

Instructor: Robert Streiffer; 5123 Helen C. White Hall; 263-9479  
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Time: Thursday 1:15 – 3:15  
Place: 5181 Helen C. White

Required Books:

Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity, by Gilbert Harman and Judith Jarvis Thomson  
The Act Itself, by Jonathan Bennett  
Reader available from Bob's Copy Shop on University by the Department.

Recommended Books:

Language, Truth, and Logic, by A. J. Ayer  
Principia Ethica, by G. E. Moore

Class Requirements:

I've tried hard to keep the number of readings down, so I expect everyone to be able to do all of the readings for every class and to come prepared to discuss them. I'll typically start with a presentation on what I took to be the most important theses and arguments, but that should leave plenty of time for discussion. If discussion wanes, I will consider assigning people to be discussion facilitators on specific topics.

The writing for this course consists of one fifteen to twenty page paper on the topic of your choosing (although I'm happy to help you choose), written in two drafts. A couple of paragraphs explaining what your topic is should be submitted to me by March 23, the class after Spring Break. The first draft of the paper, which should be at least ten pages, is due three weeks later at the beginning of class on April 13. I will get them back to you with comments by April 20. The second draft is due four weeks later at the beginning of the last class, May 11.

Reading Schedule (“#” indicates that it is in the reader)

- I. Metaethics
1. January 27  
Beginnings
  - (a) G. E. Moore, “Chapter I: The Subject Matter of Ethics” in Principia Ethica
  - (b) William Frankena, “The Naturalistic Fallacy” in Theories of Ethics, edited by Philippa Foot
2. February 3  
Emotivism I
  - (a) #A. J. Ayer, “Introduction”, “Critique of Ethics and Theology, Chapter 6 of Language, Truth, and Logic(b) #Simon Blackburn, “Moral Realism”, reprinted in his Quasi-Realism
  - (c) #Judith Jarvis Thomson, “Introduction” to her Realm of Rights

3. February 10  
Emotivism II
  - (a) #Peter Geach, "Assertion", in Philosophical Review 74
  - (b) Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Introduction to Part II" of Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity
  - (c) Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Emotivism", Chapter 7 of Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity
  
4. February 17  
Emotivism III
  
5. February 24  
Appraiser Moral Relativism I
  - (a) Gilbert Harman, "Moral Relativism" §1.1-1.5 in Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity
  - (b) #David Wong, "The Recommended Relativist Analysis of Moral "A ought to do X" Statements," Chapter 4 in Moral Relativity
  - (c) #David Wong, "The Recommended Relativist Analysis of 'X is a good Y' Statements and Consideration of Objections," Chapter 6 in Moral Relativity
  
6. March 2  
Appraiser Moral Relativism II
  - (a) #David Lyons "Ethical Relativism and the Problem of Incoherence." Reprinted in Relativism: Cognitive and Moral, edited by J. W. Meiland and M. Krausz.
  - (a) Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Thomson's Response to Harman's Part I," §10.1-§10.6 in Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity
  - (b) Robert Streiffer, "Appraiser Relativism and the Reliability of our Linguistic Intuitions"
  
7. March 9  
Agent Moral Relativism (Paper topic due next class)
  - (a) Gilbert Harman, "Universality of Practical Reasons?" §4.1-§4.2 in Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity
  - (b) Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Thomson's Response to Harman's Part I," §10.8-§10.10 in Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity
  - (c) #Bernard Williams, "Internal and External Reasons" in his Moral Luck
  - (d) Robert Streiffer, "Agent Relativism and Reasons for Action"

No class on March 16 due to Spring Recess

8. March 23 (Paper topic due)  
Morality and Reasons for Action
  - (a) #Philippa Foot, "Virtues and Vices" reprinted in her Virtues and Vices
  - (b) #Philippa Foot, "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives" reprinted in her Virtues and Vices
  - (c) #Gavin Lawrence, "The Rationality of Morality", in Virtues and Reasons, edited by Rosalind Hursthouse, Gavin Lawrence, Warren Quinn

9. March 30  
Reasons for Action and the Ways of Being Good
  - (a) Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Evaluatives and Directives", Chapter 8 in *Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity*
  - (b) #Judith Jarvis Thomson, "The Right and the Good", *The Journal of Philosophy* 94: 273-298
  - (c) Robert Streiffer, "Reasons for Action and the Ways of Being Good"
  
- II. Ethical Theory
10. April 6 (First draft of paper due next week)  
Beginnings
  - (a) #G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy" reprinted in *Virtue Ethics*, edited by Roger Crisp and Michael Slote
  - (b) #Philippa Foot, "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect", in her *Virtues and Vices*
  - (c) #Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Killing, Letting Die, and the Trolley Problem", in her *Rights, Restitution, and Risk*
  
11. April 13 (First Draft of paper due)  
The Doctrine of Doing and Allowing I
  - (a) Jonathan Bennett, Chapters 4 – 7 of *The Act Itself*
  
12. April 20 (Passover)  
The Doctrine of Doing and Allowing II
  - (a) Jonathan Bennett, Chapters 8 – 10 of *The Act Itself*
  - (b) #Shelley Kagan "The Additive Fallacy", *Ethics* 99:5 5-31
  - (c) #Jeffrey McMahan, "A Challenge to Common Sense Morality" in *Ethics* 108 (January 1998)
  - (d) #Judith Jarvis Thomson, *Critical Study of Bennett* in *Nous* 30:4 (1996)
  
13. April 27  
The Doctrine of Double Effect
  - (a) Jonathan Bennett, Chapter 11 of *The Act Itself*
  - (b) #Warren Quinn, "Actions, Intentions, and Consequences: The Doctrine of Double Effect" in his *Morality and Action*
  
- III. Applied Ethics
14. May 4 (Second draft of paper due next week)  
Physician-Assisted Suicide I
  - (a) #*Vacco v. Quill*, 117 S. Ct. 2293 (1997)
  - (b) #Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Physician-Assisted Suicide: Two Moral Arguments" in *Ethics* 109: 497-518
  
15. May 11  
Physician-Assisted Suicide II (Second draft of paper due)
  - (a) # "The Philosopher's Brief" in *The New York Review of Books* March 27, 1997
  - (b) #Paul Weithman. "Of Assisted Suicide and 'The Philosopher's Brief'" in *Ethics* 109
  - (c) #Gerald Dworkin, "Sex, Suicide, and Doctors" in *Ethics* 109