



PHIL 392 – 02 Moral Theory

Instructor: Prof. John Thrasher

Class Meeting Day(s) & Time(s): TR 11:30AM-12:45pm

Classroom: Online (Wilkinson Hall 221 if we return)

Office Hours: By appointment

Office Location:

Email Address: ThrasherIV@Chapman.edu

Phone (optional): 714-516-4562

Course Description

An examination of significant moral theories as well as the structure of those theories. Topics may include the relationship between rationality and morality, the justification of rights, the nature of the good, and theories of right. **3 credits**

Course Learning Outcomes

- Ability to state and support a thesis, apply knowledge of critical reasoning, accurately interpret philosophic sources, and clearly communicate a balanced account in writing.
- Ability to construct and analyze complex arguments and distinguish good reasoning from bad.
- Ability to reason logically, effectively, and respectfully about ethical matters

Program Learning Outcomes

- PLO1: Writing—Ability to state and support a thesis, apply knowledge of critical reasoning, accurately interpret philosophic sources, and clearly communicate a balanced account in writing.
- PLO2: Critical Reasoning—Ability to construct and analyze complex arguments and distinguish good reasoning from bad.
- PLO 3H: History of Philosophy—Ability to demonstrate a deep understanding of central figures, texts, and ideas from the Modern or Ancient and Medieval periods of the history of philosophy.
- PLO 4: Ethical Reasoning—Ability to reason logically, effectively, and respectfully about ethical matters.

Overview

This class will make significant demands on you in terms of the reading. You will likely find many of them difficult. Some of the readings will require some background knowledge—make note of anything



that seems odd in the reading or that you don't immediately understand, and we will discuss some of those issues in the seminar.

I expect students to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and to go beyond them. The readings are just a starting point for the discussion in the seminar, but it will be impossible to probe some of the deeper issues that they raise if you are not already familiar with the readings.

Doing philosophy well requires that you have a diverse range of ideas to draw on so that you can see problems in new ways and possibly find solutions or new ways of thinking that other may have missed. This requires a depth of knowledge that only comes from reading and understanding the great thinkers who have come before you.

While reading and writing are solitary pursuits, philosophy is also done collaboratively in the seminar room through discussion. I expect everyone to contribute to the discussion and to remain respectful throughout. You should not free ride on the contributions of others, but instead be prepared to contribute each seminar. Mere cleverness is no substitute for the insight that comes from deep reflection on serious problems. All of this will require a good amount of work, but I think you will find the rewards will be substantial.

Communication

The best way to contact the professor is via email. When emailing, identify yourself, use course name and meeting dates in subject heading.

Attendance Policy

Because of the interactive nature of the class, attendance is an essential component. Excessive tardiness constitutes an absence; six absences may result in failure.

Assessment

| Task | Weight | Due Date |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Questions | 35% | Throughout |
| Take Home Exams | 25% | Throughout |
| Essay Plan | Hurdle | Before Week 12 |
| Final Essay | 40% | 4pm, May 20 |

Questions (35%)

Each student will submit 1 question and one comment about the material under discussion that week on canvas. These questions will be used in the class and will be evaluated based on how well they reflect the student's engagement with the material. These should be submitted by 9am on the day of class.

Take Home Exams (25%)

There will be several take home exams throughout the semester based on the readings.

Essay Plan

The main assessment exercise for this unit is a final essay. In order to improve the quality of those essays, each student is required to submit a brief essay plan that identifies the thesis of the proposed



paper, any supporting sub-arguments, and the intended references. This consultation should be scheduled no later than Week 12 and may be scheduled any time before that.

Final Essay (40%)

The final essay will be based on the topic from your essay plan of no more than 4,500 words. A more detailed rubric and tips on writing a good essay will be posted on Canvas.

