



PHIL705

Foundations of Research in Ethics

S1 Day 2016

Dept of Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor, lecturer.

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Lecturer

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit will equip students with foundational research knowledge and skills in the broad area of Ethics. The unit will focus on an in depth reading of foundational texts in the history of ethics and will examine their impact on current debates in the field on such topics as virtue, character, value, autonomy, and the nature of right action. Texts may include: Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics, Hume's Treatise (Books II and III), Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, and Mill's On Liberty.

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:

In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics.

Sound comparative grasp of key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.

General Assessment Information

Please note that completion of ALL assessments in this unit is a compulsory requirement of completing this unit.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Paper 1: Aristotle	15%	Week 6
Paper 2: Kant	15%	Week 10
Major Comparative Essay	40%	17 June
Presentations (x3)	15%	3 times in semester
Participation	15%	Continuous

Paper 1: Aristotle

Due: **Week 6**

Weighting: **15%**

A short essay demonstrating familiarity with a central aspect of Aristotle's moral philosophy. Topic TBA. (1000-1250 Words)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics.

Paper 2: Kant

Due: **Week 10**

Weighting: **15%**

A short essay demonstrating familiarity with a central aspect of Kant's moral philosophy. Topic TBA. (1000-1250 Words)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics.

Major Comparative Essay

Due: **17 June**

Weighting: **40%**

Close comparative analysis and critical discussion of a common concern in both Aristotle and Kant's moral philosophy. Topic TBA. (2500 words)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Sound comparative grasp of key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.

Presentations (x3)

Due: **3 times in semester**

Weighting: **15%**

Each student will submit three written presentations, one for each section of the unit (Aristotle, Kant, and Aristotle/Kant comparison). The presentations must develop a central theme from the assigned topic. The focus of the presentations must be on an argument or issue developed in an *additional reading* (i.e. not the required reading) to be sourced by students themselves, which connects with the core reading/topic for the relevant week's seminar. The presentation must provide a brief summary of the authors' main argument plus a critical assessment of it.

Presentations must be uploaded online to the relevant iLearn discussion forum in the week of the seminar, by the Friday of that week, for discussion in the following 'online-only' week. The presenter must lead the online discussion for that following week. Presentations must be approximately 500 words in length.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics.
- Sound comparative grasp of key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.

Participation

Due: **Continuous**

Weighting: **15%**

Attendance at all fortnightly 'contact week' seminars and online contribution during 'online-only' weeks. To fulfill this assessment requirement each student must demonstrate that they have read all of the assigned reading for each seminar, and must have pre-prepared 5 questions from the required reading, for discussion (online and in seminar). These pre-prepared questions are to be posted to the online forum **by 12pm on Tuesdays before the seminar**, so that we can collate and discuss them during the seminar. This applies to External students as well as Internal

students, as we need to include discussion of External Students' questions in the seminar as well.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics.
- Sound comparative grasp of key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.

Delivery and Resources

Delivery:

Fortnightly seminars (commencing with a short introductory seminar in Week 1).

Recorded via Echo360 if there are External students.

Set Texts (students are required to have their own copies):

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by J.A.K. Thomson (Penguin, London: 2004).

Kant, I. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*,

Kant, I. *The Metaphysics of Morals*,

Sherman, N. *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1997).

Other readings:

Unit Schedule

Week 1 (Mar 1): Introduction and Planning (Dr Lotz)

No reading requirement for this week, except to begin on the readings for Week 3 - they are long!

Week 3 (Mar 15): Aristotle I (Dr Lotz)

Required Reading:

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books I-IV (pp. 4–111).

G.E.M. (Elizabeth) Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy'. *Philosophy*, Vol. 33, No. 124 (Jan., 1958), pp. 1-19.

Week 5 (Mar 29): Aristotle II (Dr Lotz)

Required Reading:

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books V-VII (pp. 112–199).

Philippa Foot, 'Virtues and Vices.' In Stephen Darwall (ed), *Virtue Ethics*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003): pp. 105-120.

Mid Semester Break: April 11-22

Week 7 (April 26): Kant I (Dr Formosa)

Required Reading:

Kant, *Groundwork* 1-2

Barbara Herman, 'On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty', in Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1996).

Week 9 (May 10): Kant II (Dr Formosa)

Required Reading:

Religion within the boundaries of Mere Reason, book 1. Kant. *Metaphysics of Morals*. Selection from *Doctrine of Virtue*.

Formosa, Paul. "Kant on the Radical Evil of Human Nature." *The Philosophical Forum* 38, no. 3 (2007): 221-245.

Week 11 (May 24): Comparative themes in Aristotle/Kant I: Virtue and the Emotions (Dr Lotz and Dr Formosa)

Required reading:

Nancy Sherman, 'The Emotional Structure of Aristotelian Virtue', Ch. 2 of *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue*

Nancy Sherman, 'The Passional Underpinnings of Kantian Virtue', Ch. 4 of *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue*

Week 13 (June 7): Comparative themes in Aristotle/Kant II: Love, respect and friendship (Dr Lotz and Dr Formosa)

Required reading:

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books VIII and IX.

Kant, selections from the *Doctrine of Virtue* and *The Groundwork*

Nancy Sherman, 'The Shared Voyage', Ch. 5 of *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue*

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

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

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

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.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/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

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://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

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

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Sound comparative grasp of key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.

Assessment tasks

- Major Comparative Essay
- Presentations (x3)

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of

knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics.
- Sound comparative grasp of key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.

Assessment tasks

- Paper 1: Aristotle
- Paper 2: Kant
- Major Comparative Essay
- Presentations (x3)
- Participation

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Sound comparative grasp of key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.

Assessment tasks

- Major Comparative Essay
- Presentations (x3)
- Participation

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Sound comparative grasp of key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.

Assessment tasks

- Major Comparative Essay
- Presentations (x3)

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics.

Assessment tasks

- Paper 1: Aristotle
- Paper 2: Kant
- Major Comparative Essay
- Presentations (x3)
- Participation

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics.

Assessment tasks

- Paper 1: Aristotle
- Paper 2: Kant
- Participation