

Contemporary Ethics
Wintersemester 2012/13
Mondays 12:15-13:45 P110

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This course will focus on some of the recent scholarship in normative ethics. We will also touch on some issues in metaethics. The focus will not be on particular ethical problems, although we will often use such problems as examples in discussion. After introducing the main ethical traditions from the history of western philosophy, we will explore some of the variations on those traditions that are most influential today. Finally, we will conclude with some introductory texts on metaethics.

Recommended Text: *Ethical Theory: An Anthology*. R. Schafer-Landau, ed. Blackwell, 2007.

Introduction

22 October

Moral Responsibility

29 October

Strawson, P. F. "Freedom and Resentment"

Strawson, G. "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility"

5 November

Ayer, A. J. "Freedom and Necessity"

Nagel, T. "Moral Luck"

Consequentialism

12 November

Mill, J. S. *Utilitarianism* (selections)

Sinnott-Armstrong, W. "Consequentialism" (Stanford Encyclopedia)

19 November

Hooker, B. "Rule-Consequentialism"

Singer, P. "Famine, Affluence and Morality"

Deontology

26 November

Kant, I. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (selections)

Alexander, L. & Moore, M. "Deontological Ethics" (Stanford Encyclopedia)

3 December

Korsgaard, C. "Kant's Formula of Universal Law"

O'Neill, O. "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems"

Foot, P. "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect"

Contractarianism

10 December

Hobbes, T. *Leviathan* (selections)

Gauthier, D. "Why Contractarianism?"

Rawls, J. *A Theory of Justice* (selections)

Contractualism

17 December

Scanlon, T. M. "Contractualism and Utilitarianism"

Ashford, E. and Mulgan, T. "Contractualism" (Stanford Encyclopedia)

Virtue Ethics

7 January

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (selections)

Anscombe, G. E. M. "Modern Moral Philosophy"

14 January

Hursthouse R. "Virtue Ethics" (Stanford Encyclopedia)

Slote, M. "Agent-Based Virtue Ethics"

Natural Law

21 January

Thomas Aquinas (selections)

Murphy, M. "The Natural Law Tradition in Ethics" (Stanford Encyclopedia)

Metaethics

28 January

Sayre-McCord, G. "Metaethics" (Stanford Encyclopedia)

Mackie, J. L. "The Subjectivity of Values"

4 February

Nietzsche, F. (selections)

Midgley, M. "Trying Out One's New Sword"