Philosophy 429: ETHICAL ANALYSIS

Fall, 2008, TuTh 2:30–4, 513 Dennison.

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A current version of this syllabus will be kept posted at

http://www-personal.umich.edu/~gibbard/Syllabus-Phil-429-08f.pdf

This will be a course in contemporary metaethics. Metaethics is concerned with what ethical claims mean, and with the kinds of reasoning or evidence that justify ethical claims. The course will take up the ethical intuitionism of Moore and Ross, the emotivism of Ayer and Stevenson, Hare’s universal prescriptivism, and recent proposals such as Rawls’ theory of reflective equilibrium, Brandt’s linguistic reform, new versions of “moral realism”, moral “expressivism” with “quasi-realism”. Students should already have some background in moral philosophy in the twentieth century “analytic” tradition, preferably Philosophy 361 or the equivalent.

Book to buy (ordered at Shaman Drum):

Stephen Darwall, Allan Gibbard, and Peter Railton, eds. Moral Discourse and Practice: Some Philosophical Approaches (Oxford University Press, 1997). Many readings will be from this collection, which I’ll label DGR

Other readingss will be in CTOOLS (marked [CT])or otherwise obtainable electronically (marked [E]), often through links in the on-line copy of the syllabus.

Classes will consist both of lecture and of discussion, along with other oral activities and brief written pieces. Three short (five page) papers will be required (due dates Sept. 30, Oct. 28, and Dec. 4). There will be a mid-term exam (Oct. 14) and a final examination (Thursday, Dec. 18, 1:30–3:30 p.m.).

[A few things should go without saying, but with apologies for what I hope must be an insult to your intelligence, I spell them out: (1) The work must be your own, and academic dishonesty would result in failing the course. (2) All requirements of the course must be met if you are to receive a passing grade for the course. (3) Regular attendance of class sessions is required. Also, please make sure that you will be able to be at the final exam.]
Syllabus (subject to revision)

Intuitionism, the “Naturalistic Fallacy”

Tue. Sept. 2 (wk. 1):
- Introduction; no readings.

Thu. Sept. 4 (wk. 1):
- G.E. Moore, from *Principia Ethica* (1903), DGR 2, 51–63.
- Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (1874, 7th ed. 1901), Bk. I, Ch. 3, sec. 3 (pp. 31–35). [E]

Tue. Sept. 19 (wk. 2):

Thu. Sept. 11:
- Ross, *The Right and the Good* (1930), Ch. 1 (pp. 1–15). [CT]

Justification, Dispositionalism

Tue. Sept. 16 (wk. 3):

Thu. Sept. 18:
- Brandt, *Ethical Theory*, Ch. 10 (pp. 241–69). [CT]
Emotivism, Prescriptivism

Tue. Sept. 23 (wk. 4):


Thu. Sept. 25:


Tue. Sept. 30 (wk. 5): First short paper due

Thu. Oct. 2:

- Hare, *Moral Thinking* (1981), 1.6 (pp. 20–24), 3.4–3.9 (pp. 52–64), 5.3–5.4 (pp. 94–99), 6.1–6.2 (pp. 107–111), 10.7–10.8 (pp. 182–7).

Tue. Oct. 7 (wk. 6):

- Hare, *The Language of Morals* (1952), 7.5 and 8 (pp. 121–36), 9.4 (pp. 148–9). [CT]

Justification, Dispositionalism, Naturalistic Moral Realism

Thu. Oct. 9:


Tue. Oct. 14 (wk. 7): MIDTERM EXAM

Thu. Oct. 16: No class; Weinberg Conference on Philosophy and Cognitive Science

Tue. Oct. 21 (wk. 7): FALL BREAK

Thu. Oct. 23 (wk. 8):

Tue. Oct. 28 (wk. 9):


**Thu. Oct. 30: SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE**

**Internalism, Externalism, and Sensibility Theories**

**Tue. Nov. 4 (wk. 10):**

- Foot, “Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives” (1972), DGR 18.

**Thu. Nov. 6: NO CLASS.** (I’ll be at a conference.)

**Tue. Nov. 11 (wk. 11):**


**Expressivism (again), Non-naturalism (again) or Quietism**

**Thu. Nov. 13:**


**Tue. Nov. 18 (wk. 12):**


**Thu. Nov. 20:**


**Tue. Nov. 25 (wk. 13):**


**Thu. Nov. 27: THANKSGIVING**

**Tue. Dec. 2 (wk. 14):**

• Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (1998), 17–77. [CT]

**Thu. Dec. 4: THIRD SHORT PAPER DUE**

**Tue. Dec. 9 (wk. 15): Classes end**


**Thursday Dec. 18, 1:30–3:30 p.m.: FINAL EXAMINATION**, in classroom (513 Dennison).

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