

PHIL3000
Ethics 倫理學

Course Outline

Mode of teaching: Lecture – Online / Tutorial – Online

Lecture time: Wednesday 15:30-17:15

Tutorial time: TBA

Course overview

This course investigates basic concepts, problems and theories in ethics. The topics to be discussed are drawn from two main branches of ethics: (1) *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?”; and 2) *metaethics*, which addresses second-order questions regarding the foundations of morality, including moral metaphysics, moral epistemology, and moral psychology.

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

Learning outcomes

1. To gain a basic understanding of normative ethics and metaethics.
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.

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	30%
Paper (3,000 words in English or 6,000 words in Chinese; due on November 4)	30%
Exam (online, in the final class on December 2)	40%

Required resources

R. Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics*, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press, 2012.

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

Other selected readings

Recommended resources

H. LaFollette and I. Persson (eds.) *The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory*, 2nd Edition, Wiley-Blackwell Press, 2013.

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

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

Course schedule

Week	Topics	Required Reading	Tutorials
<i>Normative Ethics</i>			
1	Ethical Theories (1): Consequentialism	Ch. 9 & 10, <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i> Smart, "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism" (recommended)	
2	Ethical Theories (2): Deontology	Ch. 11 & 12, <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i> Thomson, "The Trolley Problem" (tutorial)	
3	Ethical Theories (3): Contractarianism	Ch. 13 & 14, <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i> Watson, "Some Considerations in Favor of Contractualism" (tutorial)	
4	Ethical Theories (4): Virtue Ethics	Ch. 17, <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i> Zhong, "A Confucian Virtue Theory of Supererogation" (recommended)	
5	Ethics in Politics (1): Liberty	Miller, "Freedom and the Limits of Government", Ch. 4 of <i>Political Philosophy</i> Waldron, "Liberalism, Political and Comprehensive" (recommended)	Thomson, "The Trolley Problem"
6	Ethics in Politics: (2) Justice	Miller, "Justice", Ch. 5 of <i>Political Philosophy</i> Parfit, "Equality and Priority" (tutorial)	

<u>Metaethics</u>			
7	Moral Nihilism	Ch. 3, <i>Metaethics</i> Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values" (recommended)	Watson, "Some Considerations in Favor of Contractualism"
8	Moral Relativism	Ch. 7, <i>Metaethics</i> Harman, "Moral Relativism Defended" (recommended)	
9	Moral Naturalism	Ch. 4, <i>Metaethics</i> Smith, "Moral Realism" (recommended)	Parfit, "Equality and Priority"
10	Moral Non-naturalism	Ch. 5, <i>Metaethics</i> Zhong, "The Hard Problem for Soft Moral Realism" (tutorial)	
11	Moral Psychology	Ch. 8, <i>Metaethics</i> Wallace, "Moral Motivation" (tutorial)	Zhong, "The Hard Problem for Soft Moral Realism"
12	Remaining Issues		
13	Exam		Wallace, "Moral Motivation"

Details of course website

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.