PHIL2026
The Ethics and Moral Psychology of Good and Evil
Session 1, Online-flexible 2023

Department of Philosophy

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**General Information**

Unit convenor and teaching staff  
Mark Alfano  
mark.alfano@mq.edu.au

Credit points  
10

Prerequisites  
40cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badge 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](https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates)

**Learning Outcomes**

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

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

**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

*Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of 0 (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue.*

*This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.*

### Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>during online discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective tasks</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sundays in weeks 2-10 by 11:55 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sundays in weeks 2-10 by 11:55 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective essay</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>June 4 by 11:55 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Participation

Assessment Type 1: Participatory task  
Indicative Time on Task 2: 15 hours  
Due: during online discussion  
Weighting: 20%

Participation in class discussion and activities. Students are expected to be well-prepared and make a constructive contribution.
On successful completion you will be able to:

- draw on sources used in the unit to give clear accounts of the relevant philosophical moral concepts and theories
- 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.
- 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 tasks**

Assessment Type 1: Reflective Writing  
Indicative Time on Task 2: 15 hours  
Due: Sundays in weeks 2-10 by 11:55 PM  
Weighting: 20%

Short reflective and analytic writing tasks

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

**Quizzes**

Assessment Type 1: Quiz/Test
Indicative Time on Task: 15 hours
Due: Sundays in weeks 2-10 by 11:55 PM
Weighting: 25%

Online quizzes to test comprehension of the required readings

On successful completion you will be able to:
• draw on sources used in the unit to give clear accounts of the relevant philosophical moral concepts and theories
• 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.
• apply the theoretical knowledge gained to analysis and evaluation of selected case studies in moral psychology

Reflective essay
Assessment Type: Essay
Indicative Time on Task: 30 hours
Due: June 4 by 11:55 PM
Weighting: 35%

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

On successful completion you will be able to:
• draw on sources used in the unit to give clear accounts of the relevant philosophical moral concepts and theories
• 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.
• 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
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.

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**

Lectures will be delivered in person and recorded. They will subsequently be made available via Echo/iLearn.

Quizzes and reflective writing tasks will be available via iLearn.

Readings will be available via Leganto.

Tutorials are online weeks 2 through 11, inclusive.

**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](https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct)

**Results**

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](https://eStudent.mq.edu.au), (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](https://eStudent.mq.edu.au). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](https://ask.mq.edu.au) or if you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto: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](https://students.mq.edu.au/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/](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](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/) including:

- **IT Support**
- **Accessibility and disability support** with study
- **Mental health support**
- **Safety support** to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual
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.