Fall, 2009, TuTh 2:30–4, 2271 Angell Hall.

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A current version of this syllabus will be kept posted at

    http://www-personal.umich.edu/~gibbard/Syllabus09f-Phil-429.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:**

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 readings 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 writings. Three short (5 page) papers will be required (due dates Oct. 6, Nov. 17, and Dec. 8). There will be a mid-term exam (Oct. 27) and a final examination (Wed. Dec. 17, 4–6 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. 8 (wk. 1):**
- Introduction; no readings.

**Thu. Sept. 10 (wk. 1): NO CLASS (I'm at a conference)**

**Tue. Sept. 15 (wk. 2):**
- 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]

**Thu. Sept. 17:**
- Ross, *The Right and the Good* (1930), Ch. 1 (pp. 1–15). [CT]

*Justification, Dispositionalism*

**Tue. Sept. 22 (wk. 3):**

**Thu. Sept. 24:**
- Brandt, *Ethical Theory*, Ch. 10 (pp. 241–69). [CT]
**Emotivism, Prescriptivism**

**Tue. Sept. 29 (wk. 4):**

**Thu. Oct 1:**

**Tue. Oct. 6 (wk. 5): FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE**

**Thu. Oct. 8:**
- 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). [CT]

**Justification, Dispositionalism, Naturalistic Moral Realism**

**Thu. Oct. 15:**

***Tue. Oct. 20 (wk. 7): NO CLASS (Fall Break)*

**Thu. Oct. 22:**

**Fri. Oct. 23: Extra sessions (in regular classroom)**
- Undergraduates only: 10–11 a.m.
- Graduates: 11–12 a.m.
*Tue. Oct. 27 (wk. 8): MIDTERM EXAM

Thu. Oct. 29:

**Internalism, Externalism, and Sensibility Theories**

*Tue. Nov. 3 (wk. 9):
- Foot, “Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives” (1972), DGR 18.

Thu. Nov. 5:

Tue. Nov. 10 (wk. 10):

Thu. Nov. 12: NO CLASS. (I'll be at a conference.)

Tue. Nov. 17 (wk. 11): SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE

Thu. Nov. 19:

Fri. Nov. 20: Extra sessions (in regular classroom)
- Undergraduates only: 10–11 a.m.
- Graduates: 11–12 a.m.

Tue. Nov. 24 (wk. 12):

Thu. Nov. 26: THANKSGIVING

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

Tue. Dec. 1 (wk. 13):

Thu. Dec. 3:
• Scanlon, What We Owe to Each Other (1998), 17–77. [CT]

Fri. Dec. 4: Extra sessions (in regular classroom)
• Undergraduates only: 10–11 a.m.
• Graduates: 11–12 a.m.

Tue. Dec. 8 (wk. 14): THIRD SHORT PAPER DUE

Thu. Dec. 10: Last class

FINAL EXAMINATION, Wednesday, December 16, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm in classroom