

University of Colorado at Boulder
Philosophy 5100: Proseminar in Ethics, Fall 2016

Thursdays, 5:00-7:30 p.m., HLMS 269
Instructor of Record: Alison Jaggar

Professors

David Boonin (david.boonin@colorado.edu)
Chris Heathwood (chris.heathwood@colorado.edu)
Adam Hosein (adam.hosein@colorado.edu)
Alison Jaggar (alison.jaggar@colorado.edu)
Alastair Norcross (alastair.norcross@colorado.edu)

Course description and texts

In this team-taught proseminar, we will study several classic and influential texts in analytic ethics and political philosophy:

1. Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (1874/1907) (Norcross). A free version is available at: <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/authors/sidgwick>
2. W.D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* (1930) (Heathwood)
3. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (1971) (Hosein)
4. Elizabeth Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration* (2011) (Jaggar)
5. Classic papers in applied ethics. (Boonin)

Each professor will teach a three-week unit of the course. The books are available at the CU Bookstore; the papers any additional readings will be posted on D2L. In addition to exposing you to some key works in Anglophone moral and political philosophy since the rise of analytic philosophy, we hope that this course will help develop a shared intellectual background among the entering class of graduate students and allow you to get to know a number of our values faculty.

Requirements

1. Attendance

Attendance is required at all meetings of the proseminar. Students who miss a class should provide a reason and seek the permission of the faculty member who will be instructing that week. You should also provide an explanation in advance if you need to arrive late or leave early.

2. Preparation for class

You are required to do all of the assigned reading, whether or not it is a topic on which you eventually decide to write a paper.

3. Participation

Philosophy is a discursive discipline and active participation is expected. Active participation means not only talking but also attending respectfully and sympathetically to comments made by others.

4. Writing

Out of the five units that constitute the course, a total of four short papers is required. You may choose which four units to write papers for. Each paper should be approximately 5-7 pages or about 1,500-2,000 words. The topic for each paper should be based on some part of the readings for that unit of the course and should be fairly narrowly focused so that you can discuss it with sufficient rigor and in sufficient depth. We recommend discussing your topic in advance with the relevant professor to verify that it is a suitable topic. The paper for a given unit is due on the Monday following the final day of that unit and should be sent as an attachment, via e-mail, to the relevant professor in the form of a MS Word document. Papers are due by 5:00 p.m. on the relevant Monday.

Your papers should be written like professional journal articles. Accordingly, they should have these elements.

- *Thesis*: Your thesis should be non-trivial, and it should be stated clearly and explicitly at the outset. Your thesis can be a positive philosophical point that connects up in some clear way with the reading, or it can be a criticism of a claim or argument made in the reading. It can also be an interpretive thesis, offering an interesting interpretation of some important or contested passage from the reading.
- *Argument*: Your argument(s) for the thesis should appeal to premises that would seem plausible to the great majority of people, including most people who have not already accepted your thesis.
- *Replies to objections*: Consider how someone doubting your thesis might object to your argument, and say why these objections ultimately do not persuade you.
- *Things not to do*: Do not spend more than a quarter of the paper setting up the issue. Do not digress (these papers are too short for digressions). Do not make errors of grammar, punctuation, spelling, word usage, formatting, and the like. Make use of a good writing guide.

Grading

Your final grade for the class will be determined mainly by your four papers, but classroom participation can also influence your grade.

Grading standards vary among professors but a majority of the philosophy faculty have come to the following consensus concerning grading standards for graduate students as stated in the graduate student handbook .

“The grades for graduate students tend to run from A to B+, although lower grades are occasionally given. ... Although professors naturally differ in their grading patterns, and in their understanding of those grades, there is some consensus among the faculty in the Department that A’s should be given for excellent work, A-’s for good but not great work, and B+’s for work that is problematic, though still satisfactory.”

You can use this as a rough guide to what our grades mean, though some of us might add further nuance to it. We expect that the most common grade in the class will be an A-, but that some A’s and B+’s will also be given.

Issues, Complaints, etc.

If something is bothering you about the course, the readings, your classmates, the classroom environment, your professors, or anything related to our course, please do not hesitate to discuss the problem with any of us. If you don’t feel that we are dealing with the problem to your satisfaction, please bring your problem to the attention of our Director of Graduate Studies, Rob Rupert.

Course Schedule

Aug. 25: Sidgwick 1

Background, Methods of Ethics, Goodness, Well-Being
pp. v-vi (foreword by Rawls), vii-viii, xvii-xxiii
Book I, chs. 1, 3, 6, 8, 9
Book I, chs. 4, 7 (optional)

Sept 1: Sidgwick 2

Intuitionism, Common Sense Morality, Moral Epistemology
Book III, chs. 1, 6 (§§5-9), 11

Sept. 8: Sidgwick 3

Utilitarianism, Its Proof, Its Relation to CSM, Esoteric Morality
Book III, ch. 13
Book IV, chs. 1, 2, 3 (§§1, 7), 4 (§1), 5 (§1-3), Concluding Chapter (§§1, 2, 4, 5)
Book III, ch. 14 (optional)

Sept. 15: Ross 1

What does ‘right’ mean? What makes right acts right?
Preface (v-vi), Chapter I (1-15), Chapter II (16-47)

Appendix I (48-56), Appendix II (56-64)

Sept. 22: Ross 2

What does 'good' mean? What is the nature of goodness?
Chapter III (65-74), Chapter IV (75-104; 114-133; rest optional)

Sept. 29: Ross 3

What things are good? How good are they? What about *moral* goodness?
Chapter V (134-141), Chapter VI (142-154), Chapter VII (155-173)
Editor's Introduction (ix-1) (optional)

Oct. 6: Rawls 1

Fairness versus Utility
Sections 1-9, 11-17

Oct. 13: Rawls 2

The Original Position
Chapter 3
Nozick, pp. 183-231

Oct. 20: Rawls 3

Freedom and Property
Sections 33-35, 39, 77, 82
Nozick, pp. 150-182

Oct. 27: Anderson 1

Anderson's Methodology
Chapters 1 and 5
Anderson's Central APA Presidential address, July 2015.

Nov. 3: Anderson 2

Anderson's Argument that Segregation is the Cause of Racial Injustice in the US.
Chapters 2-4

Nov. 10: Anderson 3

Anderson's Policy Recommendations
Chapters 6-9

Nov 17: Duties to future humans: the non-identity problem

Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, Chapter 16
David Boonin, *The Non-Identity Problem and the Ethics of Future People*, Chapter 1

Dec. 1: Duties to past humans: posthumous harm

George Pitcher, "The Misfortunes of the Dead"
Douglas Portmore, "Desire Fulfillment and Posthumous Harm"

Dec. 8: Duties to non-humans: speciesism

Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal"
Shelly Kagan, "What's Wrong With Speciesism?"
Peter Singer, "Why Speciesism is Wrong: A Response to Kagan"

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Disabilities & Medical Conditions

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs

can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu.

If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see “Temporary medical conditions” under Quick Links at the Disability Services website (www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices) and discuss your needs with your professor.

Religious Observances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please inform Alison Jaggar of any anticipated conflicts by 2 September, 2016. See <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams>.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/osc/>

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU-Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the OIEC website: <http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/>

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy (<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/academic-integrity-policy>) of the institution. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible of violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at <http://honorcode.colorado.edu>.