

## PHIL 2000: ETHICS – 2011/12, TERM 1

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30 to 4:30, and Wednesdays 9:30 to 11:30, or by appointment.  
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed for students to acquire general knowledge of various ethical theories and to achieve fundamental understanding of ethical problems, so as to promote the ability of creative thinking on these problems and critical reflection on the moral issues of contemporary society.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### *Knowledge*

- ✓ **Understand** the key ideas of the three most influential historical texts in western moral philosophy: Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Kant's *Groundwork* and Mill's *Utilitarianism*.
- ✓ **Understand** the key ideas of two influential recent works in ethics: T. M. Scanlon's contractualism and Brad Hooker's rule-consequentialism.

#### *Skills*

- ✓ **Analyse** arguments in the readings or in your own thoughts. You will identify the distinct parts of the argument and understand the role each part plays in providing support for the main thesis.
- ✓ **Be critical** toward the readings, your own thoughts and other people's thoughts. You will raise questions and objections. You will propose alternatives.
- ✓ **Be constructive**. You will try to improve other people's views and your own by making clarifications, interpretations, extensions and revisions.

### EVALUATION SCHEME

- 30% Tutorials. Assignments and Weighting decided by Tutor.\*
- 30% Short Essay on Aristotle, Kant and/or Mill
  - Approx 1500 words. Due October 27<sup>th</sup>.
  - I will give you three essay questions three weeks in advance. You will choose one.
  - At least one third of the essay should be your own arguments.
  - Look at the different types of arguments described on page 3 below.
  - Provide a thesis statement ("I will argue that ...").
  - 12 pt. Times New Roman, single-spaced, double-sided, please.
- 10% Class Conference Presentation on Scanlon and/or Hooker.
  - November 24<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>. Individual presentation. Approx. 15 minutes, then Q&A.
  - It will be on the topic of your future term paper.
- 30% Term Paper on Scanlon and/or Hooker.
  - Approx. 2000 words. Due December 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - 30% - 50% should be explaining and clarifying Scanlon and/or Hooker.
  - 50% - 70% should be developing one, two or three of your own arguments.

*No mid-term exam or final exam.*

*Late assignments lose 4% per day.*

*\* Prof. Lowry will lead one tutorial group in English. It will meet weekly on Tuesdays at 1:30pm for one period in Lee Shau Kee 308 from September 20<sup>th</sup> to November 22<sup>nd</sup>.*

SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS
8 Sep	Introduction to the course	n/a
<b>Aristotle (384 – 322 BCE)</b>		
15 Sep	What is the highest human good?	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book 1
22 Sep	How should we act and feel?	<i>NE</i> , Book 2
<b>Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804)</b>		
29 Sep	Don't make exceptions for yourself.	<i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , Chapter 2, pp. 14 to 26
6 Oct	Promote rational self-determination.	<i>Groundwork</i> , Chapter 2, pp. 26 to 40
<b>John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873)</b>		
13 Oct	Is happiness the only thing we desire?	<i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapter 4
20 Oct	What is utilitarianism?	<i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapter 2
<b>T. M. Scanlon (b. 1940), Harvard University</b>		
27 Oct	What is contractualism?	<i>What We Owe to Each Other</i> , Chapter 5, pp. 189 to 218
3 Nov	What can I reasonably reject?	<i>WWO</i> , Chapter 5, pp. 218 to 247
<b>Brad Hooker (b. ~1960), University of Reading, UK</b>		
10 Nov	What is rule consequentialism?	<i>Ideal Code, Real World</i> , Chapter 2, pp. 32 to 52
17 Nov	Which rules should society have?	<i>ICRW</i> , Chapter 2, pp. 52 to 71
<b>Class Conferences</b>		
24 Nov	Conference, Part 1	n/a
1 Dec	Conference, Part 2	n/a

Kant and Mill are posted on WebCT. Aristotle and Hooker are available electronically at the library website. Scanlon is on reserve.

## RECOMMENDED READINGS

I am perfectly happy if students read only the required readings and read them carefully and thoughtfully. If, however, you are keen to read more (which is great!), you can read check out the Optional Further Reading file in the Readings folder on WebCT. It provides information about the full versions of the assigned books, as well as links to some good online entries from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

## SOME TYPES OF ARGUMENTS

**Criticize:** If you don't fully agree with a theory, then you can raise one or more objections. You can argue that, e.g., (i) the conclusion is implausible by showing that its (conceptual or practical) implications are unacceptable; or (ii) the conclusion is not adequately supported by showing that one or more of the premises is not defensible; or (iii) the premises, although defensible, do not actually support the conclusion; etc.

