



PHL 225

Ethical Theory

S1 External 2014

Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Mianna Lotz

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W6A Room 734

By appointment

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

The ethical theories of Aristotle, John Stuart Mill and Immanuel Kant have influenced contemporary ways of thinking about moral action and our moral relations with others. In the first section of the unit, we focus on Aristotle's conceptions of voluntary and involuntary actions, excuses, justifications and culpability, which ground contemporary understandings of moral and legal responsibility. We also discuss Aristotle's views on friendship, which resonate with contemporary views about the good of friendship and underpin much current philosophical discussion of friendship. In the second section, we discuss Mill's classic and influential defences of individual liberty and freedom of speech, and we consider the application of his arguments to the issues of pornography and hate speech. In the final section, we discuss Kant's conception of the good will in the light of recent philosophical debates about whether Kant's moral philosophy requires us to be moral saints. We also discuss Kant's notion of respect for persons, which underpins recent discussions of the moral and political importance of both respect for others and self-respect.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key concepts, principles and theories of Aristotle and Mill, as well as a selection of contemporary philosophers, specifically in relation to questions of individual responsibility and liberty;

Improved skills in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments and theories in the relevant literature;

Ability to identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation;

Enhancement of skills in clear and rigorous thinking as well as oral and written expression.

Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Due |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| <u>Short Paper</u> | 20% | 5pm Friday 28 March |
| <u>Essay 1</u> | 30% | 5pm Friday 2 May |
| <u>Essay 2</u> | 35% | 5pm Friday June 6 |
| <u>Participation (External)</u> | 15% | Continuous |

Short Paper

Due: **5pm Friday 28 March**

Weighting: **20%**

This task is designed to test your comprehension of the essential readings and to develop your ability to provide clear and precise exegetical analyses. It will also provide you with writing practice and feedback in preparation for the longer essays. Topics will be handed out one week prior to the due date, and marked short papers will be returned two weeks after submission.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key concepts, principles and theories of Aristotle and Mill, as well as a selection of contemporary philosophers, specifically in relation to questions of individual responsibility and liberty;
- Improved skills in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments and theories in the relevant literature;
- Enhancement of skills in clear and rigorous thinking as well as oral and written expression.

Essay 1

Due: **5pm Friday 2 May**

Weighting: **30%**

The two essays are designed to develop your ability to engage with a topic in greater depth. They develop your ability to express, analyse and organise key ideas clearly and systematically, and to provide a sustained argument. A word limit of 1500-1600 words applies. Topics will be available in class and on the unit ilearn at least three weeks before the due date, and will be returned with comments approximately three weeks after submission. Submission will be electronic (via ilearn). Submission instructions will be provided in class and on ilearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key concepts, principles and theories of Aristotle and Mill, as well as a selection of contemporary philosophers, specifically in relation to questions of individual responsibility and liberty;
- Improved skills in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments and theories in the relevant literature;
- Ability to identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation;
- Enhancement of skills in clear and rigorous thinking as well as oral and written expression.

Essay 2

Due: **5pm Friday June 6**

Weighting: **35%**

The two essays are designed to develop your ability to engage with a topic in greater depth. They develop your ability to express, analyse and organise key ideas clearly and systematically, and to provide a sustained argument. A word limit of 1500-1600 words applies. Topics will be available in class and on the unit ilearn at least three weeks before the due date, and will be returned with comments approximately three weeks after submission. Submission will be electronic (via ilearn). Submission instructions will be provided in class and on ilearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key concepts, principles and theories of Aristotle and Mill, as well as a selection of contemporary philosophers, specifically in relation to questions of individual responsibility and liberty;
- Improved skills in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments and theories in the relevant literature;

- Ability to identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation;
- Enhancement of skills in clear and rigorous thinking as well as oral and written expression.

Participation (External)

Due: **Continuous**

Weighting: **15%**

External students must contribute to at least 75% of online Discussion topics. Questions for each topic will be posted every week. To be eligible to receive marks for this component, students must address ONE of the questions in a given topic. Questions will be designed to promote discussion between students, rather than simply the individual answering of questions. The greater the level of your direct engagement with fellow students, the higher your mark will be.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key concepts, principles and theories of Aristotle and Mill, as well as a selection of contemporary philosophers, specifically in relation to questions of individual responsibility and liberty;
- Improved skills in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments and theories in the relevant literature;
- Ability to identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation;
- Enhancement of skills in clear and rigorous thinking as well as oral and written expression.

Delivery and Resources

Delivery: Day, External

This unit will use: iLecture, iLearn

Times and Locations for Lectures and Tutorials: For current updates and to confirm lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetables website:

<http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>.

Lectures:

Monday 10am-11pm W5A 205

Thursday 12-1pm W6B 336

Tutorials:

Monday 11am-12pm W5A 203

Thursday 2pm-3pm W5C 334

Requirements:

Internal students attend 2 lectures and 1 tutorial each week.

