

**Instructor:** Hon-Lam Li (李翰林)

**Teaching Assistant:** Dr. Roger Lee (李敬恆)

**Contents:** This course will focus on the following issues in Second Term, 2020-2021:

(1) **Practical Ethics:** The Problem of Abortion

- The subject matter of ethics is practical ethics. Therefore, we will start off with the most perplexing of all issues in practical ethics, namely the problem of abortion.

(2) **Normative Ethics:** Consequentialism, Deontology, and Contractualism

- How do we determine whether an act is morally right or wrong? Normative ethics is the study of theories that attempt to set standards of rightness in action, policy, or law. We shall study theories in consequentialism, deontology, contractualism and (if time permits) virtue ethics.

(3) **Metaethics:** Moral Anti-Realism and Realism

- What is the nature of our moral judgments? Can they be objectively right or wrong? Or are they merely subjective? We will study Moral Anti-Realism and Moral Realism.

**Readings:**

(1) The Problem of Abortion

- Mary Ann Warren "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," pp. 4-9.
- Michael Lockwood, "When Does Life Begin?" in his *Dilemmas in Modern Medicine*.
- Judith Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion," the whole paper.
- Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral," pp. 189-202.

(2) Normative Ethics

- J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, excerpts.
- Immanuel Kant, *Groundworks of the Metaphysics of Morals* (excerpt).
- T. M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, excerpt.

(3) Moral realism and Anti-realism:

- J. L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, chap. 1

- Gilbert Harman, *The Nature of Morality*, chap. 1
- Thomas Nagel, *The Last Word*, chap. 6.
- T. M. Scanlon, *Being Realistic about Reasons*, chap. 1-2.

**Instructions:**

- A weekly 3-hour meeting (with breaks).
- The lecture will last 2 hours.
- There will also be a weekly tutorial.

**Written assignments:**

- Two papers (Paper 1: 30%; Paper 2: 40%).

**In-class presentations, contributions, and participation: 30%**