

# HONORS MORAL PHILOSOPHY SEMINAR

Spring 2009

Jennifer M. Morton

W 1-6pm

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Office Hours: M & F 12-1.30pm

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is an in depth survey of historical and contemporary moral philosophy with a focus on virtue ethics. In the first half of this course, we will look at various versions of consequentialism, deontology, and contractarianism. In the second half of the course, we turn to critiques of these traditions and then delve into virtue ethics. Finally, we examine some contemporary empirically informed moral philosophy.

**READING:** In addition to the following books, readings will be available on Blackboard.

Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics. Hackett Publishing Company. (trans. Irwin)

Crisp, Roger and Michael Slote (eds.). Virtue Ethics. Oxford University Press.

Hursthouse, Rosalind. On Virtue Ethics. Oxford University Press.

Kant, Immanuel. Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals. Yale University Press, 2002. (trans. and ed. Allen Wood)

Mill, John Stuart. Utilitarianism. Hackett Publishing Company.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Every week you will be responsible for the core reading plus a one-page reading response (except for the weeks in which you are responsible for a discussion paper). The reading response is meant to help you come prepared to class by reconstructing a central argument from the reading and developing a problem or question you would like to see addressed in discussion. Some weeks you will be responsible for a discussion paper. A discussion paper is a 3-5 page paper on some aspect of the reading for that week. When you are responsible for writing a discussion paper, you are also responsible for coming to class ready to aid in guiding discussion and to discuss your discussion paper. Response papers and discussion papers are due at 7pm on the night before class meets as submissions to blackboard. Everyone is responsible for reading the discussion papers for every class and for, at least, skimming all the response papers.

Reading Responses	20%
Discussion Papers	30%
Final Paper	40%
Participation	10%

**LATE POLICY:** The purpose of the reading response and discussion papers is to help you prepare to **participate** in class and enrich the discussion. Therefore, late reading responses and discussion papers will **not** be accepted after they are due. If due to some unfortunate circumstances you must reschedule when you are responsible for a discussion paper, you must let me know a full week in advance.

	READING ASSIGNMENT	WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT	DISCUSSION PAPER
INTRODUCTION & APPLIED ETHICS			
01/21	Ethics and Society from an <u>Introduction to Philosophy</u> Nagel, War and Massacre Singer, All Animals Are Equal Jarvis Thomson, A Defense of Abortion	Reading Response	
FOUNDATIONS			
01/28	Aristotle, Selections from the <u>Nicomachean Ethics</u>	Reading Response	
02/04	Mill, <u>Utilitarianism</u>	Reading Response	
02/11	Kant, <u>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</u>	Reading Response	
CONTEMPORARY CONSEQUENTIALISM, DEONTOLOGY, AND CONTRACTARIANISM,			
02/18	Singer, Famine, Affluence, and Morality Smart, Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism Rawls, Two Concepts of Rules Railton, Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality	Reading Response	
02/25	Korsgaard, Kant's Formula of Universal Law O'Neill, A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics Herman, On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty Schapiro, Compliance, Complicity, and the Nature of Nonideal Conditions	Reading Response	
03/04	Hobbes, Selections from <u>Leviathan</u> Scanlon, <u>What We Owe to Each Other</u> , Intro & Chapter 1 Gauthier, Why Contractarianism?	Reading Response	
Spring Break			
CRITIQUES			
03/18	Susan Wolf, Moral Saints Williams, Persons, Character, and Morality Nagel, Moral Luck Nietzsche, Selections from <u>The Genealogy of Morals</u>	Reading Response	
VIRTUE THEORY			
03/25	Kant, selections from <u>The Metaphysics of Morals</u> Anscombe, Modern Moral Philosophy Williams, Morality, The Peculiar Institution Stocker, The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories	Reading Response	
04/01	MacIntyre, The Nature of the Virtues McDowell, Virtue and Reason Foot, Virtues and Vices	Reading Response	
04/08	Foot, Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives Dancy, Ethical Particularism and Morally Relevant Properties Hursthouse, selections from <u>On Virtue Ethics</u>	Reading Response	
04/15	Hursthouse, selections from <u>On Virtue Ethics</u>	Reading Response	
META-ETHICS & OTHER APPROACHES			
04/22	Moore, Chapter 1 of <u>Principia Ethica</u> Miller, selections from <u>Introduction to Metaethics</u> Mackie, Chapter 1 of <u>Ethics: Inventing Right &amp; Wrong</u>	Reading Response	
04/29	Greene & Haidt, How and When does Moral Judgment Work? Greene, From Moral 'Is' to Moral 'Ought': What are the moral implications of neuroscientific moral psychology? Doris, John, Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics	Reading Response	
FINAL PAPERS			
HONORS ORAL EXAMINATIONS (05/21-05/23)			