

**Phil 104: Ethical Theories**

Tu–Th, 9:30–11am in 4 LeConte

Website: <http://sophos.berkeley.edu/kolodny/S07Phil104.htm>

**Instructor:**

Niko Kolodny, [kolodny@berkeley.edu](mailto:kolodny@berkeley.edu)

Office hours: Wednesday, 2–4pm, 144 Moses Hall, or by appointment

**Graduate Student Instructors:**

Ryan Doerfler, [doerfler@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:doerfler@fas.harvard.edu)

Andy Engen, [adengen@berkeley.edu](mailto:adengen@berkeley.edu)

**Description:**

This course is concerned less with specific moral questions than with the nature of morality itself. We will ask three fundamental questions: What does morality command? On what is it based? Why should we obey it? We will read, among others, Hume, Kant, and Sidgwick.

**Prerequisites:**

Two philosophy courses, or Phil 2, or one Berkeley philosophy course with an A- or higher.

**Readings:**

1. Reader, available at Copy Central, 2560 Brancroft Way. Included readings are marked with a “\*”.
2. Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, Ed. Gregor, Cambridge, 0-521-65408-4.
3. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Ed. Selby-Bigge, Cambridge, 0198245882
4. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford, 019824908X
5. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Harvard, 0-674-00423-X
6. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, Hackett, 0915145286

**Requirements:**

1. For each lecture, [download the handout](#) and bring it to class.
2. Section participation: 10% of course grade.
3. Outlines: 10% of course grade. For each lecture, we ask you to bring an outline: five sentences, summarizing the reading for the lecture. Once in a while, we will collect these in class. You must be present in class to hand in your outline. A serious attempt automatically gets an A. Anything else, or an absence on a day when outlines are collected, gets no credit. Since you may not be able to come to every lecture (because of minor illnesses, extracurricular activities, etc.) you may fail to hand in two outlines without penalty.
4. First paper: 15% of course grade. Three pages.
5. Second and third papers: 20% of course grade each. Five pages each.
6. Final exam: 25% of course grade. The exam questions will be selected from a longer list that you will get beforehand.

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.

## Syllabus:

1. Tuesday, January 16

*Introduction*

2. Thursday, January 18

Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Bk. II, Pt. iii, §3

3. Tuesday, January 23

Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Bk. III, Pt. i, §§1–2,

4. Thursday, January 25

Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Bk. III, Pt. iii, §1

5. Tuesday, January 30

Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Bk. II, Pt. iii, §§1–2; Bk. III, Pt. iii, §6

6. Thursday, February 1

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Pt. I

**First paper assigned**

7. Tuesday, February 6

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Pt. I

8. Thursday, February 8

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Pt. II

**First paper due**

9. Tuesday, February 13

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Pt. II

10. Thursday, February 15

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Pt. III

11. Tuesday, February 20

Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, Bk. III, Ch. vi, §§5–9; Ch. vii, xi

12. Thursday, February 22

Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, Bk. IV, Ch. i–iii

13. Tuesday, February 27

Parfit, *Reason and Persons*, Ch. 1, §§10–20

14. Thursday, March 1

Scanlon, “Contractualism and Utilitarianism”\*

15. Tuesday, March 6  
Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Introduction, Ch. 4 §§1–6  
**Second paper assigned**

**No class Thursday, March 8**

16. Tuesday, March 13  
Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Ch. 5 §§1, 2, 5, 9

17. Thursday, March 15  
Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, Ch. 3

18. Tuesday, March 20  
Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, Ch. 16  
**Second paper due**

19. Thursday, March 22  
Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. 1\*

20. Tuesday, April 3  
Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, Ch. 6\*  
Geach, “Assertion”\*

**No class Thursday, April 5**

21. Tuesday, April 10  
Gibbard, *Thinking How to Live*, pp. 41–79\*

22. Thursday, April 12  
Harman, “Ethics and Observation”\*

23. Tuesday, April 17  
Dworkin, “Objectivity and Truth: You’d Better Believe It,” pp. 103–105: “Correspondence with Reality?”\*  
Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Ch. 1, §11: “Metaphysical Doubts about Reasons”  
Scanlon, “Metaphysics and Morals,” pp. 7–12\*

24. Thursday, April 19  
Stroud, “The Study of Human Nature and the Subjectivity of Value”\*  
**Third paper assigned**

25. Tuesday, April 24  
Dworkin, “Objectivity and Truth: You’d Better Believe It”\*

**No class, Thursday, April 26**

**No class, Tuesday, May 1**

26. Thursday, May 3

Review

**Third paper due**

27. Tuesday, May 8

Review

### **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~~ 9:40am, 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:*

Plagiarism and cheating will result in an “F” in the course as a whole and a report to Student Judicial Affairs.

“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.

*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.