

INTRODUCTORY HANDOUT PHILOSOPHY 13 FALL, 2007
INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY---ETHICS REVISED 10/31/2007
 Professor: Richard Arneson. TAs: Sarah Aikin and Adam Streed

For further information about the course, which will change week by week, consult the Philosophy Department web site at <http://philosophy.ucsd.edu/> and click on Courses, then on Fall 2007, then on Philosophy 13.

Lecture MWF 10:00-10:50 a.m. in Cognitive Science Bldg. 002

The final exam for this course will take place on Friday, December 14, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. If you enroll in this class, you must be free to take a regular final exam for this course at this time.

People disagree about moral issues. Are some opinions about what is morally right correct and others incorrect, or do notions of correctness and incorrectness fail to apply to moral claims? This course for the most part examines two types of proposal that hold that reason can determine what actions individuals ought morally to choose and what social policies and laws societies ought morally to uphold. One family of proposals is consequentialist: the point of morality is to promote good outcomes. In the nineteenth century, J. S. Mill argued for a utilitarian version of consequentialism. According to Mill, individual actions and social policies are morally better or worse, depending on the extent to which they promote or reduce the happiness of all humans (and other animals). We study Mill's utilitarianism in part by considering its implications for such issues as the morality of friendship and partiality to friends, the limits of our moral obligations to help distant strangers, the morality of terrorism in the sense of deliberate infliction of harm on innocent persons to further political goals, and more generally, the morality of war.

Another family of proposals holds, in a slogan, that the right is prior to the good: We should respect persons by constraining our conduct toward them in certain ways, and we are permitted to pursue our conception of what is good only within the limits set by these moral constraints. According to Immanuel Kant, these constraints on permissible conduct are set by pure practical reason and apply to all of us, regardless of our culture, upbringing, or personal desires. Kant seems to reject consequentialism and holds that there are some things we may not do whatever the consequences. We look at writings by contemporary authors including J. J. C. Smart, Robert Nozick, Warren Quinn, Judith Thomson, Thomas Nagel, Amartya Sen, and Thomas Hill to clarify what is at stake in the conflict between consequentialist and nonconsequentialist ethics. Besides not acknowledging constraints, consequentialism appears to oppose common moral views in denying that people have wide options to live their lives as they choose so long as they do not harm others by violating their rights. Consequentialism also seems to oppose common opinion in denying partiality: Most of us think it is sometimes morally permissible, and sometimes morally required, to favor those who are personally related to us by ties of friendship or kinship, over mere strangers. Mill's *On Liberty* provides a ringing defense of freedom to live as one chooses and appeals to utilitarian (consequentialist) principle to justify his position. Does he succeed or is he being inconsistent?

Toward the end of the course we examine just war theory. There are two questions here. One is, under what circumstances is it morally legitimate for one nation (or other political group) to wage war on another nation? The second question is, in waging a just war, what are the moral constraints on what it is permissible to do to enemy combatants and noncombatants? Do these constraints hold absolutely or do they give way in "supreme emergencies" or whenever the benefits of violating them are sufficiently great? Do these just warfare ideas developed many centuries ago make sense in modern times?

The aims of the course are (1) to improve our skills at reading and understanding difficult writings and thinking clearly about complex issues and (2) to become more aware of the structure of our own moral views and of moral positions opposed to our own.

COURSE TEXTS: J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*; J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*; and Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Other course readings are available at the course web page..

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Quizzes to be posed occasionally in discussion section meetings, a midterm exam (Monday of week 6), a short writing assignment, five to seven pages in length, topics to be assigned in class, and a regular comprehensive final examination. On your exams and the writing assignment you will be graded according to the clarity of your prose, the cogency of your arguments, and the soundness of the understanding of course materials that you exhibit. The final examination will comprehend all course materials including required readings, lectures, and handouts distributed in class.

GRADING: If you are taking the course on a PASS/NOT PASS basis, you must get (1) a C- or better on the final examination as well as (2) an overall C- average on all course work in order to achieve a PASS grade, with one exception: If you have an A- or better average on the midterm exam, section quizzes, and writing assignment, and are enrolled on a PASS/NOT PASS basis, you need not take the final exam in order to earn a PASS grade.

Quizzes in discussion section meetings count for ten per cent of your final course grade, the midterm exam counts for 20 per cent, the writing assignment for 30 per cent, and the final examination for 40 per cent.

Only medical excuses certified by a note from your physician or a comparable certified excuse will be accepted for late submission of the writing assignment or absence from the midterm exam, or to justify the assignment of an Incomplete course grade.

DISCUSSION SECTIONS. A discussion meeting for each section will occur once a week and students are expected to attend. Quizzes posed in discussion section will be based on the reading to be done for that specific section meeting, as your TA will explain. Your attendance and performance in section will affect your course grade in borderline cases (e.g., if the average of your grades is on the border between A- and B+). Apart from grades, the discussion sections are essential to the learning process because they provide the opportunity for a structured dialogue in which your opinions on ethical issues can be expressed, debated, and clarified.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS

Week 1. September 27-30

FRI: Introduction. Moral Puzzles.

