

Philosophy 5100 – Proseminar in Ethics:
Classic Texts in Analytic Ethics and Political
Philosophy

Fall 2013
Wednesdays 5-7:30pm, HLMS 177

Syllabus (last revised 19AUG13)

Professors

Eric Chwang	eric.chwang@colorado.edu	HLMS 273	Tues., 1:00-3:00; Fri., 1:00-2:00
Chris Heathwood	heathwood@colorado.edu	HLMS 192	Mon., 2:00-4:00 (during 3 teaching weeks only)
Adam Hosein	adam.hosein@colorado.edu	HLMS 184	Wed., 2:00-4:00 (during 3 teaching weeks only)
Alison Jaggar	Alison.Jaggar@colorado.edu	HLMS 278	Thurs. 1:45-4:30
Alastair Norcross	alastair.norcross@colorado.edu	HLMS 182	Tu. & Th., 2:30-3:30

Each of us is also very happy to meet by appointment.

Course Description

This team-taught proseminar will consist of a study of classic and influential texts in analytic ethics and political philosophy:

Henry Sidgwick's <i>The Methods of Ethics</i> (1874)	(Heathwood)
G.E. Moore's <i>Principia Ethica</i> (1903)	(Norcross)
John Rawls' <i>A Theory of Justice</i> (1999)	(Hosein)
Derek Parfit's <i>Reasons and Persons</i> (1984)	(Chwang)
Elizabeth Anderson's <i>The Imperative of Integration</i> (2011)	(Jaggar)

Each book will eventually be available at the CU Bookstore, but you may want to check other venues too.

Each book or set of readings corresponds to a three-week unit of the course. Each unit will be taught by a different professor. In addition to exposing you to some of the most important works of anglophone moral 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, while allowing you to get to know a greater number of our faculty.

Requirements

Chris Heathwood's assignment for the first three weeks of the course (Sidgwick) will be three very short, direct writing assignments, one due each week. He will explain this in class and/or by email.

For the other four units, three short papers are required, a paper for each of the last four 3-week units bar one. You may choose which three of the last four units to write for. Further details on these three short papers:

Length: 5-7 pages, or about 1,500-2,000 words, each.

Topic: Something on some part of the readings for that unit of the course. Be sure to pick a topic that is circumscribed, so you can discuss it thoroughly, rather than giving a shallow discussion of a large topic. We recommend discussing your idea in advance with the relevant professor to verify that it is worth writing about.

Due dates: Each Monday following the last day of a unit. See schedule below for exact dates.

Submission: Attach papers, written in MS Word, to an email to the relevant professor. Papers are due by 4pm on the relevant Monday.

Content: 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, early on. 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 graduate student handbook contains the following remarks about grading standards:

Grading standards can vary among professors. However, a majority of the faculty have come to a reasonable amount of consensus concerning grading standards for graduate students. The standards accepted by most professors are the following:

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

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 like we are dealing with the problem to your satisfaction, please bring your problem to the attention of our Department Chair, Graeme Forbes and/or our Director of Graduate Studies, Robert Rupert.

Current Course Schedule (subject to change)

Date	Possible Topics	Readings (due on date listed)
W 8/28	Background, Methods of Ethics, Goodness, Well-Being	Required (73 pages): - pp. v-vi (foreword by Rawls), vii-viii, xvii-xxiii. - Book I, chs. 1, 3, 6, 8, 9. Recommended: - Book I, chs. 4, 7.
W 9/4	Intuitionism, Common Sense Morality, Moral Epistemology	Required (52 pages): - Book III, chs. 1, 6 (§§5-9), 11.
W 9/11	Utilitarianism, Its Proof, Its Relation to CSM, Esoteric Morality	Required (76 pages): - Book III, ch. 13. - Book IV, chs. 1, 2, 3 (§§1, 7), 4 (§1), 5 (§1-3), Concluding Chapter (§§1, 2, 4, 5). Recommended: - Book III, ch. 14.
W 9/18	The Naturalistic Fallacy and the Open Question Argument	Moore, Chapt. 1.
W 9/25	Hedonism and Consequentialism	Moore, Chapt. 3, Sec. 36-57; Chapt. 5.
W 10/2	Intrinsic Value	Moore, Chapt. 6.
M 10/7	Moore Paper Due (to alastair.norcross@colorado.edu) by 4pm	
W 10/9	Fairness vs. Utility	Rawls, Sections 1-9, 11-17.
W 10/16	The "Original Position"	Rawls, Chapt. 3.
W 10/23	Equal Liberties	Rawls, Sections 33-35, 39, 77, 82.
M 10/28	Rawls Paper Due (to adam.hosein@colorado.edu) by 4pm	
W 10/30	Prisoner's Dilemma	Parfit, Chapt. 2; Ken Binmore, <i>Playing Fair</i> , 1994: chapters 3.1-3.2 (on D2L).
W 11/6	Non-Identity Problem	Parfit, Chapt. 16; David Boonin, "How to Solve the Non-Identity Problem", 2008 (on D2L).
W 11/13	Repugnant Conclusion	Parfit, Chaps. 17 & 19; Mike Huemer, "In Defence of Repugnance", 2008 (on D2L).
M 11/18	Parfit Paper Due (to eric.chwang@colorado.edu) by 4pm	
W 11/27	Anderson's methodology	Anderson, chapters 1 and 5, plus some additional readings to be assigned
W 12/4	Anderson's critical analysis	Anderson, chapters 2-4 inclusive.
W 12/11	Anderson's prescriptions	Anderson, chapters 6-9 inclusive.
M 12/16	Anderson Paper Due (to Alison.Jaggar@colorado.edu) by 4pm	

Fine Print

Disability:

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Center for Community, N200, and <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.

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, contact us if you face such a conflict. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

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/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

Discrimination and Harassment:

The University of Colorado at Boulder Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures, the University of Colorado Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures, and the University of Colorado Conflict of Interest in Cases of Amorous Relationships Policy apply to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of sexual harassment or discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127, or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>.

Academic Integrity:

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>.