**Defend:** If you fully agree with a theory, then you can identify one or more objections that opponents might raise, and then explain why those objections fail. You should pick the objections that you think are strongest. Alternatively, if you agree with a theory's conclusions, but you don't fully agree with the arguments given for those conclusions, then you can strengthen the arguments by revising them and/or by adding new ones.

**Interpret/Clarify:** If you think that a theory view is unclear in some important way, then you can explain exactly what is unclear and why. Then, you can identify the likely interpretations, and then provide your own argument(s) about which interpretation is best.

**Extend:** If you fully or mostly agree with a theory, but you think that it is incomplete in some important way, then you can try to extend it by thinking about what the author would have said (or should have said) concerning a neglected issue.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students are should carefully read the University Policy on Academic Honesty at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/index.htm>. If you haven't done this already, please read it tonight!

For the presentation and for the essay, I will ask you to provide proper citations (author, title, date, pages) to any material that you use. I will teach you how to do this, in case you aren't sure yet.

I will also encourage you to include a good amount of your own ideas expressed in your own words. I want to hear what you think! For this class, you should "I" in your writing. This is the best way to clearly tell the reader which ideas are yours and which ideas come from other people. If you have any questions about what is expected of you, please let me know.

## EVALUATION SCHEME FOR PROF. LOWRY'S TUTORIAL GROUP

There will be a WebCT discussion for this tutorial group. For each tutorial meeting every student will be expected to post a response to the most recent reading in 100-200 words on WebCT. The response should not summarise the reading. The response can raise an objection, or defend the reading against an objection, or identify an ambiguity (and explain why the ambiguity is significant), or make an extension to the argument in the reading. These responses will form the basis for discussion during the tutorial meetings. The evaluation will be based on attendance, active discussion and the posted responses.

## Further Reading for PHIL 2000 Ethics

### On Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*

- ◆ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated and edited by Roger Crisp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. [online access via CUHK library site]
- ◆ Kraut, Richard. "Aristotle's Ethics." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2010 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/aristotle-ethics/>.
- ◆ Sachs, Joe. "Aristotle: Ethics." In *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, URL = <http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/>.
- ◆ Kraut, Richard, ed. *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006. [online access via CUHK library site]

### On Kant's *Groundwork*

- ◆ Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*. Translated by Jonathan F. Bennett. URL = <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdf/kantgrou.pdf>.
- ◆ Johnson, Robert. "Kant's Moral Philosophy." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2009 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2009/entries/kant-moral/>.
- ◆ Sedgwick, Sally. *Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. [on reserve at UL]
- ◆ Bird, Graham, ed. *A Companion to Kant*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006. [online access via CUHK library site]

### On Mill's *Utilitarianism*

- ◆ Mill, John Stuart. *Utilitarianism*. Translated by Jonathan F. Bennett. URL = <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdf/millutil.pdf>.
- ◆ Mill, John Stuart. *Utilitarianism*. Edited by Roger Crisp. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. [online access via CUHK library site]
- ◆ Brink, David. "Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/mill-moral-political/>.
- ◆ Crisp, Roger. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Mill on Utilitarianism*. London: Routledge, 1997. [online access via CUHK library site]
- ◆ West, Henry R., ed. *The Blackwell Guide to Mill's Utilitarianism*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006. [online access via CUHK library site]
- ◆ West, Henry R. *An Introduction to Mill's Utilitarian Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. [online access via CUHK library site]

### Scanlon's *What We Owe to Each Other*

- ◆ Scanlon, T. M. *What We Owe to Each Other*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1998. [on reserve at UL]

### Hooker's *Ideal Code, Real World*

- ◆ Hooker, Brad. *Ideal Code, Real World*. New York: Clarendon Press, 2000. [online access via CUHK library site]

## Essay Grading Criteria

Here is a description of the characteristics of an excellent essay:

### Theory Analysis (worth 40%)

1. You provide an accurate account of the relevant parts of the theory, including key concepts. You don't simply describe; rather, you clarify and explain.
2. You quote relevant key passages when it is helpful to do so, and you provide proper citations.
3. Your explanation of the theory is not only about the conclusions; you also discuss the thinker's reasons and arguments for those conclusions.
4. To deepen your analysis, you might also explain how the key concepts relate to or connect with each other.
5. When it is helpful to do so, you discuss what the thinker would probably have said about an issue that he/she didn't discuss. You do this by drawing on what the thinker did say about other related things.

