental health resources (PDF)
Download the WatSafe app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

Academic Freedom at the University of Waterloo
Policy 33, Ethical Behaviour states, as one of its general principles (Section 1), “The University supports academic freedom for all members of the University community. Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base teaching and research on an honest and ethical quest for knowledge. In the context of this policy, ‘academic freedom’ refers to academic activities, including teaching and scholarship, as is articulated in the principles set out in the Memorandum of Agreement between the FAUW and the University of Waterloo, 1998 (Article 6). The academic environment which fosters free debate may from time to time include the presentation or discussion of unpopular opinions or controversial material. Such material shall be dealt with as openly, respectfully and sensitively as possible.” This definition is repeated in Policies 70 and 71, and in the Memorandum of Agreement, Section 6.