

PHIL 230
Fall 2014
Lectures: MW (+ F Sept. 5), + conferences
Location: LEA 219
Time: 12:35 – 13:25

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Office Hours: W 13:30 – 15:00

Introduction to Moral Philosophy

This course offers an introduction to central questions of moral philosophy through the study of classic texts by Aristotle, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, G.E. Moore, H.A. Prichard, and W.D. Ross. Some of the fundamental questions we may investigate include: What things are worth pursuing? What constitutes a good life? What constitutes a moral life? What is the relation between the two? Can reason determine how one ought to live, or how one ought to treat others? Can reason motivate action? Why be moral? What makes an action right/wrong? What are moral judgements? Throughout the term, we will take note of the ways in which these authors differ, not just in the answers to give to some of these questions, but in the questions they take to be most central.

Required texts

We will read selections from:

- Aristotle (4th century B.C.E.), *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Irwin, Hackett, 2nd ed. 1999
- David Hume (1711-1776), *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), ed. Selby-Bigge, Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. 1978
- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Abbott, ed. Denis, Broadview Press, 2005
- Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), *Utilitarianism and Other Essays*, ed. Ryan, Penguin, 1987
- G. E. Moore (1873-1958), *Principia Ethica*, Prometheus Books, 1988

All of these texts are for sale at Paragraphe Books (at 2220 McGill College Avenue) and on three-hour reserve at the library. Students are expected to use the editions specified above.

We will also read the paper “Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?” (1912) by H.A. Prichard and selections from W.D. Ross’s (1930) *The Right and the Good*. Copies of these readings are available online through McGill’s Library Services.

Course requirement and method of evaluation

The course requirements consist of the following:

- One argument analysis (10%)
- Two five-page essays (each worth 27.5%)
- A final exam (30%)
- Class participation (5%)

The first paper is due 15 October and the second is due 19 November. The choice of topics for each paper will be posted on MyCourses 7-10 days before the due date. The argument analysis is due 22 September. The argument to analyze will be posted on MyCourses 7 days before the due date. In order to pass the course, you must hand in your argument analysis and your two papers by the last day of classes (Dec. 4) and take the final exam.

The final exam will consist entirely of essay questions. Some of the questions will pertain to Moore, Prichard, and Ross; these will not be given out in advance. The remaining questions will range over all course readings; these will be drawn from a list of review questions handed out in advance. Paper topics and review questions will be posted on MyCourses.

Five percent of your final grade consists in class participation. This involves being present at lecture, but it also involves having an *active presence in conference*. It is therefore not sufficient to simply show up to conferences; you must come prepared by having done the readings beforehand. Be prepared to pose questions and discuss the material with your TA and colleagues.

Policy on Lateness

Assignments and essays which are turned in late without an extension will be penalized at the rate of 5% *per calendar day*. No extensions will be given on assignments or essays except for medical reasons. Requests for extensions should be directed to your teaching assistant and must be supported by appropriate medical documentation. The deadline for requesting an extension is one business day before an assignment is due. Differed exams will not be considered except for medical reasons.

Recording lectures

Lectures will not be recorded: you will need to come to class in person in order to hear the lecture. No student may record a lecture without the express permission of the instructor.

Text-matching software

Be advised that essays may be submitted to text-matching software.

MyCourses

Students are expected to check the MyCourses page at least once a week for any announcements or postings.

Copyright

Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, outlines, summaries, exam questions, etc.), including material posted on *MyCourses*, are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor.

McGill Policy Statements

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/> for more information).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Provisional Reading and Lecture Schedule