### Argument (worth 40%)

You develop your argument in some or all of the following ways:

6. You provide a detailed and specific thesis statement that clearly identifies the goal(s) of your argument and indicates exactly how you agree or disagree with the thinker.
7. You clearly identify a problem with the theory and you explain exactly why you think it is problem and how big of a problem it is.
8. You clearly explain the claims you make and the concepts you use and you give reasons to defend the claims you make.
9. You consider counter objections to your position and respond to them.
10. You identify weaknesses or limitations in your position or arguments and you explain why those weaknesses or limitations are less serious than the problems with the theory.
11. You explain the implications of your argument, such as what it tells us about the theory or a concept or a practical issue.

### Presentation and Language (worth 20%)

12. Your paper has a clear structure that is easy to follow. Each piece of the essay is presented in a way that makes it clear to the reader how it is relevant to the essay question and to your overall argument.
13. The language is precise rather than vague. You choose your words carefully and you try to be as specific as possible.

The language is natural rather than awkward. In order to express complex ideas clearly, you use straightforward and simple wording as much as possible.

## Citation Guide

### When do I need to provide a citation?

- ✓ When you use anyone else's words
  - Use quotation marks.
  - Remember to provide the page number (or the most recent marker, if it's from Aristotle).
- ✓ When you refer to a specific claim that an author makes.
  - Remember to provide the page number (or marker).
- ✓ When you state an empirical fact that is not common knowledge. Cite your source of evidence for this fact.
  - Remember to provide the page number.
- ✓ When you mention a publication (book, article, chapter, etc.).
  - No need for page number (or marker).

### How do I cite?

Insert a footnote at the end of the sentence, immediately after the period. The first time you cite a publication, the footnote must include the full information as shown below. All subsequent times you cite a publication, the footnote should be: Author's surname, Shortened Title (in italics for a book or in quotes for an article or chapter), page number. For Aristotle only, give the most recent marker instead of the page number. The marker is on the side of the page and it has four numbers and one letter, e.g., 1094a.

### Formats for this course's required readings

First time: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated and edited by Roger Crisp (Port Chester, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), marker.

Other times: Aristotle, *NE*, marker.

First time: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*, in the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at [www.earlymoderntexts.com](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com), page.

Other times: Kant, *Groundwork*, page.

First time: John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, in the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at [www.earlymoderntexts.com](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com), page.

Other times: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, page.

First time: T. M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, (Cambridge, MA, USA: Belknap Press, 1998), page.

Other times: Scanlon, *What We Owe*, page.

First time: Brad Hooker, *Ideal Code, Real World: A Rule-Consequentialist Theory of Morality* (New York, USA: Clarendon Press, 2000), page.

Other times: Hooker, *Ideal Code*, page.

## General Formats

### Book

First time: Author's First Name Author's Surname, *Title*, (City, Country: Publisher, Year), page.

Other times: Author's Surname, *Shortened Title*, page.

### Book with translator

First time: Author's First Name Author's Surname, *Title*, Translated by Translator's First Name Translator's Surname, (City, Country: Publisher, Year of this translation), page.

Other times: Author's Surname, *Shortened Title*, page.

### Edited collection of essays

First time: Editor's First Name Editor's Surname, ed., *Title*, (City, Country: Publisher, Year).

Other times: Editor's Surname, *Shortened Title*.

### Chapter in an edited collection

First time: Author's First Name Author's Surname, "Chapter Title," in *Book Title*, edited by Editor's First Name Editor's Surname, First Page of Chapter – Last Page of Chapter (City, Country: Publisher, Year), page.

Other times: Author's Surname, "Shortened Title," page.

### Journal Article

First time: Author's First Name Author's Surname, "Title," *Journal* Volume/Issue (Year): First Page of Article – Last Page of Article, at Page.

Other times: Author's Surname, "Title," page.