

Philosophy 2/EthicSoc 20: Introduction to Moral Philosophy Winter '14-15

This course is a survey of moral philosophy in the Western tradition. What makes right actions right and wrong actions wrong? What is it to have a virtuous rather than a vicious character? What is the basis of these distinctions? Why should we care about morality at all? Our aim is to understand how some of the most influential philosophers (including Aristotle, Kant, and Mill) have addressed these questions, and by so doing, to better formulate our own views. No prior familiarity with philosophy is required. Fulfills the Ethical Reasoning requirement.

Instructor:

Prof. Tamar Schapiro

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Office hours: Tuesdays 2:30-4:00 in 100-102A. Also by appointment if necessary.

Texts (available in the Stanford Bookstore):

Course Reader for Phil. 2/EthicSoc 20

Kant: Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals. Cambridge University Press Textbooks, 2nd Edition. Translated by Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann. Introduction by Christine Korsgaard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics. 2nd Edition. Translation and introduction by Terence Irwin. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1999.

Pre-requisites:

None. It is expected that many students taking the course will have had no prior training in philosophy.

Course Requirements:

Participation in section – 5%

5 acceptable 1-page response papers – 10%*

First paper (5-7 pp.) – 25%

Second paper (6-8 pp.) – 30%

Final Exam – 30%

* In order to earn any credit for response papers, you must turn in all 5. If you turn in 4 or less, you receive no credit for any of them. For further details, see “Response Paper Guidelines” (posted on Coursework).

Grading policies:

In order to pass the course you must complete all of the written work and attend lectures and sections regularly. Extensions on papers may be granted at the discretion of the TAs and/or Prof. Schapiro. Late papers will be docked one-third of a grade per day late (from A to A-, A- to B+, etc.).

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

All readings are in the Course Reader (CR) except Kant's *Groundwork*, Korsgaard's "Introduction" to Kant's *Groundwork*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and Susan Wolf's "Moral Saints" (posted on Coursework). Please do each reading at least once before the day on which it is to be discussed. Readings for this course are not usually long but they are fairly difficult; most students find it helpful to read the material at least once before it is discussed in lecture and at least once afterwards.

1/6: Introduction

1/8: Ayn Rand, "Value Yourself" (CR)
Louis Pojman, "Egoism and Altruism" (CR)

1/13: James Rachels, "Ethical Egoism" (CR)

1/15: Jeremy Bentham, "Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation" (CR)
[Guest lecture by TA – Prof. Schapiro out of the country]

1/20: Robert Nozick, "The Experience Machine" (CR)
Derek Parfit, "What Makes a Person's Life Go Best?" (CR)
[Guest lecture by TA – Prof. Schapiro out of the country]

1/22: John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism," Chapters I-II (CR)

1/27: John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism," Chapter IV (CR)

1/29: Ursula LeGuin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (CR)
John Rawls, "Classical Utilitarianism" (CR)
Robert Nozick, "Side Constraints" (CR)

[First paper due Sunday, 2/1, 10pm]

2/3: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
Preface (recommended)
First Section, read through "is not first to be expected from the effect." (p. 17/Ak. 401) (REQUIRED)
Christine Korsgaard's "Introduction," read up to "Second section" (p.xvii) (REQ)

- 2/5: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
 Remainder of Sec. I (rec)
 Sec. II, read through “there arises from it the concept of duty.” (p. 26/Ak. 412) (rec)
 Sec. II, “Everything in nature works according to laws” (p. 26/Ak. 412) through “...free conduct as such, i.e. to morals.” (p. 30/Ak. 417) (REQ)
 Sec. II, “Now the question arises” (p. 30/Ak. 417) through “such an imperative either.” (p. 32/Ak. 419) (rec)
 Sec. II, “By contrast” (p. 32/Ak. 419) through “dependence upon the one principle.” (p. 36/Ak. 424) (REQ)
 Korsgaard’s “Introduction,” read up to “The Formula of Humanity” (p. xxiii) (REQ)
- 2/10: Korsgaard, “Kant’s Formula of Universal Law” (CR)
- 2/12: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
 Sec. II, “If we now attend” (p. 36/Ak. 424) through “necessarily do this a priori.” (p. 39/Ak. 427) (rec)
 Sec. II, “The will is thought as a capacity” (p. 39/Ak. 427) through “also be *my* ends.” (p. 43/Ak. 430) (REQ)
 Korsgaard’s, “Introduction,” read up to “Autonomy and the kingdom of ends,” (p.xxvi) (REQ)
- 2/17: Onora O’Neill, “Between Consenting Adults” (CR)
- 2/19: Thomas Nagel, “War and Massacre” (CR)
- 2/24: Thomas Nagel, “Moral Luck” (CR)
- 2/26: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I
- 3/3: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II and Book III, chs. 6-12
- 3/5: Philippa Foot, “Virtues and Vices”
 Skim Chapter IV if you want more examples of virtues and vices
- [Second paper due: Friday, 3/6, 10pm]**
- 3/10: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X, chs. 1-8.
- 3/12: Susan Wolf, “Moral Saints” (Coursework)
- [Final Exam: Take-home, due electronically on Thursday, 3/19, 10pm]**