

Introduction to Philosophy II

Jack Woods

Course Description – The goal of this course is survey-level knowledge of some central questions in moral philosophy. We will start with questions about the foundations of moral philosophy. Are moral properties features of the world? Are they subjective? Objective? Something in-between? Does the moral domain have any distinctive features that make its study especially difficult? What are we saying when we say something is wrong? Once we have seen how these sorts of debates go, we will explore two of the most prominent views about which acts are right and which are wrong: consequentialism and deontology. We will then turn to questions concerning free will, moral responsibility, and blame. These issues inform our concept of moral judgment in sometimes surprising ways—figuring out how to integrate our views of morality with our views of blame and responsibility is no easy task.

There will be readings that I distribute on Moodle and over email. Not every reading will be obligatory, but which are not will be determined in the first few weeks of the course.

Course Schedule – Revisable in terms of student interest and progress

Metaethics & Moral Psychology – Weeks 1 to 6

Introduction

no reading

The Euthyphro Dilemma and Divine Command Theory

Plato's

Euthyphro

Jonathan Berg's

How can Morality Depend on Religion?

Morality and Motivation

Hume's

Treatise on Human Nature (selections)

Moral Naturalism and Non-Naturalism

Gilbert Harman's

Ethics and Observation

Skepticism about Morality: Error Theory

J.L. Mackie's

The Subjectivity of Values

What is Moral Discourse about: Non-Cognitivism, Realism, Quasi-Realism

A.J. Ayer's

Language, Truth, and Logic (selections)

Normative Ethics – Weeks 7 to 9

Consequentialism and **HOW** to act

Bernard Williams's

Utilitarianism: For and Against

Partiality and Projects

Bernard Williams's

Utilitarianism: For and Against

Peter Singer's

Famine, Affluence, and Morality

The Basic View
Immanuel Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
Onora O'Neill *A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics*

Keeping the View, Dropping the Kant
Philippa Foot's *Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives*

Freedom and Responsibility – Weeks 10 to 14

Incompatibilism and the Basic Problem
Roderick Chisholm's *Human Freedom and the Self*

Even more Incompatibilism
Peter van Inwagen's *An Essay on Free Will*

Compatibilism
A.J. Ayer's *Freedom and Necessity*

Does it Matter?
Harry Frankfurt's *Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*
The Principle of Alternate Possibilities

Deep Selves, Blame, and Morality
Peter Strawson's *Freedom and Resentment*
Susan Wolf's *Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility*

Recap – Week 15

Coursework – The work for the course will consist of a few very short writing exercises and two longer papers. For the final, you will revise one of these pieces of writing in light of my comments. The first paper will be no longer than 800 words. The final paper should be no more than 1500 words. The goal in these papers is clarity. If you can display an clear understanding of the topic to be addressed *and* you address that topic and only that topic in a reasonably straightforward fashion, you can expect to do well. The first writing exercise will give you an idea about what this means. You should view each writing exercise as an practice runs at writing clear, straightforward prose.

<i>Grade Breakdown</i> –	Short Writing and Exercises	30%
	First Paper	15%
	Final	35%
	Participation (including attendance)	20%

Course Policies – I expect the members of this class to *actively* participate. This includes: doing the reading before the lecture, contributing by asking questions and taking part in class discussion, attendance (which goes without saying, but I'm saying it anyways), and sustained effort on the graded portions of the course. I take the participation portion of the course quite seriously. Plagiarism, in any form, will not be tolerated. The result will be an immediate failure of the course.