



PHIL705

Foundations of Research in Ethics

S1 External 2018

Dept of Philosophy

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Disclaimer

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General Information

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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 topics such as virtue, character, value, autonomy, emotions, 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. This year we will focus on Aristotle's and Kant's ethical writings, before engaging in a comparison of the works of these two key figures in the history of ethics.

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, focusing specifically on virtue, emotion, and moral motivation.

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

Improved ability to read critically and independently

Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression

General Assessment Information

Late Submission Penalty

“Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.”

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Paper 1: Aristotle</u>	25%	No	28/3/2018
<u>Paper 2: Kant</u>	25%	No	7/5/2018
<u>Comparative Essay</u>	30%	No	6/6/18
<u>Participation</u>	20%	No	Continuous

Paper 1: Aristotle

Due: **28/3/2018**

Weighting: **25%**

A short essay demonstrating familiarity with a central aspect of Aristotle's moral philosophy.

Topic TBA. (1500 Words) A rubric will be handed out with the essay question in Week 3. Due 28/3/18 at 11:59pm.

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, focusing specifically on virtue, emotion, and moral motivation.
- Sound comparative grasp of relevant key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.
- Improved ability to read critically and independently

- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression

Paper 2: Kant

Due: **7/5/2018**

Weighting: **25%**

A short essay demonstrating familiarity with a central aspect of Kant's moral philosophy. Topic TBA. (1500 Words) A rubric will be handed out with the essay question in Week 6. Due 7/5/18 at 11:59pm.

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, focusing specifically on virtue, emotion, and moral motivation.
- Sound comparative grasp of relevant key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.
- Improved ability to read critically and independently
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression

Comparative Essay

Due: **6/6/18**

Weighting: **30%**

Close comparative analysis and critical discussion of a common concern in both Aristotle and Kant's moral philosophy. Topic TBA. (1800 words) A rubric will be handed out with the essay question in Week 10. Due 6/6/18 at 11:59pm.

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, focusing specifically on virtue, emotion, and moral motivation.
- Sound comparative grasp of relevant key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.
- Improved ability to read critically and independently
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression

Participation

Due: **Continuous**

Weighting: **20%**

Participation in all seminars and contributions to online forums. A rubric will be distributed in week 1. To fulfill this assessment requirement each student must demonstrate that they have read all of the assigned reading for each seminar, and contribute in a constructive way to

seminar discussion, including by asking critical questions. Students will also be assessed on the quality of their contributions to weekly online forums.

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, focusing specifically on virtue, emotion, and moral motivation.
- Sound comparative grasp of relevant key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.
- Improved ability to read critically and independently
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression

Delivery and Resources

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

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

Kant, I. *Practical Philosophy*, ed. M. Gregor (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 1999).

This book contains, in full, all of Kant's main writings on ethics. We will use the translations from this text.

Other readings:

These are listed in the unit schedule and access will be provided via iLearn.

Unit Schedule

Week 1 (Tuesday February 27): Introduction and Planning (Dr Lotz/Dr Formosa)

No reading requirement for this week's seminar. The week is to be used for commencement of the readings for the following weeks' seminars.

In this week we outline the unit, and explain the approach and focus we will take to the readings each week. We will also explain the unit structure, which involves bursts of intensive reading and seminar discussion, followed by time for online discussion and reflection, the completion of writing tasks, and preparation for the next intensive burst of seminar discussion. Since the amount of readings required each week during the intensive seminar periods is higher than usual, students will have more time in between the intensive seminar discussion weeks to contribute to online forums, undertake assessment tasks, and prepare for the next intensive burst of seminar discussion. The pedagogical aim of this approach is to facilitate higher quality student discussion and improve student engagement with the material for both internal and external students.

Please note: the below texts are provisional and are subject to change.

Week 2 (Tuesday March 6):

No off-line seminar.

Moderated forum discussion: background questions on Kant, Aristotle and Virtue

Reading preparation for the intensive section on Aristotle.

