

PHIL3000
Ethics 倫理學

Course Outline (tentative)

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. Utilitarianism
6. Deontology
7. Contractualism
8. Virtue ethics
9. Prioritarianism
10. Liberalism

Learning activities

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. Assignments: paper and exam.

Assessment scheme

Task nature	Weight
Tutorial (10% for one presentation, 20% for four-session discussions)	30%
Paper (1,500 words in English or 3,000 words in Chinese; any topic of the course; due on November 10 th)	30%
Exam (December 1 st , in class)	40%

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"	
2	The error theory	Chapter 3, <i>Metaethics</i> *Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values"	
3	Moral relativism	Chapter 7, <i>Metaethics</i> Lyons, "Ethical Relativism and the Problem of Incoherence"	
4	Moral naturalism	Chapter 4, <i>Metaethics</i> Sturgeon, "Ethical Naturalism"	*Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values"

5	Moral non-naturalism	Chapter 5, <i>Metaethics</i> *Huemer, "Moral Knowledge"	
6	Utilitarianism	Chapter 7 & 8, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> Smart, "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism"	*Huemer, "Moral Knowledge"
7	Deontology	Chapter 9 & 10, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> *Thomson, "The Trolley Problem"	
8	Contractualism	Chapter 11, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> *Watson, "Some Considerations in Favor of Contractualism"	*Thomson, "The Trolley Problem"
9	Virtue ethics	Chapter 13, <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> Zhong, "A Confucian Virtue Theory of Supererogation"	
10	Other topics (1): Prioritarianism	*Parfit, "Equality and Priority"	*Watson, "Some Considerations in Favor of Contractualism"
11	Other topics (2): Liberalism	Swift, "Liberty"	
12	Review		*Parfit, "Equality and Priority"
13	Exam		

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	
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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.