



PHIL*3290 Advanced Ethical Theory

Fall 2018

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - August 23, 2018

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

This course focuses on the theoretical foundations of morality. Ethical theory comprises metaethics, which is primarily concerned with the objectivity of moral judgments; normative ethics, which is concerned with the principles of sound moral judgment, and moral psychology, which is concerned with moral motivation and moral reasoning.

Pre-Requisite(s): 1.50 credits in Philosophy or 7.50 credits

1.2 Course Description

This course will focus on the area of moral philosophy known as metaethics. As the name implies, this inquiry involves getting 'meta' about ethics by reflecting on the nature of ethical judgments rather than attempting to justify those judgments, which is the subject of normative ethics. Our course will trace some of the main threads of twentieth and twenty-first century metaethics. This period sees metaethics get taken up as a serious, independent philosophical endeavor apart from normative ethics, and it is a period of philosophy marked by intense interest in language. Hence, many of our authors are concerned with the meaning of moral judgments: do they represent the world in the way that many ordinary beliefs do, or do they serve some other function, such as commending or expressing our attitudes? Depending on how we answer these questions we will be faced with other problems. In this course we will encounter theories including emotivism, prescriptivism, expressivism, realism, naturalism, constructivism, and constitutivism. These are some of the leading views on these issues advocated by contemporary philosophers. You will be introduced to some of the debates that are ongoing today, as well as the immediate historical context for those debates.

1.3 Timetable

Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

1.4 Final Exam

Exam time and location is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructor(s)

John Hacker-Wright (Ph.D)

Email: jhackerw@uoguelph.ca

Telephone: +1-519-824-4120 x56765

Office: MCKN 330

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00-12:00 and by appointment

3 Learning Resources

The following text is available at the bookstore. It and other useful texts will be on reserve in the library:

3.1 Required Resource(s)

Required Text (Textbook)

Steven M. Cahn and Andrew T. Forchimes, *Foundations of Moral Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2017.

4 Learning Outcomes

Learning Objectives: We will aim to achieve the following goals in this course, which fit within a framework for the Bachelor of Arts approved by the University of Guelph Senate. By the end of this course you will be able to:

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. ...identify, comprehend, analyze and evaluate sophisticated arguments about theoretical issues in ethics (literacy).
 2. ...better understand and articulate your ethical commitments (professional and ethical behavior).
 3. ... arrive at your own reasoned evaluation of the views that we will be discussing (creative and critical thinking).
 4. ...communicate your philosophical views on these issues to others clearly and concisely (communication).
 5. ...thoroughly understand key issues in metaethics (depth and breadth of understanding).
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

Reading Schedule

FMP=Foundations of Moral Philosophy, Cahn and Forchimes

Date	Topic/Reading	Assignments due
Sept 7 – What is metaethics?	Syllabus	
Sept 10 What is metaethics?	FMP 3-19	
Sept 12 Moore and The Open Question Argument	FMP 95-101	
Sept 14	Discussion	FMP p. 101 Study Questions 3 & 4
Sept 17 Early Non-Cognitivism: Ayer	FMP 151-157	
Sept 19	FMP 154-159	

<p>Early Non-Cognitivism: Stevenson</p>		
<p>Sept 21 Early Non-Cognitivism: Hare</p>	<p>FMP 169-175</p>	<p>FMP, p.175 Study Question 4</p>
<p>Sept 24 Later Non-Cognitivism: Blackburn</p>	<p>FMP 176-182</p>	
<p>Sept 26 Later Non-Cognitivism: Shroeder</p>	<p>FMP 183-191</p>	
<p>Sept 28 Later Non-Cognitivism: Discussion</p>	<p>Discussion</p>	<p>FMP, p. 192 Study Questions 1 & 2</p>
<p>Oct 1 Later Non-Cognitivism: Gibbard</p>	<p>FMP 193-201</p>	

