PHIX2026

The Ethics and Moral Psychology of Good and Evil

Session 1, Online-flexible 2022

Department of Philosophy

Contents

General Information	2
Learning Outcomes	3
General Assessment Information	3
Assessment Tasks	4
Delivery and Resources	7
Unit Schedule	7
Policies and Procedures	10
Changes since First Published	12

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General Information

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Credit points
10

Prerequisites
40cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
What is it that makes us good or evil, virtuous or vicious? What does it mean to be a competent agent who can be held responsible for moral as well as immoral action? And what does morality and moral theory require of us as agents? Thinking about what motivates morality raises important questions about the role played by reason, will, emotion and intuition in bringing about moral behaviour. It also offers a basis for critically examining prominent ethical theories to see how well they can accommodate the lived realities of human agency and motivation. And it invites further questions about the contribution of social context and psychopathic conditions in explaining ordinary and extreme forms of wrongdoing. This unit will critically examine the philosophical and psychological literature on moral agency, virtue, goodness, and evil, as well as exploring historical and contemporary philosophical accounts of the importance of such things as integrity, character, autonomy and respect for others in moral life and moral relations.

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:

ULO2: demonstrate a good general understanding of how contemporary philosophical and psychological research contributes to our understanding of moral agency, judgement and motivation

ULO3: analyse and critically evaluate relevant competing philosophical theories and arguments.

ULO1: draw on sources used in the unit to give clear accounts of the relevant philosophical moral concepts and theories

ULO4: apply the theoretical knowledge gained to analysis and evaluation of selected case studies in moral psychology

ULO5: construct sound arguments in support of your own ethical positions, judgements and values

General Assessment Information

NOTE: It is expected that students will complete ALL ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS in this unit. You do not need to have passed each assessment to pass the unit, but it is expected that all assessments are attempted.

General Submission Procedure: Written assessments must be submitted via TurnItIn at the correct link provided on the Unit iLearn site.

Extensions: Extensions must be sought via the MQ Special Consideration application procedure, in advance of the due date. Extensions will only be granted for medical or equivalent reasons, supported by documentation (medical certificate or equivalent). Please note that workload in other units, and employment outside of university, will not be accepted as grounds for an extension.

LATE SUBMISSION POLICY: Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – ten 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 days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Quizzes	25%	No	23:59, Sunday, weekly
Reflective tasks	20%	No	23:59 20/03/2022
Reflective essay	35%	No	23:59 03/06/2022
Participation	20%	No	Ongoing

Quizzes

Assessment Type [1]: Quiz/Test
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 15 hours
Due: **23:59, Sunday, weekly**
Weighting: **25%**

Online quizzes to test comprehension of the required readings.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- demonstrate a good general understanding of how contemporary philosophical and psychological research contributes to our understanding of moral agency, judgement and motivation
- analyse and critically evaluate relevant competing philosophical theories and arguments.
- draw on sources used in the unit to give clear accounts of the relevant philosophical moral concepts and theories
- apply the theoretical knowledge gained to analysis and evaluation of selected case studies in moral psychology

Reflective tasks

Assessment Type [1]: Reflective Writing
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 15 hours
Due: **23:59 20/03/2022**
Weighting: **20%**

Short reflective and analytic writing tasks

On successful completion you will be able to:

- demonstrate a good general understanding of how contemporary philosophical and psychological research contributes to our understanding of moral agency, judgement and motivation
- analyse and critically evaluate relevant competing philosophical theories and arguments.
- draw on sources used in the unit to give clear accounts of the relevant philosophical moral concepts and theories
- apply the theoretical knowledge gained to analysis and evaluation of selected case studies in moral psychology
- construct sound arguments in support of your own ethical positions, judgements and values

Reflective essay

Assessment Type [1]: Essay
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 30 hours
Due: **23:59 03/06/2022**
Weighting: **35%**

