



PHIL2025

Ethical Theory

Session 1, Weekday attendance, North Ryde 2020

Department of Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor, Lecturer, Tutor

Mianna Lotz

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By appointment

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

40cp at 1000 level or above

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 defenses 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:

ULO1: 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.

ULO2: Apply improved skills in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments and theories in the relevant literature

ULO3: Identify, apply and develop the skills and concepts involved in ethical reasoning and argumentation.

ULO4: Demonstrate enhanced skills in clear and rigorous thinking as well as oral and written expression.

Assessment Tasks

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Assessment details are no longer provided here as a result of changes due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Students should consult [iLearn](#) for revised unit information.

[Find out more about the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and potential impacts on staff and students](#)

General Assessment Information

Full information about each assessment task is available in the Task Outlines, Task Descriptions, and Task Rubrics, all of which are located under "Assessment" on the unit iLearn site.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT WEEKLY QUIZZES

There are 10 Weekly Quizzes available (Weeks 2-5 and Weeks 7-12).

These quizzes are worth 2% each.

Correction to information below: YOU CAN COMPLETE AS MANY QUIZZES AS YOU LIKE.

(Please ignore the error below where it is stated that you should complete 7 out of 10 quizzes. That is no longer applicable to this unit.)

Quiz deadlines:

To be eligible for a mark the quiz must be completed by the following times/days each week in which there is a quiz:

Internal students: 11.59pm each Wednesday night (i.e. the night before the second Lecture each week);

Online-only students: 11.59pm each Sunday night following the lectures on that topic.

No extensions will be granted for any quizzes.

Delivery and Resources

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Any references to on-campus delivery below may no longer be relevant due to COVID-19.

Please check here for updated delivery information: https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit_status

Delivery: Day/attendance

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>.

Classes:

In Week 1: There will be two live lectures. Internal students are expected to attend both lectures this week. Online students must listen to iLearn recordings as per usual.

Lecture 1: Tuesday 2–3pm

Lecture 2: Thursday 11am–12pm - Live lecture: Internal students are expected to attend 7/10 live lectures.

Tutorials:

Thursdays 12–1pm

Thursdays 2–3pm

FROM WEEK 2:

Lecture 1: Recorded mini-lecture, available on Echo360 at unit iLearn site by 12pm each Monday. There will be no live lecture, **BUT AN ONLINE QUIZ BASED ON READING AND LECTURE MUST BE COMPLETED by 11.59pm each Wednesday night**).

All students: Listen online to recorded mini-lecture 1 at the start of each week and complete weekly quiz based on Reading 1 for that week, and recorded mini-lecture.

Internal students: Attend Lecture 2 and 1 tutorial each week. Tutorials start in Week 2.

Online students: Listen online to both lectures each week and complete weekly online discussion tasks as provided on iLearn.

Required and recommended resources:

All required readings are in the PHIL2025: Ethical Theory course reader available via Print On Demand from the bookstore. This contains the essential weekly readings for lectures and tutorials. All students are expected to read the essential readings. Additional readings will be mentioned in lectures, and must be used for the Essay. Most journal articles are available

electronically; additional books and book chapters covering all core areas of the unit, are available in the Library.

Unit Schedule

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

The unit schedule/topics and any references to on-campus delivery below may no longer be relevant due to COVID-19. Please consult [iLearn](#) for latest details, and check here for updated delivery information: https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit_status

PHL2025 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 PHL2025 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 for essay topics.

SECTION 1: ARISTOTLE, AGENCY AND FRIENDSHIP

Week 1 (beginning 24 February): 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 (beginning 2 March): 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 (beginning 9 March): 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

SHORT PAPER DUE: 11.59pm Friday 13 March

SECTION 2: MILL AND PATERNALISM

Week 4 (beginning 16 March): 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.

Week 5 (beginning 23 March): 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 (beginning 30 March): 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/>

Week 7 (beginning 6 April): 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.

***** MID-SEMESTER BREAK: 13-24 April *****

Week 8 (beginning 27 April): 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 (beginning 4 May): Kant on Duty and the Good Will

Essential Reading:

(i) Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of 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 (beginning 11 May): Kant on Duty and the Categorical Imperatives

Essential Reading:

(i) Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of 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 (beginning 18 May): Kant on respect and dignity

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

(i) Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of 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 (beginning 25 May): Non-teaching week (Essay preparation and one-on-one consultation)

ESSAY DUE: 11.59pm Friday 29 May

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.*)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://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 published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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 help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Getting help with your assignment](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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.

Changes since First Published

| Date | Description |
|------------|--|
| 27/02/2020 | Correction of error in number of Weekly Quizzes students complete. |
| 19/02/2020 | Learning Outcomes included from MCMS. |