Week 3 (Tuesday March 13): 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 4 (Tuesday March 20): 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.

Week 5 (Tuesday March 27):

Moderated online forum discussion on Aristotle. No "off-line" seminar. Students are expected to make contributions to online forums this week.

Essay writing week.

Paper 1 Aristotle due: 28/3/2018

Reading preparation for the intensive section on Kant.

Week 6 (Tuesday April 3): Kant I (Dr Formosa)

Required Reading:

Kant, *Groundwork* 1-2. I.e. pp. 43-93 of the Cambridge edition. We won't read Section III.

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 7 (Tuesday April 10): Kant II (Dr Formosa)

Required Reading:

Religion within the boundaries of Mere Reason, book 1. I.e. pp 57-97 of the below Cambridge Edition - "Religion and Rational Theology", although I'd recommend also reading pp. 101-103.

Kant. *Metaphysics of Morals*. Selections from the *Doctrine of Virtue*. We will just read:

"Introduction to the doctrine of virtue" (pp. 512-540 of the Cambridge edition).

Formosa, Paul. "Kant on the Radical Evil of Human Nature." *The Philosophical Forum* 38, no. 3

(2007): 221-245.

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Week 8 (Tuesday May 1):

Moderated online forum discussion on Kant's Groundwork. No "off-line" seminar. Students are expected to make contributions to online forums this week.

Essay writing week.

Week 9 (Tuesday May 8):

Moderated online forum discussion on Kant's later works in moral philosophy. No "off-line" seminar. Students are expected to make contributions to online forums this week.

Paper 2: Kant, due 7/5/2017.

Reading preparation for the intensive comparative section on Kant and Aristotle.

Week 10 (Tuesday May 15): 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*

Paul Formosa, 'Achievement Dignity and Autonomy: How to Live Up to Your Status Dignity', Ch. 5 of *Kantian Ethics, Dignity and Perfection*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 2017.

Week 11 (Tuesday May 22): 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*. We read: Doctrine of the Elements of Ethics, Part II, Duties to Others. In the Cambridge edition of *Practical Philosophy* book, pp. 568-588. (6:448-6:474).

Secondary reading - TBA.

Week 12 (Tuesday May 30):

Moderated online forum discussion on the comparison between Kant and Aristotle on virtue. No "off-line" seminar. Students are expected to make contributions to online forums this week.

Comparative essay writing week.

Week 13 (Tuesday June 5):

Moderated online forum discussion on the comparison between Kant and Aristotle on love and respect. No "off-line" seminar. Students are expected to make contributions to online forums this week.

Comparative essay, due 6/6/17.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](http://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<http://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/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 relevant key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.

Assessment task

- Comparative Essay

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, focusing specifically on virtue, emotion, and moral motivation.
- Sound comparative grasp of relevant key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression

Assessment tasks

- Paper 1: Aristotle
- Paper 2: Kant
- Comparative Essay
- 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 outcomes

- In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics, focusing specifically on virtue, emotion, and moral motivation.
- Sound comparative grasp of relevant key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.
- Improved ability to read critically and independently
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression

Assessment tasks

- Comparative Essay
- 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 outcomes

- In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics, focusing specifically on virtue, emotion, and moral motivation.
- Sound comparative grasp of relevant key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.
- Improved ability to read critically and independently

Assessment task

- Comparative Essay

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 outcomes

- In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics, focusing specifically on virtue, emotion, and moral motivation.
- Sound comparative grasp of relevant key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.
- Clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression

Assessment tasks

- Paper 1: Aristotle
- Paper 2: Kant
- Comparative Essay
- 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, focusing specifically on virtue, emotion, and moral motivation.

Assessment tasks

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

Changes from Previous Offering

Some minor changes to the content and delivery. Assessment was changed so as to spread the assessment load out evenly throughout the semester.

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
19/02/2018	Changes to some readings.