Unit guide PHIL705 Foundations of Research in Ethics

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Convenor, lecturer.
Mianna Lotz
Mianna.Lotz@mq.edu.au
Contact via By email
By appointment

Lecturer
Paul Formosa
paul.formosa@mq.edu.au
Contact via By email
By appointment

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 such topics as virtue, character, value, autonomy, 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.

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

**General Assessment Information**

Please note that completion of ALL assessments in this unit is a compulsory requirement of completing this unit.

**Assessment Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paper 1: Aristotle</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paper 2: Kant</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Week 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major Comparative Essay</strong></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>17 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentations (x3)</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3 times in semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Paper 1: Aristotle**

Due: **Week 6**  
Weighting: **15%**

A short essay demonstrating familiarity with a central aspect of Aristotle's moral philosophy. Topic TBA. (1000-1250 Words)

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.

**Paper 2: Kant**

Due: **Week 10**  
Weighting: **15%**

A short essay demonstrating familiarity with a central aspect of Kant's moral philosophy. Topic TBA. (1000-1250 Words)

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.
Major Comparative Essay
Due: 17 June
Weighting: 40%

Close comparative analysis and critical discussion of a common concern in both Aristotle and Kant's moral philosophy. Topic TBA. (2500 words)

On successful completion you will be able to:
• Sound comparative grasp of key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.

Presentations (x3)
Due: 3 times in semester
Weighting: 15%

Each student will submit three written presentations, one for each section of the unit (Aristotle, Kant, and Aristotle/Kant comparison). The presentations must develop a central theme from the assigned topic. The focus of the presentations must be on an argument or issue developed in an additional reading (i.e. not the required reading) to be sourced by students themselves, which connects with the core reading/topic for the relevant week's seminar. The presentation must provide a brief summary of the authors' main argument plus a critical assessment of it.

Presentations must be uploaded online to the relevant iLearn discussion forum in the week of the seminar, by the Friday of that week, for discussion in the following 'online-only' week. The presenter must lead the online discussion for that following week. Presentations must be approximately 500 words in length.

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

Participation
Due: Continuous
Weighting: 15%

Attendance at all fortnightly 'contact week' seminars and online contribution during 'online-only' weeks. To fulfill this assessment requirement each student must demonstrate that they have read all of the assigned reading for each seminar, and must have pre-prepared 5 questions from the required reading, for discussion (online and in seminar). These pre-prepared questions are to be posted to the online forum by 12pm on Tuesdays before the seminar, so that we can collate and discuss them during the seminar. This applies to External students as well as Internal
students, as we need to include discussion of External Students' questions in the seminar as well.

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

Delivery and Resources

Delivery:
Fortnightly seminars (commencing with a short introductory seminar in Week 1).
Recorded via Echo360 if there are External students.

Set Texts (students are required to have their own copies):
- Kant, I. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*,
- Kant, I. *The Metaphysics of Morals*,

Other readings:

Unit Schedule

Week 1 (Mar 1): Introduction and Planning (Dr Lotz)

*No reading requirement for this week, except to begin on the readings for Week 3 - they are long!*

Week 3 (Mar 15): Aristotle I (Dr Lotz)

Required Reading:
Week 5 (Mar 29): Aristotle II (Dr Lotz)

Required Reading:

Mid Semester Break: April 11-22

Week 7 (April 26): Kant I (Dr Formosa)

Required Reading:
Kant, *Groundwork 1-2*


Week 9 (May 10): Kant II (Dr Formosa)

Required Reading:


Week 11 (May 24): 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*

Nancy Sherman, ‘The Passional Underpinnings of Kantian Virtue’, Ch. 4 of *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue*

Week 13 (June 7): 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* and *The Groundwork*

Nancy Sherman, ‘The Shared Voyage’, Ch. 5 of *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue*

**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:


In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/) of 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/support/student_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/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](http://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/](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 key common and contrasting themes in the work of these philosophers.

Assessment tasks

- Major Comparative Essay
- Presentations (x3)

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

**Assessment tasks**

- Paper 1: Aristotle
- Paper 2: Kant
- Major Comparative Essay
- Presentations (x3)
- 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 outcome**

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

**Assessment tasks**

- Major Comparative Essay
- Presentations (x3)
- 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 outcome

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

Assessment tasks

- Major Comparative Essay
- Presentations (x3)

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 outcome

- In-depth familiarity with the foundational philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant in the field of ethics.

Assessment tasks

- Paper 1: Aristotle
- Paper 2: Kant
- Major Comparative Essay
- Presentations (x3)
- 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.
Assessment tasks

• Paper 1: Aristotle
• Paper 2: Kant
• Participation