

INTRODUCTION TO MORAL PHILOSOPHY: Syllabus

We start with a few moral issues, including abortion and our obligations to others. We then take up issues about the nature of morality as a whole such as whether there is a single true morality. We end by considering moral theories that attempt to formulate basic principles of morality.

Lectures: Tuesday and Thursday at 10 AM in Frick 120 (Kreske Auditorium)

Preceptors: Andrea Brewer, Cecilia Tilli, Gilbert Harman, Ada Fee, Keinan Greene, and Rachel Parsons. Precepts are arranged on Blackboard.

I. MORAL PROBLEMS

Thursday, September 16, Tradeoffs.

Foot, "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect," chapter 60.

Thomson, "Killing, Letting Die, and the Trolley Problem," chapter 61

Tuesday, September 21, Abortion and the sanctity of life.

Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion," Blackboard Course Materials for this course.

Tooley, "Abortion and Infanticide," chapter 46

Marquis, "An Argument that Abortion is Wrong," chapter 47

Thursday, September 23, Obligations to others: parents, strangers.

Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," chapter 53

Harris, "The Survival Lottery," chapter 54

Tuesday, September 28, Duties to animals

Kant, "We Have No Duties to Animals," chapter 42

Singer, "All Animals Are Equal," chapter 43

Feinberg, "The Rights of Animals and Unborn Generations," chapter 44

Thursday, September 30, Justice

Rawls, "A Theory of Justice," chapter 64

Tuesday, October 5, Moral Responsibility

Taylor, "Determininism and the Theory of Agency," chapter 36

Nagel, "Moral Luck," chapter 39

Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," chapter 41

II. META-ETHICS

Thursday, October 7, Analogies between moralities and languages.

3-5 paper due before class.

Roedder and Harman, "Linguistics and Moral Theory," Blackboard Course Materials.

Tuesday, October 12, Religion and morality.

Plato, "Euthyphro," chapter 23

Craig and Sinnott-Armstrong, "God and Objective Morality: A Debate," chapter 25.

Thursday, October 14, Moral nihilism.

Ayer, "A Critique of Ethics," chapter 2

Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values," chapter 3

Tuesday, October 19, Emotivism. NO ACTUAL LECTURE TODAY.

Stevenson, "The Nature of Ethical Disagreement," on Blackboard.

Thursday, October 21, Impartial spectators.

Hume, "Of the Influencing Motives of the Will" and "Moral Distinctions Not Derived from Reason," chapter 1

Firth, "Ethical Absolutism and the Ideal Observer," on Blackboard.

Tuesday, October 26, The "open question argument"

Moore, "The Subject Matter of Ethics," chapter 6

Ridge, "Moral Non-Naturalism," in the online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy at
<<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-non-naturalism/>>

Thursday, October 28, Morality as knowable a priori

Smith, "Realism," chapter 9

Audi, "Moral Knowledge and Ethical Pluralism," chapter 13

<Midterm break>.

Tuesday, November 9, Moral relativism

Harman, "Moral Relativism Defended," chapter 5

Shafer-Landau, "Ethics as Philosophy," chapter 8

Thursday, November 11, Social conventions

Hobbes, "Leviathan," chapter 62

Gauthier, "Why Contractarianism?" chapter 63

4-7 page paper due in lieu of midterm

Tuesday, November 16, Personal moralities

Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism,"

<<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/sartre/works/exist/sartre.htm>>.

Harman, "Personal Principles," Chapter 7, *The Nature of Morality*, on Blackboard.

III. MORAL THEORIES

Thursday, November 18, Virtue

Hursthouse, "Normative Virtue Ethics," chapter 68

Slote, "Agent Based Virtue Ethics," chapter 69

Tuesday, November 23, Duty
Kant, "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals," chapter 55
Korsgaard, "Kant's Formula of the Universal Law," chapter 56

Tuesday, November 30, Value
Nozick, "The Experience Machine," chapter 30
Ross, "What Things Are Good," chapter 34
Parfit, "What Makes Someone's Life Go Best?" chapter 35

Thursday, December 2, Egoism
Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism," chapter 19
Hunt, "Flourishing Egoism," chapter 20
Rachels, "Ethical Egoism," chapter 21

Tuesday, December 7, Utilitarianism
Mill, "Utilitarianism," chapter 48
Smart, "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism," chapter 50

Thursday, December 9, Rational constraints
Nozick, "The Rationality of Constraints," chapter 58

Tuesday, December 14, Justifying moral views
Sayre-McCord, "Coherentism and the Justification of Moral Beliefs," chapter 14

Thursday, December 16, Short answer test

Tuesday, January 11, 7-10 page paper due in lieu of final exam.

READING/ REQUIREMENTS/ PAPERS/EXAMS/GRADING

Readings are either in Russ Shafer-Landau (ed.) *Ethical Theory*, which you can purchase at *Labyrinth*, or available on Blackboard. Attendance is required at all precepts and lectures. Assessment will be based on a 3-5 page paper due October 7, 2010 (15%), a 4-7 paper in lieu of a midterm due November 11, 2010 (20%), quizzes given in precept (10%), a one hour short answer test held in class on December 16, 2010 (25%), and a final paper of 7-10 pages in lieu of a final exam due January 11, 2011 (30%).

Beginning philosophy students are strongly encouraged to consult the following online resources to learn how to read philosophy books and articles and to write philosophy papers:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>