Lecture Dates and Topics	Readings
Week 1	
Wednesday, Sept. 3 <i>Introduction</i>	No readings
Friday, Sept. 5 <i>Argumentation</i>	Handout on argumentation (available on MyCourses)
Week 2	
Monday, Sept. 8 <i>Aristotle: Happiness and the ultimate good</i>	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (NE), Bk. I, chs. 1-5, 7-8
Wednesday Sept. 10 <i>Aristotle: Virtue and its acquisition</i>	NE, Bk. I, ch. 13; Bk. II, ch. 1-4; Bk. X, ch. 9
<i>Aristotle: The doctrine of the mean</i>	NE, Bk. II, ch. 5-9
Week 3	
*Monday, Sept. 15 <i>Aristotle: Temperance as an example of virtue of character</i> <i>Aristotle: Decision and deliberation</i>	* <i>Argument analysis assignment</i> <i>posted on MyCourses</i> NE, Bk. III, ch. 11 NE, Bk. III, chs. 2-3
Wednesday, Sept. 17 <i>Aristotle: Prudence and virtues of thought</i>	NE, Bk. VI, chs. 1-2, 5-9, 12-13
Week 4	
*Monday, Sept. 22 <i>Aristotle: Pleasure</i> <i>Aristotle: Happiness revisited</i>	* <i>Argument analysis due in class</i> NE, Bk. VII, chs. 11-14; Bk. X, chs. 1-5 NE, Bk. X, chs. 7-8
Wednesday, Sept. 24 <i>David Hume: Introduction</i>	<i>Moral Philosophy</i> (MP), pp. ? - ?
Week 5	
Monday, Sept. 29 <i>Hume: Reason, passion, and moral judgement</i>	MP, Bk. II, Part III, Sec. III; MP, Bk. III, Part I, Secs. I-II
Wednesday, Oct. 1 <i>Hume: Justice</i>	MP, Book III, Part II, Secs. I, II, VI
Week 6	
*Monday, Oct. 6 <i>David Hume: Sympathy, goodness, and benevolence</i>	* <i>First paper topics posted on</i> <i>MyCourses</i> MP, Bk. III, Part III, Secs. I, III, VI

Wednesday, Oct. 8

Immanuel Kant: Introduction

*Grounding for the Metaphysics of
Morals (G)*, Ak. 4: 387-392

Kant: Moral worth and the good will

G, Ak. 4: 393-396

Week 7

Monday, Oct. 13

Thanksgiving holiday – no class

*Wednesday, Oct. 15

Kant: Duty, inclination, and reason

**First paper due in class at 12:35*

G, Ak. 4: 397-405

Week 8

Monday, Oct. 20

Kant: The categorical imperative; perfect and imperfect duties

G, Ak. 4: 406-425

Wednesday, Oct. 22

Kant: Formula of Humanity; Autonomy vs. heteronomy

G, Ak. 4: 426-445

Week 9

Monday, Oct. 27

Jeremy Bentham: The principle of utility

*An Introduction to the Principles of
Morals and Legislation (in
Utilitarianism and Other Essays)*
ch. I, II, IV

Wednesday, Oct. 29

John Stuart Mill: Introduction; Higher and lower pleasures

*Utilitarianism (U) (in
Utilitarianism and Other Essays),*
chs. I, II through p. 283

Week 10

Monday, Nov. 3

Mill: Utilitarianism

U, chs. II, p. 283 through the end,
III

Wednesday, Nov. 5

Mill: Proof of the principle of utility

U, ch. IV

Week 11

*Monday, Nov. 10

**Second paper topics posted on
MyCourses*

Mill: Justice and utility

U, ch. V

Wednesday, Nov. 12

G.E. Moore: Introduction

Principia Ethica (PE), Preface, pp.
vii-xii

Moore: The naturalistic fallacy

PE, secs. 1-15, 24-26 (pp. 1-21,
37-41)

Week 12

Monday, Nov. 17

Moore: The naturalist fallacy cont'd

PE, secs. 1-15, 24-26 (pp. 1-21,
37-41)

*Wednesday, Nov. 19
Moore: Critique of hedonism

*Second paper due in class at 12:35
PE, secs. 36-44, 47-48 (pp. 59-74, 77-81)

Week 13

Monday, Nov. 24
Moore: Right conduct

PE, secs. 16-17, 64, 88-91 (pp. 22-7, 105-8, 146-150)

Wednesday, Nov. 26
H.A Prichard

“Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake”, e-copy available through [McGill Library Services](#)

Week 14

Monday, Dec. 1
W.D. Ross: The meaning of ‘right’

The Right and the Good (RG), e-copy available through [McGill Library Services](#), pp. v-vi, 1-15

Wednesday, Dec. 3
Ross: What Makes Right Acts Right?

RG, from p. 16 to the last full paragraph on p. 30

Thursday, Dec. 4
Ross: Ethical Intuitionism

RG, pp. 30 - 47