

Phil 2: Individual Morality and Social Justice

MWF 9–10am in 145 Dwinelle

Website: <http://sophos.berkeley.edu/kolodny/F06Phil2.htm>

Instructor:

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Description:

We will survey the basic questions of moral and political philosophy, as well as some classic attempts to answer them. We will ask, among other things: What is the morally right thing for me to do? Why should I do it? Is there a fact of the matter what it is, or does it just depend on my feelings or upbringing? Why should I do what the government tells me to? Why should I tolerate alien moral beliefs and practices? We will read, among others: Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Bentham, Mill, and Nietzsche.

Requirements:

1. For each lecture, [download the handout](#) and bring it to class.
2. Section participation: 10%.
3. Four 3-page papers: 17.5% each.
4. Final exam: 20%. The questions will come from a longer list that you will have before the exam.

Note: GSIs will not give extensive comments on the last paper and final exam. However, GSIs will be available to meet to discuss them in person.

Readings:

1. Reader, available at Copy Central, 2560 Brancroft Way. Included readings are marked with a “*”.
2. *The Classical Utilitarians: Bentham and Mill*, Ed. Troyer, Hackett, 0-87220-649-1
3. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ed. Curley, Hackett, 0-87220-177-5
4. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Ed. Laslett, Cambridge, 0-521-35730-6
5. Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Basic Books, 0-465-09720-0
6. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, *****Original Edition*****, Harvard, 0-674-01772-2
7. Shafer-Landau, *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?*, Oxford, 0-19-516873-9

Part I: Individual Morality

The content of morality: What is the morally right thing for me to do?

Week of August 28: Utilitarianism

Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Ch. I–IV, XIII

Bentham, “Push-Pin versus Poetry”

Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 42–45

Weeks of September 4 and September 11 (first half): Criticism of utilitarianism

*****No class September 4*****

*Smart, *An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics*, Ch. 10

Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, §§4, 5, 27

*Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”

*Williams, “Persons, Character, and Morality”

Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 28–33

Weeks of September 11 (second half) and September 18 (first half): Utilitarian replies

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Ch. II, V

*Railton, “Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality”

The authority of morality: Why should I do the morally right thing?

Week of September 18 (second half): Morality as a constituent of living well

*****First paper topic September 18*****

*****No class September 22*****

*Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I

Week of September 25: Morality as a means to staying alive

*****First paper due September 25*****

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 6, 11 (paragraphs 1 and 2 only), 13–15, 17

Week of October 2 (first half): Morality as a deforming illusion

*Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay

*The objectivity of morality: Is there any fact of the matter
what the morally right thing is?*

Week of October 2 (second half): Does it depend on God?

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, Ch. 2, §§4, 6

*Plato, *Euthyphro*

Week of October 9: Is it relative to my culture? To my personal values?

***** Second paper topic October 9 *****

*Harman, "What is Moral Relativism?"

*Williams, *Morality: An Introduction*, "Interlude: Relativism"

*Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, Ch. 6

Weeks of October 16 and October 23 (first half): Why think that morality is not objective?

***** Second paper due October 16 *****

Shafer-Landau, *What Ever Happened to Good and Evil?*

Part II: Social Justice

Authority and obedience: When, if ever, am I obligated to do what the state says? Why?

Week of October 23 (second half)

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 18–21 (and review Ch. 13–15, 17)

Week of October 30

Locke, *Second Treatise*, Ch. 2–4, 7–9, 19 (paragraphs 211–228 only)

**The Declaration of Independence*

Week of November 6

***** Third paper topic November 6 *****

***** No class November 10 *****

*Hume, "Of the Original Contract"

*Wollheim, "A Paradox in the Theory of Democracy"

Toleration: When, if ever, should we permit beliefs and practices that we find imprudent, offensive, or immoral? Why?

Weeks of November 13 and 20

***** Third paper due November 13 *****

***** No class November 24 *****

Mill, *On Liberty*, Ch. I–IV

*Lewis, "Mill and Milquetoast"

Distributive justice: Who should get what? Why?

Weeks of November 27 and December 4

***** Fourth paper topic November 27 *****

***** Fourth paper due December 4 *****

Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. ix, 9–18, 22–28, 48–53, 149–164, 167–182, 213–231, 280–294, 331

Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Sections 12–14, 17, 48

***** Final Exam: Monday, December 18, 8–11am *****

Course Policies:

Extensions:

Plan ahead. You may request extensions from your GSI *up until 72 hours* before papers are due. After then, extensions will be granted *only for medical and family emergencies*.

Submitting Work:

Papers must be submitted, on paper, by you, to your GSI, in class, by 9:10am, before the lecture starts. Papers submitted later will lose *one step* (e.g., B+ to B) *immediately* and then an *additional step every 24 hours*. If you cannot come to lecture on the due date, you may request to make other arrangements with your GSI, so long as you do so well before the deadline. Whatever the circumstances, you are responsible for ensuring that your GSI gets your paper. Forgotten or unopenable attachments, bounced or lost emails, and so on, are your responsibility.

“Re-grading”:

You are strongly encouraged to discuss grades and comments on papers with your GSI or me. However, *grades on particular papers and exams will not be changed under any circumstances*. While there is no perfect system, selective “re-grading” at students’ request only makes things worse. “Second” grades are likely to be less accurate and less fair than “first” grades. This is because, among other things, the GSI does not have access to other papers for purposes of comparison, the student will inevitably supply additional input (clarifications, explanations, etc.) that the original paper did not, and there are certain biases of self-selection.

The only exception, to which none of these concerns apply, is a suspected arithmetical or recording error in your final course grade. Please do not hesitate to bring this to your GSI’s or my attention.

Academic Dishonesty:

“Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor.

“In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution. ‘Proper attribution’ means that you have fully identified the original source and extent of your use of the words or ideas of others that you reproduce in your work for this course, usually in the form of a footnote or parenthesis.”

—Report of the Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Subcommittee, June 18, 2004.

Plagiarism and cheating will be penalized, at a minimum, by an “F” on the paper or exam in question. It may also, depending on its seriousness, result in an “F” in the course as a whole and a report to Student Judicial Affairs.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you have an official accommodation letter that is relevant to this course, please notify both me and your GSI at a reasonable time. We will do whatever we can to help.