<p>Oct 3</p> <p>Error Theory: Mackie</p>	<p>FMP 221-231</p>	
<p>Oct 5</p> <p>Error Theory: Olson</p>	<p>FMP 241-246</p>	<p>FMP 246 Study Questions 2 & 4</p>
<p>Oct 8</p>	<p>No Class</p>	
<p>Oct 10</p> <p>Fictionalism: Joyce</p>	<p>FMP 247-256</p>	
<p>Oct 12</p>	<p>Review</p>	<p>Midterm Distributed</p>
<p>Oct 15</p> <p>Realism:</p> <p>Railton</p>	<p>FMP 102-114</p>	
<p>Oct 17</p> <p>Realism: Parft</p>	<p>FMP 115-125</p>	

<p>Oct 19</p> <p>Realism: Smith</p>	<p>FMP 126-134</p>	
<p>Oct 22</p>	<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Mid-Term Due</p>
<p>Oct 24</p> <p>Aristotelian Naturalism: Anscombe</p>	<p>"Modern Moral Philosophy" on CourseLink</p>	
<p>Oct 26</p> <p>Aristotelian Naturalism: Geach</p>	<p>"Good and Evil" on CourseLink</p>	<p>Study Question TBA</p>
<p>Oct 29</p> <p>Aristotelian Naturalism: Foot</p>	<p>"Moral Beliefs" on CourseLink</p>	
<p>Oct 31</p> <p>Aristotelian Naturalism: Foot</p>	<p>"Does Moral Subjectivism Rest on a Mistake?"</p>	
<p>Nov 2</p>	<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Study Question TBA</p>

<p>Aristotelian Naturalism: Discussion</p>		
<p>Nov 5</p> <p>Constructivism and Constitutivism: Rawls</p>	<p>FMP 305-316</p>	
<p>Nov 7</p> <p>Constructivism and Constitutivism: Korsgaard</p>	<p>FMP 317-329</p>	
<p>Nov 9</p> <p>Constructivism and Constitutivism: Korsgaard</p>	<p>"Constitutivism and the Virtues" on Courselink</p>	<p>Study Question TBA</p>
<p>Nov 12</p> <p>Constructivism and Constitutivism: Street</p>	<p>FMP 330-344</p>	

Nov 14 Constructivism and Constitutivism	Discussion	
Nov 16 Reasons and Motivation: Nagel	FMP 463-469	FMP Study Questions 1 & 3
Nov 19 Reasons and Motivation: Williams	FMP 487-498	
Nov 21	No Class	
Nov 23	No Class	
Nov 26 Reasons and Motivation:	FMP 480-486	

Foot		
Nov 28 Reasons and Motivation: Parfit	FMP 524-436	
Nov 30	Final Exam Review	Final Exam Review

Take Home Final or Paper Due Date: TBA (approximately one week after the end of classes)

6 Assessments

Evaluation

Here are the criteria that I will employ in assessing your essay questions and papers (rubric from SUNY-Buffalo Department of Philosophy):

	Fails Completely	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Competent	Exemplary
Thesis –10%	No identifiable	Difficult to	Unclear,	Promising, but	Easily