Lectures start in the first week of semester, tutorials start in the second week.

Required and recommended resources:

All required readings are in the PHL225: Ethical Theory course reader available from the bookstore. This contains the essential weekly readings for lectures and tutorials. All students are expected to purchase the reader. A list of additional readings is also provided for each topic. Most journal articles are available electronically; additional books and book chapters covering all core areas of the unit, are available at the Reserve Loans desk in the Library.

Unit Schedule

PHL225 UNIT SCHEDULE AND READINGS

The following is an outline of the topics and the readings that will be covered week by week. The listed essential readings are all in the PHL225 course Reader. These are the minimum required reading for the unit. The further readings will assist you to develop an expanded understanding of the issues discussed in lectures, and should be used for essay preparation. More detailed reading lists will also be provided with the essay topics.

SECTION 1: ARISTOTLE

Week 1 (3 & 6 Mar): Unit Introduction; Introduction to Aristotle

Essential Reading:

(i) Aristotle: 'Moral Virtue, How Produced'. From P. Singer (ed) *Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp.26-7.

Week 2 (10 & 13 Mar): Aristotle on voluntary/involuntary action; Nagel on moral luck

Essential Reading:

(i) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III.

(ii) T. Nagel, 'Moral Luck', Chp. 3 in *Nagel Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 24-38.

Further Reading:

(iii) J. Feinberg. 1986. 'Failures of Consent', extracts from Chs. 23 & 26 of *Harm to Self*, (New York & Oxford: OUP) Extracts: pp. 189-195; 269-280; 316-322.

(iv) T. Irwin, 'Reason and Responsibility in Aristotle' in Amelie Rorty (ed), *Essays On Aristotle's Ethics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, pp. 117-157.

Week 3 (17 & 20 Mar): Aristotle and contemporary views of friendship

Essential Reading:

- (i) Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics Books VIII, IX
- (ii) D. Cocking and J. Kennett, 'Friendship and the Self', Ethics 108, 1998: pp. 502-27.

Further Reading:

- (iii) Cooper, J. 'Aristotle on Friendship', in Amelie Rorty (ed), Essays on Aristotle's Ethics, pp. 301- 340
- (iv) Badhwar, N.K., (ed.), 1993, Friendship: A Philosophical Reader, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- (v) Friedman, M.A., 1993, What Are Friends For? Feminist Perspectives on Personal Relationships and Moral Theory, Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP

SECTION 2: MILL

Week 4 (24 & 27 Mar): Mill on Liberty

Essential Reading:

- (i) J. S. Mill: "Introductory" p, 126-140. (Note the famous passage on p. 135)
- (ii) Chapter III "Of Individuality" pp. 184-204.

***** SHORT PAPER DUE: 5pm Friday 28 March*****

Week 5 (31 Mar & 3 Apr): Paternalism

Essential Reading:

- (i) G. Dworkin, 'Paternalism'. In Paternalism, ed. Rolf Sartorius (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), pp. 19-34.
- (ii) R. E. Goodin, 'Permissible Paternalism: Saving Smokers from Themselves.' In Ethics In Practice: An Anthology. Ed. Hugh La Follette (Cambridge; Mass.: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997), pp. 320-325.

Further Reading:

- (iii) A. E. Cudd, 'Taking Drugs Seriously: Liberal Paternalism and the Rationality of Preferences.' In Ethics In Practice: An Anthology. Ed. Hugh La Follette (Cambridge; Mass.: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997), pp. 309- 319.

Week 6 (7 & 10 April): Contemporary Liberal Autonomy

Essential Reading:

(i) A. E. Fuchs, 'Autonomy, Slavery, and Mill's Critique of Paternalism', *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 4, 2001: 231-251

Further Reading:

(ii) John Christman, 'Autonomy in Moral and Political Philosophy', (2003), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, url: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/autonomy-moral/>

***** MID-SEMESTER BREAK: 12-25 April *****

Week 7 (28 April & 1 May): Mill and Scanlon on Freedom of Thought and Expression

Essential Reading:

(i) J. S. Mill Chapter II "Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion pp. 141- 183 (The last few pages are a good although brief summary.)

(ii) T. Scanlon, 'A Theory of Freedom of Expression', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (Winter 1972), pp. 204-226.

Further Readings:

(iii) J. Riley, *Routledge Philosophy guidebook to Mill on Liberty* London and New York: Routledge, 1988

(iv) R. Amdur, 'Scanlon on Freedom of Expression'. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 3, (Winter 1972), pp. 287-300.

***** ESSAY ONE DUE: 5pm Friday 2 May*****

Week 8: (5 & 8 May): Challenges to Freedom of Expression: "Hate Speech" and Pornography

Essential Reading:

(i) J. Arthur, 'Sticks and Stones'. In *Ethics In Practice: An Anthology*. (3rd edition.) Ed. Hugh La Follette (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp. 398-410.

