

Phil 170 / 270  
Ethical Theory  
Spring 2018  
Stanford Philosophy

**Lectures:** Barry Maguire

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**Tutorials:** Nathan Hauthaler

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Office: Building 90, room 92N

Office Hours: Thursdays, 13.30 – 15.00

**Class Details:** Tuesday & Thursday, 12.00 – 13.20, Building 50, room 52H

**Course Description:** This is an advanced introduction to Ethical Theory.

**Reading:** Everything on this syllabus has been carefully chosen. Most of it is difficult. Read each piece a few times. Read once, quickly, to get the structure of the argument, the main claims, and the conclusion(s). Read a second time to study the argument more carefully, to formulate the argument in your own words, to think up your own examples to illustrate the main claims, and to think of counterexamples to these claims. Read a third time to soak up any remaining details. Some excellent reading advice can be found online here: [www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading](http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading). You are encouraged to read anything else that interests you. In general, the more you read, the better a sense you will have of the strengths and weaknesses of prominent views in any given topic, and of typical forms of argument in the area.

**Writing:** An important goal of this course is for you to develop your skills in philosophical writing. I will distribute a guide to writing philosophical essays early in the semester. The assessments are designed to help you develop these skills. Please also read Jim Pryor's 'Guide to Writing Philosophy Papers,' Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style*, George Orwell's 'Politics and the English Language,' and Angela Mendelovici's 'A Sample Philosophy Paper.'

**Assignments:** *Undergraduates:* Three short (1,000 word) essays. The first will be an argument reconstruction. The second will be an objection to an argument. The third will be your own argument. *Graduates:* One long paper (5-6,000 words) on something inspired by the readings, submitted at the end of week twelve. In anticipation, one 1,000 word abstract, submitted at the end of week five.

**Submission:** Submit your assignments in .docx (preferred) or .pdf to [stanfordphilosophyessay@gmail.com](mailto:stanfordphilosophyessay@gmail.com) by 11.59pm on the due date. Late fees (10% deduction per day) will accrue to essays late, unreadable, not properly uploaded, etc.

**Assessment:** 25% for first essay, 30% for second, 35% for third, 10% for participation.

**Text Availability:** All texts for this class are available on the course website or online (e.g. jstor.org) or in the library.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. Terms are short so missing any classes is strongly discouraged.

**Electronics Policy:** Phones and Laptops are not permitted in class without an explanation.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability should initiate the request with the Student Disability Resources Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information, please see <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oea>. Please also feel free to contact me at any time if there is anything I can do to make the course more accessible for you.

**Email Policy:** Please be professional. Kindly avoid asking anything you can find out without asking. Please keep your questions brief and accept my apologies in advance for terse replies. I will reply as soon as possible. If you don't receive a reply within two days please send a short follow-up email.

**Dog Policy:** I will occasionally bring my dog, Maggie, to office hours. I keep my office door closed to stop her from wandering the halls—so when you arrive, please knock to let me know that you're there. If you need to speak with me in a dog-free environment, please just ask (ideally, in advance so that I can leave her at home or meet you at a different location).

**Honor Code:** You have all taken the Stanford Honor Code, of which plagiarism is a violation. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. It is in your interest to keep a careful record of any resources you use in research and writing. Always cite any resource that you use. Do not re-use papers written for past classes.

**Provisional Nature of the Syllabus:** I reserve the right to alter the syllabus at any time. Alterations will be announced via e-mail and an updated syllabus will be uploaded to the course website.

**Lectures:** I will not attempt to cover all the material in the lectures. If two readings are listed, I will generally move through them in the given order on Tuesday and Thursday.

## Unit One: Values

### Week One: Divine Command Theory and Objectivism

- Alfred Plato, *Euthyphro*
- David Enoch, 'Why I'm an Objectivist about Ethics (And Why You Are Too)'

### Week Two: Welfare and Beyond

- Debra Satz, Michael McPherson, and Daniel Hausman, 'Welfare' sections 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5; in *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy and Public Policy*.
- Susan Wolf, *Meaning in Life*, chapter one

### Week Three: Care and Ubuntu

- Nell Noddings, 'Why Care about Caring?' in *Caring, A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*
- Thaddeus Metz, 'Toward an African Moral Theory'

## Unit Two: Motives and Virtue

### Week Four: Integrity and Alienation

- Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism, For and Against* (sections 3, 4, and 5)
- Sarah Conly, 'Utilitarianism and Integrity'

### Week Five: Duty

- Barbara Herman, 'On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty'
- Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork* (section one; focus on the stuff about the shopkeeper)

### Week Six: Worth

- Sukaina Hirji, 'What's Aristotelian about Neo-Aristotelian Virtue Ethics?'
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.4 (very short; do read around)
- Nomy Arpaly, 'Moral Worth' (chapter 3 of *Unprincipled Virtue*)

## Unit Three: Rules and Institutions

### Week Seven: Collective Action

- Walt Sinnott-Armstrong, 'It's not my fault: Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations'
- Julia Nefsky, 'Fairness, Participation and the Real Problem of Collective Harm'

#### Week Eight: Ethics of Markets

- Matt Zwolinski, 'The Ethics of Price Gouging,' *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 2008
- Lucas Stanczyk, 'Productive Justice'

#### Unit Four: Critical Theory

#### Week Nine: Ideology and Epistemic Injustice

- Sally Haslanger, "'But Mom, Crop-Tops are Cute!'" Social Knowledge, Social Structure, and Ideology Critique'
- Tommie Shelby, 'Racism, Moralism, and Social Criticism'
- Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice* (chapters 1 and 2)

#### Week Ten: Revolution

- Malcolm X, 'The Ballot or the Bullet'
- Rosa Luxemburg, 'Reform or Revolution' (selections)
- Axel Honneth, *The Idea of Socialism* (chapter 1)