

PHIL1008: Introduction to Ethics

Course Description:

This course will provide an introduction to central topics in ethics and the most prominent approaches to thinking about them. We will examine different theories of what makes an action right or wrong, how we might respond to the view that we should only ever should act in line with self-interest, what could make a given entity worthy of moral concern, and what might explain the place of morality in our universe. Particular attention will be paid to consequentialism, deontology, and virtue theory as frameworks for thinking about key ethical questions. We will consider the role that certain other issues in philosophy, such as whether human beings have free will, should play in approaching topics in ethics. In addition, we will think about how philosophical work in ethics can inform decisions that we regularly make in our lives.

Course Meetings:

Lectures: Wednesdays and Thursdays 9-10am
Wednesdays in Haydon-Allen Lecture Theatre, Thursdays in Law Lecture Theatre
Tutorials: Coombs Seminar Room D

Instructor:

Matthew Lindauer
matthew.lindauer@anu.edu.au
Coombs 2210
Wednesdays 3-4pm and by appt.

Tutor:

Ten-Herng Lai
ten-herng.lai@anu.edu.au
Coombs 3218
Tuesdays 2-3pm and by appt.

Course Requirements:

Participation: 10%
First Essay: 20%
Second Essay: 30%
Final Exam: 40%

Course Papers:

Topics will be distributed in advance of the paper due dates. I will be available in office hours to discuss outlines and even early stage ideas (so don't hesitate to come and meet with me). Please submit papers double-spaced with normal font on Wattle.

Course Readings:

The following texts and suggested editions will be used in the course:
John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Hackett
Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Hackett

Other readings will be distributed using Wattle.

Attendance, Preparation, and Participation:

- 1) Attendance: To get the most out of the class, you should do your best to attend each lecture and tutorial.
- 2) Preparation and Participation: You are expected to do the required reading for each lecture and to participate in tutorial discussions. I will also ask that each student submit a brief reading response at least 24 hours in advance of the next lecture on Wattle. These reading responses will not be graded (beyond whether or not they were submitted, which is included under your participation grade), but will be used to get a sense of what parts of the readings were most exciting or confusing and where discussion should tend towards in the coming class. They can take the form of just two or three questions, and I don't want students to be concerned about putting a lot of time or effort into these. Since you'll be doing the readings anyway, it shouldn't be much extra work to jot down a few thoughts or questions that came to you in the course of reading.

Academic Integrity:

I expect all students to abide by the standards of academic integrity. For the ANU's website containing information about these requirements, see <http://www.anu.edu.au/students/program-administration/assessments-exams/academic-honesty-plagiarism>. One of the most severe violations of academic integrity is plagiarism. If you directly quote, closely paraphrase, or use some original idea from another author, you must cite the source of this material. This includes material drawn lectures, journal articles, books, and also internet sources, such as websites. Do make use of the university requirements or get in touch if you have questions about these requirements. All violations of academic integrity or honesty will be taken seriously and resolved in line with the University's policies.

Course Meeting Schedule:

February 22, 23

Introduction, Mill, Chapter 1

March 1, 2

Mill, Chapters 2 and 3

March 8, 9

Mill, Chapters 4 and 5

March 15, 16

Kant, Section 1

March 22, 23

Kant, Sections 2 and 3

March 29, 30

Korsgaard on realism and constructivism
van Inwagen on free will

April 2, First Paper Due

April 3-18, Teaching Break

April 19, 20

Aristotle, Books 1 and 2

April 26, 27

Aristotle, Books 3 and 4
Foot, selections from *Natural Goodness*

May 3, 4

Hume, selections from *A Treatise of Human Nature*
Hobbes, selections from *Leviathan*

May 10, 11

Rachels, "Egoism and Moral Skepticism"
Nagel, "Right and Wrong"

May 17, 18

Issues in Applied Ethics:
1) Lecture by Ten-Herng Lai on Civil Disobedience
Rawls, selections from *A Theory of Justice*
Brownlee, selections from *Conscience and Conviction: The Case for Civil Disobedience*
2) Determined by student interest,
Topic selected was: The Ethics of Immigration
Carens, "Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders"
Wellman, "Immigration and Freedom of Association"

May 24, 25

Loose Ends, Exam Guide
Concluding Session

May 28, Second Paper Due

June 13-15, Take-Home Exam