A major essay applying relevant concepts and theories introduced in the unit

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- analyse and critically evaluate relevant competing philosophical theories and arguments.
- draw on sources used in the unit to give clear accounts of the relevant philosophical

moral concepts and theories
- apply the theoretical knowledge gained to analysis and evaluation of selected case studies in moral psychology
- construct sound arguments in support of your own ethical positions, judgements and values

Participation

Assessment Type [1]: Participatory task
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 15 hours
Due: **Ongoing**
Weighting: **20%**

Participation in online forums and activities. Students are expected to be well-prepared and make a constructive contribution.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- demonstrate a good general understanding of how contemporary philosophical and psychological research contributes to our understanding of moral agency, judgement and motivation
- analyse and critically evaluate relevant competing philosophical theories and arguments.
- draw on sources used in the unit to give clear accounts of the relevant philosophical moral concepts and theories
- apply the theoretical knowledge gained to analysis and evaluation of selected case studies in moral psychology
- construct sound arguments in support of your own ethical positions, judgements and values

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[1] If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the Writing Centre for academic skills support.

[2] Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

Due to COVID-19 restrictions there will be a recorded lecture each week (which may be broken into 2-3 parts) and one 1-hour tutorial (zoom or face-to-face for Internals) or discussion board Forum (for Externals) per week.

Students are expected to complete at least 3.5 hours of unit reading and private study per week in this unit, additional to lecture listening and tutorial participation and any assessment preparation time.

REQUIRED READING: All required reading in this unit can be accessed via the PHIL2026 Leganto link on the unit iLearn site. Additional readings will be notified on iLearn and in lectures. The readings are compulsory reading for this unit. You will be expected to keep up with the readings throughout semester, and tutorial/online discussion as well as the quizzes will require prior familiarity with the relevant readings.

Unit Schedule

PHIL2026 UNIT SCHEDULE AND READINGS

The following is an outline of the topics and the Essential Readings that will be covered week by week. The listed essential readings are all available in Leganto under the unit code PHIL2026. These are the minimum required reading for the unit. Further readings recommended in classes will assist you to develop an expanded understanding of the issues discussed in lectures, and are expected to be used for essays.

Week 1 (beginning 21 February): Consequentialist approaches to moral goodness

Essential Reading:

1. James Rachels, 'The Utilitarian Approach'. Chapter 7 in James Rachels *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 8th edition (Singapore: McGraw-Hill, 1999): [This is a basic introduction to utilitarian consequentialism – just read Chp 7, pp. 94-107.

2. Philip Pettit, ‘Consequentialism’ in Peter Singer Singer (ed), *A Companion to Ethics.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993): pp. 230–240. [Focus on pp. 338-340, ignore pp. 341-342, and skim read pp. 343-351.

Week 2 (beginning 28 February) – Consequentialism and moral psychology (i): Does the good consequentialist lack integrity?

Essential Reading:

1. Susan Wolf, ‘Moral Saints’, *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 79, No. 8 (August, 1982): 419-439.

2. Bernard Williams, ‘Consequentialism and Integrity’ In Samuel Scheffler (ed.) *Consequentialism and Its Critics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): pp. 20-50.

Week 3 (beginning 7 March) – Consequentialism and moral psychology (ii): Is the good consequentialist incapable of genuine friendship and intimacy?

Essential Reading:

1. Michael Stocker, excerpt from 'The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories', *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 73, No. 14, On Motives and Morals (August 12, 1976): pp. 453-466.

2. Peter Railton, 'Alienation, Consequentialism and the Demands of Morality', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 1984): pp. 134-171.

Week 4 (beginning 14 March) – Virtue ethics and moral psychology: What kind of person is the Aristotelean virtuous agent?

Essential Reading:

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

2. James Rachels, 'Virtue Ethics'. In James Rachels *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 8th edition (Singapore: McGraw-Hill, 1999): Chapter 12, pp. 143-155.