Chapman University's Academic Integrity Policy

Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction by the instructor/administrator and referral to the University Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions including expulsion. Please see the full description of Chapman University's policy on Academic Integrity at www.chapman.edu/academics/academic-integrity/index.aspx

Chapman University's Students with Disabilities Policy

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office. If you will need to utilize your approved accommodations in this class, please follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s). This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be utilized. Please contact Disability Services at (714) 516-4520 or visit <https://www.chapman.edu/students/health-and-safety/disability-services> if you have questions regarding this procedure or for information or to make an appointment to discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. Once formal approval of your need for an accommodation has been granted, you are encouraged to talk with your professor(s) about your accommodation options. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

Chapman University's Equity and Diversity Policy

Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman's Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Please see the full description of this policy at <http://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/eoo.aspx>. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the dean of students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy."

Required Texts:

1. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*
2. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*
3. John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*
4. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*
5. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*

The texts of Hobbes, Kant, Mill, and some of the other thinkers we will be reading from the Early Modern period can be found on www.earlymoderntexts.com

Weekly Schedule of Readings & Topics for the Term

| | Reading | Assessment |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Week 1-Intro | | |
| 2/4 T | No Reading | |
| 2/4 R | No Reading | Question & Comment |
| Week 2-Hobbes | | |
| 2/9 T | 1. Verse Autobiography 2. Aubrey's Life | Question & Comment |
| 2/11 R | <i>Leviathan</i> , Chapters 1-5 | Question & Comment |
| Week 3-Hobbes | | |
| 2/16 T | <i>Leviathan</i> , 6-8 | Question & Comment |
| 2/18 R | <i>Leviathan</i> , 9-12 | Question & Comment |
| Week 4-Hobbes | | |
| 2/23 T | <i>Leviathan</i> , 13-14 | Question & Comment |
| 2/25 R | <i>Leviathan</i> , 15-16 | Question & Comment |
| Week 5-Hobbes | | |
| 3/2 T | <i>Leviathan</i> , 17-19 | *Short Essay Question & Comment |
| 3/4 R | <i>Leviathan</i> , 20-24 | Question & Comment |
| Week 6-Hobbes | | |
| 3/9 T | David Gauthier, "Thomas Hobbes, Moral Theorist" | |
| 3/11 R | <i>Leviathan</i> , Review and Conclusion | |
| Week 7-Madeville and Hume | | |
| 3/16 T | Hume, <i>Treatise</i> Book III, Part 1 | Question & Comment |
| 3/18 R | Hume, Enquiry Concerning Morals §3 "Of Justice" | Question & Comment |
| Spring Break | | |
| Week 8-Kant | | |
| 3/30 T | <i>Groundwork</i> , Preface | Question & Comment |
| 4/1 R | <i>Groundwork</i> , Chapter 1 | Question & Comment |
| Week 9-Kant | | |
| 4/6 T | <i>Groundwork</i> , Chapter 2 | Question & Comment |
| 4/8 R | <i>Groundwork</i> , Chapter 3 | Question & Comment |
| 4/11 Sun | Take Home Exam Due | |
| Week 10-Mill | | |
| 4/13 T | <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapter 1 | Question & Comment |
| 4/15 R | <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapters 2-3 | Question & Comment |
| Week 11-Mill | | |
| 4/20 T | <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapter 4 | Question & Comment |
| 4/22 R | <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Chapter 5 | Question & Comment |
| Week 12-Mill | | |
| 4/27 T | <i>On Liberty</i> , Chapter 1-2 | Question & Comment |
| 4/29 R | <i>On Liberty</i> Chapter 3 | Question & Comment |
| Week 13-Mill | | |
| 5/4 T | <i>On Liberty</i> , Chapter 4 | Question & Comment |
| 5/6 R | <i>On Liberty</i> , Chapter 5 | Question & Comment |
| Week 14-Nietzsche | | Take Home Exam Due |
| 5/11 T | Genealogy, I | Question & Comment |
| 5/13 R | Genealogy II | Question & Comment |