

PHIL 941: Graduate Seminar in Ethical Theory
Revised Syllabus, Fall 2004
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I. Administrative Information

Professor: Robert Streiffer

Lectures: 5193 Helen C. White, Thursday, 4:00-6:00

Office Hours: Philosophy Office, Tuesday, 9:30-10:30 and by appointment

Philosophy Office: 5123 Helen C. White Hall; 263-9479

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II. Course Description

This class is a graduate level survey course of ethical theory. We will be using three new anthologies edited by Stephen Darwall to explore three of the four main traditions within ethical theory: consequentialism, contractualism, and deontology (with virtue ethics being the unexplored fourth). We will be trying to determine what distinguishes the three traditions from each other, and which is the most plausible. We will also be reading a work that defends a substantive view about perhaps the most important area within deontology, J. J. Thomson's *The Realm of Rights*.

III. Required Materials

- *Consequentialism*, ed. Stephen Darwall (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003)
- *Contractarianism/Contractualism*, ed. Stephen Darwall (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003)
- *Deontology*, ed. Stephen Darwall (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003)
- Judith Jarvis Thomson, *The Realm of Rights* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990)
- Readings marked with an "*" will be available for photocopying in the philosophy library.

IV. Class Requirements

1. Read all of the assignments, read them carefully, and read them critically. The average amount of reading per class is about 55 pages.
2. Attend all the classes and participate in the discussions. Participation is 10% of your grade.
3. A term paper, 4,500-6,000 words (15-20 pages) in length, on a topic of your choosing (although I'm happy to help you choose), written in two drafts and worth 60% of your grade. You must submit a paper proposal, 250-350 words (1 page) in length, at the beginning of class on September 30. You must submit a rough draft, at least 3,000 words (10 pages) in length, at the beginning of class on October 21. The final draft is due at the beginning of class on December 9.
4. Two 20 minute in-class presentations on some aspect of the reading for that day, You should make a handout no longer than two pages, that defines any key terminology and theses and lays out your specific argument in valid (e.g., syllogistic, modus ponens, etc.) form. Bring 14 copies to distribute in class the day of your presentation. Each presentation will be 15%

of your grade. People who are presenting on the same day should consult beforehand to avoid redundancy in the presentations.

V. Reading Schedule

1. September 2, Introduction and Course Overview (22 pages)
 - (1) * Shelly Kagan, "Preliminaries," ch. 1 of *Normative Ethics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998): 1-22.

Consequentialism, ed. Stephen Darwall (3 meetings)

2. September 9, Classical Sources (58 pages)
Shahin and Tim
 - (1) John Stuart Mill, "From *Utilitarianism*," ch. 2, 32-63 (32 pages)
 - (2) ~~Henry Sidgwick, "From *The Methods of Ethics*," ch. 4, 67-88 (22 pages)~~
 - (3) G. E. Moore, "From *Principia Ethica*," ch. 5, 89-92 (4 pages)
3. September 16, Contemporary Expressions (52 pages)
Leigh and Josh
 - (1) Samuel Scheffler, "From *The Rejection of Consequentialism*," ch. 7, 108-131 (24 pages)
 - (2) Derek Parfit, "From *Reasons and Persons*," ch. 8, 132-159 (28 pages)
4. September 23 (Starting at 5:15), Contemporary Expressions and Discussion (37 pages)
Bekka and Holly
 - (1) Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality," ch. 9, 160-196 (37 pages)

Deontology, ed. Stephen Darwall (2 meetings)

5. September 30, Classical Sources (66 pages)
Brad and Mark
Paper proposals due
 - (1) ~~Richard Price, "From *A Review of the Principle Questions in Morals*," ch. 4, 34-54 (21 pages)~~
 - (2) David Ross, "From *The Right and the Good*," ch. 5, 55-80 (26 pages)
6. October 7, Contemporary Expressions (47 pages)
Bekka, Nick, and David
 - (1) Robert Nozick, "Moral Constraints," ch. 6, 83-89 (7 pages)
 - (2) Thomas Nagel, "Agent-Relativity," ch. 7, 90-111 (22 pages)
 - (3) Stephen Darwall, "Agent-Centered Restrictions," 112-138 (27 pages)

Contractualism/Contractarianism, ed. Stephen Darwall (4 meetings)

7. October 14, Contemporary Discussion (67 pages)
Eric and Emily
 - (1) Thomas Hobbes, "From *Leviathan*," ch 1, 11-51 (41 pages)
 - (2) ~~Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "From *The Social Contract*," ch 2, 55-79 (25 pages)~~

8. October 21 (59 pages)
Mark and Mavis
Rough draft of paper due
 - (1) David Gauthier, "Why Contractarianism?," ch. 4, 91-107 (17 pages).
 - ~~(2) David Gauthier, "From *Morals by Agreement*," ch. 5, 108-137 (30 pages)~~
9. October 28, Classical Sources (47 pages)
Leigh and David
 - (1) John Rawls, "From *A Theory of Justice*," ch. 7, 151-189 (39 pages)
 - (2) Thomas Scanlon, "Contractualism and Utilitarianism," ch. 9, 219-246 (28 pages)
10. November 4, Contemporary Expressions (56 pages)
Jamie, Eric, and Brad
 - (1) * Thomas Scanlon, "The Structure of Contractualism," ch. 5 in *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1998), 189-247 (59 pages)
11. November 1, Overflow

The Realm of Rights, by Judith Jarvis Thomson (3 meetings)

12. November 18, Rights: What They Are
Mavis, Emily and Josh
 - (1) "Introduction," 1-4 (4 pages)
 - (2) "Claims, Privileges, and Powers," ch. 1, 37-60
 - (3) "Duties," ch. 2, 61-78 (18 pages)
 - (4) "Ought," ch. 3, 79-104 (26 pages)
 - (5) "Value," ch. 5, 123-148 (26 pages)
 - (6) "Tradeoffs," ch. 6, 149-175 (27 pages)

No Class on November 25 due to Thanksgiving Holiday

13. December 2, Rights: Which They Are (58 pages)
Jamie, Nick, and Holly
 - (1) "Harm," ch. 9, 227-248 (22 pages)
 - (2) "Distress and Harm," ch. 10, 249-271 (23 pages)
 - (3) * Joel Feinberg, "The Offense Principle," in *Social and Political Philosophy*, edited by George Sher and Baruch A. Brody (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996), 84-96 (13 pages)

14. December 9, Rights: Which They Are (a is 69 pages, b is 61 pages)
Shahin and Tim
Final draft of paper due
(1a) "Liberty," ch. 11, 272-293 (22 pages)
(2a) * Thomas Scanlon, "Responsibility," ch. 6 in *What We Owe to Each Other*
(Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1998), 248-294 (47 pages)

or

- (1b) "Giving One's Word," ch. 12, 294-321 (28 pages)
(2b) * Thomas Scanlon, "Promises," ch. 7 in *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge,
MA: Belknap Press, 1998), 295-327 (33 pages)