

PHIL3000
Ethics 倫理學

Course Outline

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

Location :

ERB 803

Tut: TBA

Location:

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 (as shown on CUSIS)

1. Be familiar with some of the central issues in ethics, which might be issues in history of ethics or in contemporary ethics.
2. Be able to read analytically, such that they can identify distinct parts of an argument and grasp each part's role in the overall structure.
3. Be able to read critically, such that they can raise their own questions and form their own objections to the material.
4. Be able to discuss arguments critically and constructively.
5. Be able to defend their own position by giving reasons and explaining the force of those reasons.

Additional learning outcomes

5. Be familiar with major ethical theories (and some of the major historical texts developing these theories) and be able to evaluate them critically.
6. Be able to think through contemporary ethical issues and to draw on the resources of ethical theories in doing so.
7. 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?

II. Ethical problems. We shall explore some specific ethical questions. 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 how, if at all, does this relate to 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 address these questions.

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 us, and in virtue of what do we have these 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 six times over the term (active participation will be expected)
3. Reading: about 30 pages per week on average
4. Assignments: one reading response, one term paper, one exam, active class participation, and one presentation in the tutorial

Assessment scheme

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Reading response	500 – 600 words in English. May be submitted (electronically) any time before the week 8 lecture.	10%
Term paper	2500 – 3000 words in English. Due by the week 11 lecture. (To be submitted electronically.)	35%
Exam	To be held (face-to-face) during week 13 lecture.	35%
Tutorials	15% for student presentation. 5% for weekly participation. (Face-to-face.)	20%

Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)

Dates and mode of assessment (e.g., face-to-face) is tentative. If we need to hold the course online, the above-presented activities will still take place but online or as take-home assignments.

Required reading

Kant, Immanuel (2010). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Mary Gregor (ed. and transl.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Alternative version: 2011. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. A German-English Edition. Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann (ed. and transl.). 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*

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Required reading</i>	<i>Tutorials</i>
1	Consequentialism: Introduction	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , chs. 1-2 Recommended: Shafer-Landau, <i>Fundamentals</i> , ch. 9	
2	Consequentialism: Elaboration and Challenges	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , ch. 5 (pp. 42-54 only) Recommended: Shafer-Landau, <i>Fundamentals</i> , ch. 10	
3	Deontology: Introduction	Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , §1 Recommended: Shafer-Landau, <i>Fundamentals</i> , chs. 11-12; Korsgaard, "Introduction" (pp. vii-xv only)	Selection from Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism" Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk away from Omelas" Nozick, "The Experience Machine"
4	Deontology: Elaboration and Challenges	Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , §2 (4:406-4:430 only) Recommended: Korsgaard, "Introduction" (pp. xv-xxiii only)	
5	Virtue Ethics: Introduction	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book I (chs. 1, 4, 5, & 7) Recommended: Shafer-Landau, <i>Fundamentals</i> , ch. 17 (pp. 256-265 only)	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)
6	Virtue Ethics: Elaboration and Challenges	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book II (chs. 1, 4-9) Recommended: Shafer-Landau, <i>Fundamentals</i> , ch. 17 (pp. 266-275 only)	
7	World Hunger	Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" Recommended: O'Neill, "Ending World Hunger"	Wolf, "Moral Saints"
8	Deception and Consent	Dougherty, "Sex, Lies, and Consent" Recommended: McGregor, "Force, Consent, and the Reasonable Woman" Reading response must be submitted by now.	
9	Abortion Ethics	Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral"	Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

10	The Metaethical Landscape	Shafer-Landau, Part 1 of <i>Whatever Happened to Good and Evil</i> Recommended: Williams, "Internal and External Reasons"	Term paper workshop
11	Why Be Moral? Part 1	Foot, "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives" Recommended: Shafer-Landau, <i>Fundamentals</i> , ch. 19 Term paper due.	Nagel, "Value" (§8.5 of <i>The View from Nowhere</i>)
12	Why Be Moral? Part 2	Harman, "Moral Relativism Defended"	
13	Exam	No new reading	

* **This schedule is unofficial and tentative.** Adjustments may be made to the reading plan, assignment deadlines, and exam time leading up to the semester. This schedule will be finalized before the end of the drop/add period.

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 hours	W 11:45 am - 1:45 pm
Office location:	Fung King Hey Building, 416
Telephone:	3943 7139
Email:	nicholaskrimell@cuhk.edu.hk

TA	
Name:	TBA
Office hours:	TBA
Office location:	TBA
Email:	TBA

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.