

PHIL3000
Ethics 倫理學

Course Outline

Time: T 4:30pm-6:15pm

Location: LSK 308

Tutorial time to be arranged

Course overview

This course aims to introduce basic concepts, problems and theories in ethics. The topics to be discussed are drawn from two main branches of ethics: (1) *metaethics*, which is a systematic inquiry of the foundations of morality, including moral semantics, moral ontology, moral epistemology, and moral psychology; and (2) *normative ethics*, which explores first-order moral questions like “what has value?”, “what traits of character are virtuous?”, “what makes an action right or wrong?”, and “what kind of political system is just?”.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

Learning outcomes

1. To gain a basic understanding of metaethics and normative ethics.
2. To be able to articulate and evaluate major ethical theories.
3. To be able to think critically about moral issues.
4. To be able to construct clear and reasoned arguments.

Topics

1. The error theory
2. Moral relativism
3. Moral naturalism
4. Moral non-naturalism
5. Egoism
6. Utilitarianism
7. Deontology
8. Virtue ethics
9. Liberalism
10. Egalitarianism

Learning activities

Learning activities include lectures, tutorials, readings, presentations, discussions, and writings:

1. Lecture: one 2-hour session every week.
2. Tutorial: one 2-hour session every two weeks.
3. Reading: around 30 pages of required reading every week.
4. Writing: midterm exam and final paper.

Assessment scheme

Task nature	Weight
Tutorial	30%
Midterm Exam (October 21st, in class)	30%
Final Paper (due on November 30th)	40%

Classroom policy

1. Attendance is *mandatory* for both lectures and tutorials.
2. Everyone has the obligation to *actively participate* in the class. Class participation includes paying close attention, raising relevant questions, discussing philosophical issues, and making responses.
3. Behavior that interferes with classroom activities is *strictly forbidden*. Such behavior includes: (a) constant late arrivals; (b) chatting with others (or more rarely, with yourself); and (c) doing things unrelated to the course, such as playing with your electronic devices.

Required resources

A. Fisher, *Metaethics*, Acumen Press, 2011

J. Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 4th Edition, McGraw-Hill Press, 2003

Other selected readings

Recommended resources

S. Darwall, *Philosophical Ethics*, Westview Press, 1997

R. Shafer-Landau (ed.), *Ethical Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd Edition, Wiley-Blackwell Press, 2013

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu>)

Course schedule (* indicates readings for tutorials)

Week	Topics	Required reading	Tutorials
1	Introduction	Darwall, "Metaethics: The Basic Questions", from <i>Philosophical Ethics</i>	
2	Holiday (September 9th)		
3	The error theory	Chapter 3, <i>Metaethics</i> Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values"	
4	Moral relativism	Chapter 7, <i>Metaethics</i> Gensler, "Cultural Relativism"	
5	Naturalistic moral realism	Chapter 4, <i>Metaethics</i> *Railton, "Facts and Values"	
6	Non-naturalistic moral realism	Chapter 5, <i>Metaethics</i> *Huemer, "Moral Knowledge", from <i>Ethical Intuitionism</i>	
7	Egoism and morality	Chapter 5 & 6, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>	
8	Midterm exam in class (October 21st)		
9	Utilitarianism	Chapter 7 & 8, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> *Thomson, "The Trolley Problem"	
10	Deontology	Chapter 9 & 10, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> *Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect"	
11	Virtue ethics	Chapter 13, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> *Zhong, "A Confucian Virtue Theory of Supererogation"	
12	Political morality (1): liberalism	Swift, "Liberty", from <i>Political Philosophy</i>	
13	Political morality (2): egalitarianism	Swift, "Equality", from <i>Political Philosophy</i>	

Details of course website

This course uses Blackboard for announcements and discussions. Reading materials, assignments, and lecture notes will be put in a Dropbox folder (the link to this folder is posted on Blackboard).

Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

Teacher	
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TA	
Name:	
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Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed **declaration** that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.