thesis or thesis shows lack of effort or comprehension of assignment.	identify, inconsistently maintained, or provides little around which to structure paper.	buried, poorly articulated, lacking in insight and originality.	may be unclear or lacking insight or originality.	identifiable, interesting, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, clear.
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Structure and style – 25%	No evident structure or organization. No transitions between major points.	Unclear, unfocused, disorganized, lacking in unity, transitions abrupt or confusing, context unclear.	Generally unclear, unfocused, often wanders or jumps around. Few or weak transitions. Does not provide sufficient information, explanation, and context for readers.	Generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. May have some unclear transitions or lack of coherence. Does not fully appreciate reader's need for information, explanation, and context.	Evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis. Essay is focused and unified. Words chosen effectively. Excellent transitions between points. Anticipates reader's need for information, explanation, and context.
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Use of sources (when applicable): 15%	No attempt made to incorporate information from primary and secondary sources.	Very little information from sources. Poor handling of sources.	Moderate amount of source information incorporated. Some key points supported by sources. Quotations may be poorly integrated into paragraphs. Some possible problems with source	Draws upon sources to support most points. Some evidence may not support thesis or may appear where inappropriate. Quotations integrated well into paragraphs. Sources cited correctly.	Draws upon primary and secondary source information in useful and illuminating ways to support key points. Excellent integration of quoted material into paragraphs. Sources cited correctly.
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				citations.		
Logic and argumentation –40 – 55%	No effort made to construct a logical argument. Failure to support thesis.	Little attempt to offer support for key claims or to relate evidence to thesis. Reasons offered may be irrelevant. Little to no effort to address alternative views.	Arguments of poor quality. Weak, undeveloped reasons offered in support of key claims. Counter-arguments mentioned without rebuttal.	Argument is clear and usually flows logically and makes sense. Some counter-arguments acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed fully.	Arguments are identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Clear reasons are offered in support of key claims. Author anticipates and successfully grapples with counter-arguments.	
Mechanics 10%	Difficult to understand because of significant problems with sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.	Several problems with sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.	Some problems with sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.	Sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling strong despite occasional lapses.	Correct sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.	

6.1 Assessment Details

Reading Questions (30%)

Date: Due before the class meeting for which they are assigned

When assigned, you will submit a response to one or more reading questions from the book to the Courselink dropbox. These are due before the class meeting for which they are assigned. The answer should be as long as needed to give a complete answer to the question. This may range from a couple of sentences to a full page.

N.B.: It is crucial that these be submitted on before the class on which they are

assigned: the questions are meant to prompt you to do the reading and to try to understanding it.

I will automatically drop two of these grades (or as you may choose to regard it: you only have to do...). I will grade them out of ten points, based on the extent to which they demonstrate a good faith effort to explain the meaning of the passage.

These will be graded on a 10-point scale as follows:

9-10 Excellent: an important passage was selected and fully and accurately explained.

7-8 Good: some inaccurate or gap of explanation

5-6 Satisfactory: some significant inaccuracy or gap of explanation

Below 5 Unsatisfactory: serious inaccuracy or gaps, incompleteness

Take Home Mid-Term (30%)

Date: See Activities Schedule, Home

This will consist of a series of essay questions that you will complete at home. There will be four questions that can be completed in approximately 6-8 pages of typed print. The writing in your essay questions will be evaluated according to the rubric printed above.

Take Home Final or Research Paper (40%)

Date: See Activities Schedule, Home

For the final project, you may choose either a take-home final, much like the mid-term but with 6 questions answerable in 10-12 pages of typed print, or, alternatively, a research paper of 10-12 pages in length. In the research paper, you should find and

read at least 3 papers published in peer-reviewed journals that discuss one an issue discussed in the text. Your paper should discuss and critically assess the views in the papers you found.

7 Course Statements

7.1 ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION & LATE POLICY

All assignments should be submitted to me through the Courselink dropbox. Please submit a file in Word or Rich Text Format (no .pdf files please).

All late assignments will be assessed a 10% penalty for every 24 hours late, except in cases of illness or family emergency.

7.2 PARTICIPATION & CLASSROOM COMPORIMENT

Please note that this is a seminar style course, and so your participation in discussion is expected every class.

Out of consideration for your fellow students, please observe the following rules:

1. No cell phone use, including text messaging.
2. No personal conversations.
3. No laptop use, except for presentations.

I reserve the right to remove you from the classroom if your behaviour is distracting to me or other students.

8 University Statements

8.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

8.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#) are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

8.3 Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the fortieth class day; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of the add period in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for [Dropping Courses](#) are available in the Undergraduate Calendar.

8.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

8.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance, and not later than the 40th Class Day.

8.6 Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

8.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

8.8 Resources

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.