(ii) D. Dyzenhaus, 'John Stuart Mill and the Harm of Pornography', *Ethics*, 102 (3), 1992: 534-551

Further Reading:

(iii) Ronald Dworkin: 'Do We Have a Right to Pornography?' In *Ethics In Practice: An Anthology*. Ed. Hugh La Follette (Cambridge; Mass.: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997), pp. 333-337.

(iv) Rae Langton, 'Pornography, Speech Acts, and Silence'. In *Ethics In Practice: An Anthology*.

H. La Follette (Cambridge; Mass.: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997), 338- 349.

SECTION 3: KANT

Week 9 (12 & 15 May): Kant on Duty and the Good Will

Essential Reading:

(i) Immanuel Kant, Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, ed. Mary Gregor (CUP, 1997), Section I ('Transition from Common Rational to Philosophic moral cognition'), [4:393-405]

Further Reading:

(ii) Barbara Herman, 'On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty', in The Practice of Moral Judgment, (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1993)

Week 10 (NB: 22 May ONLY): Kant on Duty and the Categorical Imperatives

(There will be no lecture on Monday 19 May)

Essential Reading:

(i) Immanuel Kant, Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, Section II, 4: pp. 406-431.

(ii) Christine Korsgaard, 'An Introduction to the ethical, political and religious thought of Kant'. Chp 1 in Creating the Kingdom of Ends (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Week 11 (26 & 29 May): Kant on respect and dignity

Essential Reading: (NB: the Kant pieces are short)

(i) Immanuel Kant, Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, Section II, 4: [pp. 430-440].

(ii) The Doctrine of Virtue: Introduction, Sections XI & XII [pp. 398-403];

(iii) Part 1, Ch. II ('Man's Duty to Himself Merely as a Moral Being') [pp. 429-437];

(iv) Part II, Ch. 1. Section II ('On Duties of Virtue Towards Other Men Arising from the Respect Due to Them', [pp 462-468];

(v) Ch. II 'On Ethical Duties of Men Toward One Another with Regard to their Condition' [pp. 469-473].

(vi) Stephen Darwall, 'Two Kinds of Respect', Ethics 88, 1977: pp. 36-49.

Further Reading:

(vii) Robin Dillon, 'Kant on Arrogance and Self-Respect', in Cheshire Calhoun (ed). Setting the Moral Compass: Essays by Women Philosophers, (New York: OUP, 2004), pp. 191- 216.

Week 12 : Non-teaching week (Essay preparation and one-on-one consultation)

*** ESSAY TWO DUE: 5pm Friday 6 June***

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation;
- Enhancement of skills in clear and rigorous thinking as well as oral and written expression.

Assessment task

- Participation (External)

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Improved skills in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments and theories in the relevant literature;
- Enhancement of skills in clear and rigorous thinking as well as oral and written

expression.

Assessment task

- Participation (External)

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key concepts, principles and theories of Aristotle and Mill, as well as a selection of contemporary philosophers, specifically in relation to questions of individual responsibility and liberty;
- Improved skills in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments and theories in the relevant literature;
- Ability to identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation;
- Enhancement of skills in clear and rigorous thinking as well as oral and written expression.

Assessment tasks

- Short Paper
- Essay 1
- Essay 2
- Participation (External)

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key concepts, principles and theories of Aristotle and Mill, as well as a selection of contemporary philosophers, specifically in relation to questions of individual responsibility and liberty;
- Improved skills in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments and theories in the relevant literature;
- Ability to identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation;
- Enhancement of skills in clear and rigorous thinking as well as oral and written expression.

Assessment tasks

- Short Paper
- Essay 1
- Essay 2
- Participation (External)

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key concepts, principles and theories of Aristotle and Mill, as well as a selection of contemporary philosophers, specifically in relation to questions of individual responsibility and liberty;
- Improved skills in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments and theories in the relevant literature;
- Ability to identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation;

Assessment tasks

- Essay 1
- Essay 2

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Improved skills in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments and theories in the relevant literature;
- Ability to identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation;

Assessment tasks

- Essay 1
- Essay 2
- Participation (External)

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key concepts, principles and theories of Aristotle and Mill, as well as a selection of contemporary philosophers, specifically in relation to questions of individual responsibility and liberty;
- Enhancement of skills in clear and rigorous thinking as well as oral and written expression.

Assessment tasks

- Short Paper
- Essay 1
- Essay 2
- Participation (External)

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key concepts, principles and theories of Aristotle and Mill, as well as a selection of contemporary philosophers, specifically in relation to questions of individual responsibility and liberty;
- Ability to identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation;

Assessment task

- Participation (External)

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of the key concepts, principles and theories of Aristotle and Mill, as well as a selection of contemporary philosophers, specifically in relation to questions of individual responsibility and liberty;
- Ability to identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation;