



PHL 132

Philosophy, Morality and Society

S3 Day 2013

Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit provides an introduction to major topics in ethics, moral theory and contemporary political philosophy. The first section, Ethics and the Good Life, focuses on the nature of happiness. Is pleasure essential to happiness? Or does the pursuit of pleasure harm our chances of lasting fulfilment? Must we be virtuous in order to be happy? What is the relationship between happiness and duty? The second section, Foundations of Morality, explores the sources of morality and the objectivity of moral judgment. Is morality based ultimately in self-interest? What is the relationship between morality and religion? Are there moral principles that everyone is bound by reason to recognise? Or is the validity of moral standards relative to specific societies and cultures? In the third section, Contemporary Problems of Justice, we turn to questions of applied political philosophy, focusing on questions such as: What principles should govern the distribution of economic and social resources within a society? What are the obligations of wealthy nations to those less fortunate? What obligations do we have towards immigrants and refugees?

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:

How to understand the nature of happiness using concepts drawn from ancient philosophy at an elementary level

How some key modern philosophers have sought to establish the foundations of morality

at an elementary level

How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and religion at an elementary level

How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and cultural diversity at an elementary level

The elements of some contemporary theories of justice

How to apply theories of justice to contemporary social issues, including global inequality, the treatment of immigrants and refugees, and climate change, at an elementary level

How to summarise and explain a philosophical text at an elementary level

How to engage reflectively and critically with philosophical theories and arguments at an elementary level

How to express and defend your own ideas with clarity and rigour, in a logical, structured argument, at an elementary level

How to engage constructively and respectfully with the views of others, even if you disagree with them.

Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Due |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Task 1 | 20% | Week 2 - Friday 20th December |
| Task 2 | 25% | Week 4 - Friday 17 January |
| Task 3 | 35% | Wednesday 29 January |
| Task 4 | 20% | Throughout semester |

Task 1

Due: **Week 2 - Friday 20th December**

Weighting: **20%**

750 to 1000 word summary and analysis of a philosophical text

On successful completion you will be able to:

- How to understand the nature of happiness using concepts drawn from ancient philosophy at an elementary level
- How to summarise and explain a philosophical text at an elementary level

Task 2

Due: **Week 4 - Friday 17 January**

Weighting: **25%**

Journal entries or case studies on parts 1 and 2 of the unit

On successful completion you will be able to:

- How to understand the nature of happiness using concepts drawn from ancient philosophy at an elementary level
- How some key modern philosophers have sought to establish the foundations of morality at an elementary level
- How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and religion at an elementary level
- How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and cultural diversity at an elementary level
- How to engage reflectively and critically with philosophical theories and arguments at an elementary level

Task 3

Due: **Wednesday 29 January**

Weighting: **35%**

1500 word essay on a topic from parts 2 and 3 of the unit

On successful completion you will be able to:

- How some key modern philosophers have sought to establish the foundations of morality at an elementary level
- How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and religion at an elementary level
- How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and cultural diversity at an elementary level
- The elements of some contemporary theories of justice
- How to apply theories of justice to contemporary social issues, including global inequality, the treatment of immigrants and refugees, and climate change, at an elementary level
- How to express and defend your own ideas with clarity and rigour, in a logical, structured argument, at an elementary level

Task 4

Due: **Throughout semester**

Weighting: **20%**

Completion of self-test quizzes and participation in class discussions and online Discussion Forums. Attendance at a minimum of 11 of the 14 seminars is, under normal circumstances, a requirement of passing the unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- How to understand the nature of happiness using concepts drawn from ancient philosophy at an elementary level
- How some key modern philosophers have sought to establish the foundations of morality at an elementary level
- How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and religion at an elementary level
- How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and cultural diversity at an elementary level
- The elements of some contemporary theories of justice
- How to apply theories of justice to contemporary social issues, including global inequality, the treatment of immigrants and refugees, and climate change, at an elementary level
- How to engage constructively and respectfully with the views of others, even if you disagree with them.

Delivery and Resources

Required and Recommended Texts and/or Materials

The PHL132 Unit Reader, which contains all the essential reading material for the lectures, must be purchased from the Co-op Bookshop.

Supplementary readings for the Essay assessment will be available electronically via [e-Reserve](#). Material that cannot be placed in e-Reserve due to Copyright infringements can be found in the Reserve section of the library where individual copies may be made.

Technologies used:

This unit has an online presence in iLearn. Students will require access to reliable broadband and a computer.

Unit materials, announcements and other relevant information are found on iLearn for the unit at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au>. It is necessary to visit the unit iLearn site regularly.

Your log-in details for iLearn are the same as your E-Student username and password. Should

you have any technical difficulties logging in, including password resets, you will need to contact the IT Helpdesk on 9850 4357 or log onto OneHelp via the website <http://mq.edu.au/onehelp/index.html> to log a support request.

What has changed since last delivery:

Online Discussion Forums for each seminar have been introduced.

Unit Schedule

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Seminar 1 9 December | Introduction |
| Seminar 2 11 December | Epicurean Ethics |
| Seminar 3 13 December | Stoic Ethics |
| Seminar 4 16 December | Aristotle's Ethics |
| Seminar 5 18 December | Morality, religion and atheism |
| Seminar 6 20 December | Cultural diversity and moral relativism |
| 23 December - 3 January | Mid-session Break |
| Seminar 7 6 January | Egoism and self-interest theories |
| Seminar 8 8 January | Kant and the universality of reason |
| Seminar 9 10 January | Utilitarianism |
| Seminar 10 13 January | Utilitarianism and animal welfare |
| Seminar 11 15 January | Justice and inequality |
| Seminar 12 17 January | Justice, immigration and refugees |
| Seminar 13 20 January | Climate justice |
| Seminar 14 22 January | Review and Essay Writing Skills |

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://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

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

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can be accessed at: <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

UniWISE provides:

- Online learning resources and academic skills workshops http://www.students.mq.edu.au/support/learning_skills/
- Personal assistance with your learning & study related questions.
- The Learning Help Desk is located in the Library foyer (level 2).
- Online and on-campus orientation events run by Mentors@Macquarie.

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

Details of these services can be accessed at <http://www.student.mq.edu.au/ses/>.

IT Help

If you wish to receive IT help, we would be glad to assist you at <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the university's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students and it outlines what can be done.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- How to apply theories of justice to contemporary social issues, including global inequality, the treatment of immigrants and refugees, and climate change, at an elementary level

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- How to understand the nature of happiness using concepts drawn from ancient philosophy at an elementary level
- How some key modern philosophers have sought to establish the foundations of morality at an elementary level
- How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and religion at an elementary level
- How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and cultural diversity at an elementary level
- The elements of some contemporary theories of justice

Assessment tasks

- Task 1
- Task 3
- Task 4

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and religion at an elementary level
- How to think philosophically about the relation between morality and cultural diversity at an elementary level
- The elements of some contemporary theories of justice
- How to summarise and explain a philosophical text at an elementary level
- How to engage reflectively and critically with philosophical theories and arguments at an elementary level
- How to express and defend your own ideas with clarity and rigour, in a logical, structured argument, at an elementary level

Assessment tasks

- Task 1
- Task 3

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- How to apply theories of justice to contemporary social issues, including global inequality, the treatment of immigrants and refugees, and climate change, at an elementary level
- How to summarise and explain a philosophical text at an elementary level
- How to engage reflectively and critically with philosophical theories and arguments at an elementary level
- How to express and defend your own ideas with clarity and rigour, in a logical, structured argument, at an elementary level

Assessment task

- Task 3

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- How to apply theories of justice to contemporary social issues, including global inequality, the treatment of immigrants and refugees, and climate change, at an elementary level
- How to engage reflectively and critically with philosophical theories and arguments at an elementary level
- How to express and defend your own ideas with clarity and rigour, in a logical, structured argument, at an elementary level

Assessment task

- Task 2

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- How to summarise and explain a philosophical text at an elementary level
- How to engage reflectively and critically with philosophical theories and arguments at an elementary level
- How to express and defend your own ideas with clarity and rigour, in a logical, structured argument, at an elementary level
- How to engage constructively and respectfully with the views of others, even if you disagree with them.

Assessment tasks

- Task 2
- Task 3

- Task 4

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The elements of some contemporary theories of justice
- How to apply theories of justice to contemporary social issues, including global inequality, the treatment of immigrants and refugees, and climate change, at an elementary level
- How to engage constructively and respectfully with the views of others, even if you disagree with them.

Assessment task

- Task 4