**** Reflective Writing Task DUE: 23.59pm Sunday 20 March 2022**

Week 5 (beginning 21 March): Can Virtue Ethics guide moral action?

Essential Reading:

1. Robert B. Louden, 'On Some Vices of Virtue Ethics'. 1984. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 21 (3): 227-236.

2. Rosalind Hursthouse, 'Normative Virtue Ethics'. In Roger Crisp (ed) *How Should One Live? Essays on the Virtues.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996): pp. 19-36.

Week 6 (beginning 28 March): Is there such a thing as moral character? Challenges and defences.

Essential Reading:

1. Gilbert Harman, 'Moral Psychology Meets Social Psychology: Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error. *Proceedings of the Aristotelean Society,* Vol 99 (1999): 315-331.

2. Joel Kupperman, 'The Indispensability of Character', *Philosophy* Vol 76, No. 296 (2001): 239-250.

Week 7 (beginning 4 April): Kant and the Ethics of Dignity

Essential Reading:

1. Chapter 3 “Treating People with Dignity and Respect”, from Formosa, Paul. *Kantian Ethics, Dignity and Perfection*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017: pp. 72-119.

***** MID-SEMESTER BREAK: 11-25 April (inclusive) 2022**

Week 8 (beginning 26 April): Kantian Moral Development and Evil

Essential Reading:

1. Herman, Barbara. ‘On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty’. In The Practice of Moral Judgment, 1993. Harvard University Press.

2. Formosa, Paul. ‘Evil, Virtue, and Education in Kant’. Educational Philosophy and Theory,

2018, 1–10.

Week 9 (beginning 2 May): Evil Actions and Evil People

Essential Reading:

1. Formosa, Paul. ‘A Conception of Evil’. Journal of Value Inquiry 42, no. 2 (2008): 217–39.

2. Russell, Luke. “Dispositional Accounts of Evil Personhood” In Evil: A Philosophical Investigation. Oxford University Press, 2014. Chapter 8.

Week 10 (beginning 9 May): Psychopaths, Sentimentalism and Rationalism

Essential Reading:

1. Heidi Maibom (2005), “Moral Unreason: The Case of Psychopathy,” *Mind and Language*, Vol. 20 (2) , pp. 237-257.

2. Kennett, Jeanette (2006), "Do psychopaths really threaten moral rationalism?" *Philosophical Explorations*, Vol. 9 (1), pp. 69-82.

Week 11 (beginning 16 May): Evil and Reactive Attitudes

Essential Reading:

1. Peter Strawson: ‘Freedom and Resentment’ in P.F. Strawson, Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays, (London: Methuen, 1974).

2. Gary Watson: ‘Responsibility and the Limits of Evil: Variations on a Strawsonian Theme’, in Schoeman (ed.) Responsibility, Character and the Emotions (1987).

Week 12 (beginning 23 May): The Narrative Self and a Meaningful Life

Essential Reading:

1. Marya Schechtman: 'The Narrative Self-Constitution View', Ch. 5 of The Constitution of Selves, (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

2. Susan Wolf, 'Meaning in Life' in Meaning in Life and Why it Matters, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 1-33.

**** REFLECTIVE ESSAY DUE: 23.59pm Friday 3 June 2022**

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (https://policies.mq.edu.au). 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
- Assessment Procedure
- Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public
- Special Consideration Policy

Students seeking more policy resources can visit Student Policies (https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit Policy Central (https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the search tool.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/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

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe academic integrity – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free online writing and maths support, academic skills development and wellbeing consultations.

Student Support

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

The Writing Centre

The Writing Centre provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- Workshops
- Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader
- Access StudyWISE
- Upload an assignment to Studiosity
- Complete the 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

Macquarie University offers a range of Student Support Services including:

- IT Support
- Accessibility and disability support with study
- Mental health support
- Safety support to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via AskMQ, or contact Service Connect.

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
18/02/2022	Tutor details added.
17/02/2022	-
07/02/2022	-