

PHIL 161
Fall 2023
MW 2:00-3:20pm
Olmstead 1136

Paul Tulipana
ptuli001@ucr.edu
HMNSS 3218
Office hours MW 3:30-4:30pm, o.b.a.

Value Theory



How do ethical considerations and motives contribute to the structure of our lives? What is the source or ground of these considerations and motives? Are they relative to individuals or to cultures, or are they the same for everybody? What is morality telling us to do, anyway?

Requirements

Reading and lectures

Carefully reading the assigned texts is important in this course. The lectures go beyond the content of the assigned readings. Regular attendance at lecture is expected, and participation is encouraged. If you anticipate logistical difficulties being able to regularly attend lecture, let me know and we will try to work something out.

Students should exercise courtesy to their instructors and fellow classmates by avoiding the use of distracting applications during lecture, including email, web browsing, chat programs, etc.

Short reflections

Twice during the quarter, you'll be asked to write a (very low-stakes) short reflection paper on one of the readings. These reflections should be less than a single page long and should present a

comment or a question that I'll try to integrate into lecture. These two reflections will account for 10% of your final grade.

Midterm Essay

A short writing exercise (roughly 1500-2000 words in length) will be due around midterm. It will be primarily expository in character. It will account for 40% your final grade. I'll be handing out possible essay topics in advance.

Final Exam

We'll have a take-home final exam during the end-quarter exam period. You'll have a few days during finals week to write it. It will account for 50% of your final grade.

Late Assignments

Late writing assignments will be penalized one third of one letter grade (i.e., A- becomes B+) every 24 hours, starting ten minutes after the deadline. Exceptions to the lateness policy will be made in cases we deem exceptional.

Accessible Education Information

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations should submit their request for accommodations to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) as soon as possible, as it may take up to two weeks for the SDRC to review the request. You can request a letter of accommodation on the R'Ability website.

For more information, please visit the SRDC website (www.sdrc.ucr.edu), visit the CAE at 1228 Student Services Building, or contact them by phone at (951) 827-3861.

Texts

Everything is available online.

Schedule of Topics¹

Introduction

1. *Ethical theory: What's being theorized?*: No reading

(Perceived) Threats

2. *Relativism*

¹ Schedule is subject to change

- Bernal Díaz del Castillo, “Baptizing Tlaxcalan Women” from *The History of the Conquest of New Spain* (1568)
- Michel de Montaigne, from “Of Cannibals” (1578 or 1580)
- Francis Snare, “Descriptive Relativism” and “Moral Principles of Toleration” from *The Nature of Moral Thinking* (1992)

3. Egoism

- Ayn Rand, from *Atlas Shrugged* (1957)
- James Rachels, “Ethical Egoism” from *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* 4th ed. (2002)

4. Evolutionary biology

- Richard Dawkins, “Why are People?” from *The Selfish Gene* (1976)
- Simon Blackburn, “Evolutionary theory” from *Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* (2001)
- Elliott Sober, “Direct and Indirect Strategies” and “Psychological Altruism is a Direct Strategy” from “Did evolution make us psychological egoists?” in *From a Biological Point of View* (1994)
- Richard Joyce, “Genealogical Debunking” from *The Evolution of Morality* (2006)

Foundations

5. Self-interest and implicit contracts

- Thomas Hobbes, “Epistle Dedicatory”, “Preface”, and chapters 1-2 from *On the Citizen* (1642)
- Hobbes, chapters 4-5 from *On the Citizen* (1642)

6. Fine feelings and sympathy

- Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees. Part I: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits: An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue* (1714)
- David Hume, from *A Treatise of Human Nature* 3.1, “Of virtue and vice in general” (pp. 293-306)
- Hume, from *Treatise* 3.2, “Of justice and injustice” (pp. 307-366)
- Hume, from *Treatise* 3.2, “Of the other virtues and vices” (pp. 367-395)

7. Rational willing

- Immanuel Kant, Section I (“Transition from common rational to philosophic moral cognition”) from *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785)
- Kant, Section II (“Transition from popular moral philosophy to metaphysics of morals”) from *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785)

Ethical ideas

8. Pleasure and Happiness

- Jeremy Bentham, “Of the Principle of Utility” and “Value of a Lot of Pleasure or Pain” from *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1863)
- Robert Nozick, “Side Constraints” and “The Experience Machine” from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974)

9. Integrity

- Bernard Williams, “Against Utilitarianism” from Gensler, et. al., eds. *Ethics: Contemporary Readings* (2004)
- Williams, “Utilitarianism and Moral Self-Indulgence” from *Moral Luck* (1981)

10. Authenticity

- Charles Taylor, “The Sources of Authenticity” and “The Need for Recognition” from *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1991)

11. Identity

- Kwame Anthony Appiah, from “The Demands of Identity” in *The Ethics of Identity* (2005)

12. Judgment

- Martha Nussbaum, from “The Narrative Imagination” in *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (1997)
- Immanuel Kant, *An answer to the question: What is Enlightenment?* (1784)
- Hannah Arendt, “The Accused” from *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963)