

REVISED 11/12/07

Phil 2: Individual Morality and Social Justice

MWF 9–10am in 145 Dwinelle

Website: <http://sophos.berkeley.edu/kolodny/F07Phil2.htm>

Instructor:

Niko Kolodny, kolodny@berkeley.edu

Office hours: F 12–2 (except Sept. 7, 21, Nov. 23) in 144 Moses Hall, or by appointment

Graduate Student Instructors:

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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. Writing workshop exercises: 10%.
4. Two 2-page papers: 12% each.
5. Two 3-page papers: 18% each
6. Final exam: 20%. The questions will come from a longer list that you will have before the exam.

Note: GSIs will give only a grade, not comments, on the writing workshop exercises, 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 Bancroft 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

Introduction

August 27: What is philosophy? What is moral and political philosophy?

*Jim Pryor's Guidelines (everything in the reader up until Smart)

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

August 29, 31, (No class Sept. 3), September 5, 7, 10, 12, 14, 17, 19: Utilitarianism and its implications

*****First paper topic September 14*****

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

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

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

*Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

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

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

September 21, 24: Morality as a constituent of living well

*Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I

September 26, 28, October 1: Morality as a means to staying alive

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

October 3: Morality as a deforming illusion

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

Writing workshops

October 5, 8: Improving as a philosophical writer

*****Exercises will be assigned*****

***** Second paper topic October 8 *****

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

October 10: Does it depend on God?

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

*Plato, *Euthyphro*

October 12, 15, 17: Is it relative to my culture? To my personal values?

***** Second paper due October 15*****

- *Harman, "What is Moral Relativism?"
- *Williams, *Morality: An Introduction*, "Interlude: Relativism"
- *Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, Ch. 6

October 19, 22: Why think that morality is not objective?
 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?

October 24, 26, 29
 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 18–21 (and review Ch. 13–15, 17)

October 31, November 2, 5
 Locke, *Second Treatise*, Ch. 2–4, 7–9, 19 (paragraphs 211–228 only)
 **The Declaration of Independence*

November 7, 9, (No class Nov. 12)
 *** **Third paper topic November 5** ***
 *Hume, "Of the Original Contract"

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

November 14, 16, (No class Nov. 19, 21, 23)
 *** **Third paper due November 14** ***
 Mill, *On Liberty*, Ch. I–IV

November 26
 *** **Fourth paper topic November 26** ***
 *Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Lec. II, §§2–3
 *Thomson, "Abortion"

Distributive justice: Who should get what? Why?

November 28, 30, December 3: Libertarianism
 Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. ix, 9–18, 22–28, 48–53, 149–164, 167–182, 213–231, 280–294, 331

December 5, 7: Democratic Equality
 *** **Fourth paper due December 7** ***
 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Sections 12–14, 17, 48

Review

December 10: What was the point of all of that?

* Plato, *Apology* (excerpt)

***** Final Exam: Wednesday, December 19, 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.

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

You are expected to be familiar with the definitions of academic dishonesty in the Code of Student Conduct, which can be found here:

<http://students.berkeley.edu/osl/sja.asp?id=1143&rcol=1201>.

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 from the Disabled Students’ Program 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.