

PHIL3000
Ethics 倫理學

Course Outline

Time : M 9:30am-11:15am

Location :

UCC C5

Tut: TBA

Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)

This course is designed for students to learn how to think about fundamental ethical problems, and how to articulate their thoughts. It also introduces them to some key texts in moral philosophy and helps them to analyze and evaluate the arguments presented therein. Topics to be discussed may include the good life, conceptions of happiness, rationality and morality, duties to others, duties to self.

Learning outcomes

1. To be able to identify and evaluate philosophical arguments involving ethics.
2. To be able to critically examine moral beliefs (one's own and others').
3. To be able to contribute to philosophical dialogue, both in person and through writing, on moral matters.
4. To be familiar with major ethical theories (and some of the major historical texts developing these theories) and to evaluate them critically.
5. To be able to think through contemporary ethical issues and to draw on the resources of ethical theories in doing so.
6. To be able to think through a central metaethical question and to consider its relation to first-order ethical theories.

Topics

This course is divided into three parts:

I. Ethical theories. We shall explore and evaluate three major ethical theories – consequentialism, deontology, and virtue theory – through the lens of three of their most important proponents – Mill, Kant, and Aristotle, respectively. In looking at these theories, we'll consider how their proponents might answer some big picture questions, including: What makes an action morally right/wrong? What is it to be a virtuous person? What sorts of things are valuable in themselves? What do we owe others and to whom (or what), exactly, do we have these moral obligations? And which (if any) of these questions should we take as a starting point?

II. Ethical problems. We shall explore some specific ethical questions. Can we live an exceptionally morally good life while also living well? (This question really straddles parts I and II of the course.) What obligations do we have towards individuals suffering from hunger across the world? Is deceiving someone into sex always, in every circumstance, *nonconsensual* sex and, as such, *seriously* morally wrong? Is abortion morally wrong and, if so, why (and what does this say about why, in general, it's wrong to kill people)? In exploring these questions, we'll turn to the resources provided by the above-discussed ethical theories. At the same time, we'll reevaluate these theories in light of how they handle the ethical problems we're considering.

III. Why be moral? The first two parts of this course are devoted to the pursuit of answers to first-order normative questions. Metaethics is the study of this pursuit. We'll devote the final part of this course to exploring a particular metaethical question: "Why be moral?", i.e., "What reasons (if any) do we have to do what morality demands of me, and in virtue of what do we have those reasons?" In pursuing this question, we'll consider how other metaethical questions relate to it. We'll also consider how the potential answers to this question might be informed – and constrained – by the ethical theories with which this course begins.

Learning activities

1. Lecture: one 2-hour session every week
2. Tutorials: one 2-hour session every two weeks (active participation will be expected)
3. Reading: about 30 pages per week *on average*
4. Assignments: two reading responses, one term paper, and one exam

Assessment scheme

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
1 st reading response	500 – 600 words in English. Due in week 4 tutorial.	5%
2 nd reading response	500 – 600 words in English. Due in week 8 tutorial.	10%
Term paper	2500 – 3000 words in English. Due in week 12 lecture.	30%
Exam	To be held during the week 13 lecture.	45%
Participation in tutorials		10%

Remarks on Assessment Scheme

Students should come prepared to discuss their reading responses in the tutorials in which they are due. And in general students should come prepared to participate actively in discussion in tutorials. Additional guidelines and advice on the reading responses and term papers will be provided in lectures and in tutorials.

Grade Descriptor

Please refer to: http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

Required reading

Kant, Immanuel (2010). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Mary Gregor (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mill, John Stuart (2001). *Utilitarianism*, Second Edition. George Sher (ed.). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

Additional required readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Recommended learning resources

Shafer-Landau, Russ (2003). *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shafer-Landau, Russ (2017). *The Fundamentals of Ethics*, 4th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<https://iep.utm.edu/>)

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

Additional recommended readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Course schedule (All lectures and tutorials will be held on campus.)

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Required reading</i>	<i>Tutorials</i>
1	Consequentialism: Introduction	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , chs. 1-4 Recommended: Shafer-Landau, <i>Fundamentals</i> , ch. 9	
2	Consequentialism: Elaboration and Challenges	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , ch. 5 Selection from Williams, “A Critique of Utilitarianism” <i>Against</i> Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk away from Omelas” (for tutorial only) Nozick, “The Experience Machine” (for tutorial only) Recommended: Shafer-Landau, <i>Fundamentals</i> , ch. 10	Tutorial 1: Evaluating utilitarianism (Review and discussion of weeks 1-2 reading.)
3	Deontology: Introduction	Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , §1-2 Recommended: Shafer-Landau, <i>Fundamentals</i> , chs. 11-12	
4	Deontology: Elaboration and Challenges	Kant, “On a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns” & “Taking What is a Human Being’s Duty to Himself for a Duty to Other Beings” (<i>The Metaphysics of Morals</i> , §2.1.16-18)	Tutorial 2: Evaluating Kantian deontology (Review and discussion of weeks 3-4 reading.)
5	Virtue Ethics	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book I (chs. 1, 4, 5, & 7) and Book II (chs. 1, 4-9) Recommended: Shafer-Landau, <i>Fundamentals</i> , ch. 17	
6	Living Right and Living Well	Wolf, “Moral Saints”	Tutorial 3: Evaluating the relationship between the good life and the moral life (Review and discussion of weeks 5-6 reading.)
7	World Hunger	Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” Recommended: O’Neill, “Ending World Hunger”	
8	Deception and Consent	Dougherty, “Sex, Lies, and Consent” Recommended: McGregor, “Force, Consent, and the Reasonable Woman”	Tutorial 4: Evaluating challenges to our ethical intuitions (Review and discussion of weeks 7-8 reading.)
9	Abortion Ethics	Marquis, “Why Abortion Is Immoral” Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”	

10	The Metaethical Landscape and the Question, “Why be moral?”	Shafer-Landau, Part 1 of <i>Whatever Happened to Good and Evil</i> Foot, “Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives” Recommended: Williams, “Internal and External Reasons”	Tutorial 5: Abortion Ethics (Review and discussion of week 9 reading. Also: discussion of term papers.)
11	Why Be Moral? A Relativist Response.	Harman, “Moral Relativism Defended” Recommended: Shafer-Landau, <i>Fundamentals</i> , ch. 19	
12	Why Be Moral? Objectivist Responses.	McDowell, “Are Moral Requirements Hypothetical Imperatives?” Nagel, “Value” (§8.5 of <i>The View from Nowhere</i>)	Tutorial 6: Why be moral? (Review and discussion of Weeks 10-12 reading.)
13	Exam (during lecture)		

Details of course website

Reading materials, assignments, and lecture notes will be posted to Blackboard.

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

Teacher	
Name:	Rimell, Nicholas
Office location:	FKH416
Telephone:	3943 7139
Email:	nkr2uz@virginia.edu (will be updated later)

TA	
Name:	
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

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/academic_honesty/

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.