

Phil 290: Reasons and Rationality

Mondays, 2–4, in 234 Moses Hall

Niko Kolodny, kolodny@berkeley.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays, 2–4 in 144 Moses Hall, or by appointment.

Description:

You seem to be subject to two different kinds of “ought”: two different kinds of normative demand. On the one hand, you are subject to demands that the world makes on you. Some fact of your situation, we might say, is a *reason* for you to believe or do something. Because the hunter was caught red handed, you have reason to believe that he was poaching. Because Moses Hall is on fire, you have reason to leave. On the other hand, you are subject to demands that your attitudes make on one another, however the world may be. Some attitude that you have, we might say, makes it *irrational* of you to have or fail to have some other attitude, whether or not you have reason for or against any of those attitudes. Because you believe that Berkeley is west of San Francisco, it would be irrational of you to believe that Berkeley is east of San Francisco. Because you intend to vote for Nader, it would be irrational of you to fail to intend to go to the polling station. The topic of this seminar is the relation between these two kinds normative demand.

Requirements:

1. Presentation: 25%
2. Outline of term paper, five pages: 25%
3. Term paper, 15–20 pages: 50%

August 28

Introduction

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

September 11: Presenter: Titelbaum

Broome, [“Normative Requirements”](#)

Broome, [“Reasons”](#)

September 18: Presenter: Hunter

Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason*, Ch. 2, 3, 8

September 25: Presenter: Schmall

Smith, *The Moral Problem*, Ch. 5

October 2: Presenter: Beeghly

Korsgaard, “The Normativity of Instrumental Reason”

October 9: Presenter: Wallace

Wallace, [“Normativity, Commitment, and Instrumental Reason”](#)

Searle, *Rationality in Action*, pp. 263–266

October 16: Presenter: Kolodny
Kolodny, [“Why Be Rational?”](#)

October 23: Presenter: Kohl
Raz, [“The Myth of Instrumental Reason”](#)

October 30: Presenter: Kolodny
Broome, [“Is Rationality Normative?”](#)
Kolodny, “Why Be Disposed to Be Coherent?”

November 6: Presenter: Kolodny
***** Outlines of term papers due *****
Kolodny, “Does Intending the End Give Us Reason to Take the Means?”

November 13: Presenter: Kolodny
Kolodny, “Why Have Consistent Intentions?”

November 20: Presenter: MacFarlane
Harman, *Change In View*, selections
MacFarlane, [“How is Logic Normative for Thought?”](#)

November 27: Presenter: Kolodny
Pollock and Cruz, *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge*, Probabilism, p. 89–109
Gibbard, “Valuing Truth”
Kolodny, “Why Have Consistent and Closed Beliefs, or, for that Matter, Probabilistically Coherent Credences?”

December 4: Presenter: Ginsborg
***** Term papers due *****
Ginsborg, [“Reasons for Belief”](#)