Week 2. October 1-7

MON: Reading: J. L. Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values."

WED: Reading: Ronald Dworkin: "Objectivity and Truth: You'd Better Believe It."

FRI: Introduction to utilitarianism. Reading: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapter 1 and paragraphs 1-10 of chapter 2.

Week 3. October 8-14

MON: Happiness and human good. Reading: Mill, *Utilitarianism* paragraphs 1-10 of chapter 2 again; Robert Adams, "Well-Being and Excellence."

WED: Reading: Richard Kraut, "Desire and the Human Good."

FRI: Utilitarianism and moral rules. Reading: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapter 2. Smart, "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism,"

Week 4. October 15-21

MON: Morality and motivation; Mill's proof. Reading: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapters 3 and 4.

WED: Utility and justice. Reading: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapter 5. Rawls, "Classical Utilitarianism."

FRI: Reading: R. Nozick, "Side Constraints," and Amartya Sen, "Rights and Agency" (sections 1-4 only).

Week 5. October 22-28 NO CLASS-- CAMPUS CLOSED IN RESPONSE TO FIRE

The midterm exam originally scheduled for Monday, October 22 has been rescheduled for Monday, October 29. The midterm covers the same material the October 22 midterm would have done. The advance information handout on the midterm still applies.

The three classes missed due to the fire closure will have to be rescheduled. I suggest one makeup class for each of the next three weeks. I'll have to confirm the time and date after consulting you as to what suits you best. Here is a tentative plan, subject to revision, as to how we shall play catch-up. Sorry for the inconvenience. (If the plan changes, I'll revise the syllabus as available at the course web site.)

Week 6. October 29-November 4.

MON: MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS.

WED: The doctrine of double effect. Reading: G. E. M. Anscombe, "War and Murder"; also Warren Quinn, "Actions, Intentions, and Consequences: the Doctrine of Double Effect."

MAKEUP CLASS: The doctrine of doing and allowing. Reading: Thomas Nagel, "Agent-Relativity and Deontology." The class will be given Wednesday from 5-6 pm in WLH 2112 and repeated on Thursday from 5-6 pm in Pepper Canyon Hall 121.

FRI: Friendship. Reading: Neera Badhwar, "Friends as Ends in Themselves."

Week 7. November 5-11

MON: Friendship and consequentialism,. Reading: Peter Railton, "Consequentialism, Alienation, and the Demands of Morality."

MAKEUP CLASS: Reading: Thomas Hurka, "The Justification of National Partiality." The class will be given Tuesday 5-6 and repeated on Wednesday also at 5-6 pm, both times in Philosophy Dept. seminar room, HSS Bldg 7077.

WED: Just war and warfare; the war convention and noncombatant immunity. Reading: Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, chapter 3 and excerpt from chapter 9 (See also Anscombe reading for week 6, "War and Murder.")

FRI: Just war and just cause. Reading: Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust War*, chapters 4 and excerpts from chapters 5 & 6. See also Anscombe, reading for week 6, "War and Murder."

Week 8. November 12-18

MON: NO CLASS: VETERANS' DAY CLOSURE.

WED: Another perspective on war. Reading: Jeff McMahan, "The Ethics of Killing in War."

MAKEUP CLASS: Reading: Mill, *On Liberty*, chapter 1.

FRI: Reading: Mill, *On Liberty*, chapter 3.

Week 9. November 19-25

MON: Reading: Mill, *On Liberty*, chapters 4 and 5.

WED: Introduction to Kant's ethics. Reading: Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface and Section 1; also Editor's Introduction.

FRI: NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY.

Week 10. November 26-December 2.

MON: Moral worth; from moral worth to the categorical imperative. Reading: Kant, *Groundwork*, section 1. Recommended: Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck"; Nomy Arpaly, "Moral Worth." *Note: These two essays are required reading for the last class.*

WED: Hypothetical and categorical imperatives. Reading: Kant, *Groundwork*, section 2, pages 19-36.

FRI: **WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS.** What if everyone did the same?

Universalizability and the universal law formula. Reading: Kant, *Groundwork*, section 2, pages 19-36 (same as Wednesday's reading).

Week 11. December 3-9

MON: Humanity as an end in itself; autonomy, the kingdom of ends. Reading: Kant, *Groundwork*, section 2, pages 36-51. Recommended: Thomas Hill, "Humanity as an End In Itself."

WED: Kant: "On a Supposed right to Lie from Philanthropy"; also Christine Korsgaard: "The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil."

FRI: Reading: Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck"; also Nomy Arpaly, "Moral Worth."

Arneson's office hours: Tuesdays 2-3 and Thursdays 4:30-5:30 in HSS 8057.

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