

Phil 2: Individual Morality and Social Justice

MWF 3–4 in 2060 Valley Life Sciences Building

Website: <http://sophos.berkeley.edu/kolodny/S10Phil2.htm>

Instructor:

Niko Kolodny, kolodny@berkeley.edu

For office hours, see: <http://sophos.berkeley.edu/kolodny>

Graduate Student Instructors:

Ben Boudreaux: boudreau@berkeley.edu

Markus Kohl: mkohl@berkeley.edu

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 may read, among others: Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Bentham, Mill, and Nietzsche.

Requirements:

1. For each lecture, download the handout from the website and bring it to class.
2. Section participation: 15%. Sections will be cancelled for one week, chosen by the GSI.
3. One 2-page paper: 15%.
4. Two 3-page papers: 20% each.
You will have the option of re-writing one of your papers. The grade on the re-write will replace the grade for the original paper.
5. Final exam: 30%. 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 re-writes and final exams, but they will be available to discuss them.

Readings:

1. Online readings, some of which can be accessed only from the UC Berkeley network.
 - The obvious advantage is that these readings are all free, but I realize that this may be inconvenient for students who prefer to read things on paper.
 - For off-campus access to the UC Berkeley network, see: http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/Help/connecting_off_campus.html.
 - If there is a problem with a link, try clicking it a second time, or restarting your browser. (Surprisingly, this often solves the problem.) If that doesn't work, try locating the electronic resource (e.g., "Philosophy and Public Affairs," or "Oxford Scholarship Online") on the UCB library website, and then searching for the title of the specific article or book.
2. Shafer-Landau, *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?*, Oxford, 0-19-516873-9
3. Reader with the remaining material, available at Copy Central, 2560 Bancroft Way.

Part I: Individual Morality

Introduction

January 20: What is philosophy? What is moral and political philosophy?

Jim Pryor's Guidelines on (1) Reading Philosophy

(<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>)

and (2) Writing Philosophy

(<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>)

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

January 22, 25, 27, 29, February 1, 3, 5: Utilitarianism and its implications

First paper topic Jan. 29

Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Ch. I–IV, XIII

(<http://www.utilitarianism.com/jeremy-bentham/index.html>)

Bentham, "Push-Pin versus Poetry"

(http://www.ucl.ac.uk/Bentham-Project/Faqs/f_pushpin.htm)

Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 42–45

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

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

Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" in *Philosophy & Public Affairs*

(<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2265052>)

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

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

February 8, 10: Morality as a constituent of living well

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I

(<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>)

February 12 (no class on Feb. 15), 17, 19: Morality as a means to staying alive

First paper due Feb. 12

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

(<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-contents.html>)

February 22: Morality as a deforming illusion

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

(<http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/Nietzsche/genealogy1.htm>)

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

February 24: Does it depend on God?

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, Book II, Ch. 2 (sections 4 and 6 only)

(<http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/locke/>)

Plato, *Euthyphro*

(<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyphro.html>)

February 26, March 1, 3 (no class Mar. 5): Is it relative to my culture? To my personal values?

*****Second paper topic Mar. 3*****

Harman, "What is Moral Relativism?" in Oxford Scholarship Online

(<http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/oso/private/content/philosophy/9780198238041/p018.html>)

Williams, *Morality: An Introduction*, "Interlude: Relativism"

Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, Ch. 6

(<http://www.archive.org/details/AlfredAyer>)

March 8, 10: 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?

March 12, 15, 17, 19

*****Second paper due Mar. 19*****

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

(<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-contents.html>)

March 29, 31, April 2

Locke, *Second Treatise*, Book II, Ch. 2–4, 7–9, 19 (sections 211–228 only)

(<http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/locke/>)

The Declaration of Independence

(<http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/index.htm>)

April 5

Hume, "Of the Original Contract"

(<http://www.constitution.org/dh/origcont.htm>)

April 7

***** Third paper topic April 7*****

Wollheim, "A Paradox in the Theory of Democracy"

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

April 9, 12, 19

Mill, *On Liberty*, Ch. I–IV

(<http://www.bartleby.com/130/>)

Distributive justice: Who should get what? Why?

April 21, 23, 26: Libertarianism

*****Third paper due April 21*****

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

April 28, 30: Democratic Equality

Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, sections 12–14, 17, 48

Review

May 3, 5

*****Optional re-write due May 5*****

***** Final Exam: Wednesday, May 12, 7–10PM*****

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 3:10pm, 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.