

PHIL 230
Fall 2016
lectures MW 8:35-9:25 am, plus mandatory conference on Th or F
lecture hall: Leacock 26

Prof. Sarah Stroud
office: Leacock 942
office phone: x3250
office hours: Friday 1-3 pm

Introduction to Moral Philosophy

An introduction to central questions of moral philosophy through the study of classic texts by Aristotle, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and G. E. Moore. Some of the fundamental questions we will investigate through these texts are the following: What things are worth pursuing? What constitutes a good life? What constitutes a moral life? What is the relation between the two? How do we reason about what to do? Can reason determine how one ought to live, or how one ought to treat others? Can reason motivate us to act in accordance with those determinations? What are moral judgments, and why are we influenced by them? Throughout the term we will take note of the ways in which our authors differ, not just in the answers they give to these questions, but in the questions they take to be most central.

Required Texts

We will read selections from:

- Aristotle (4th century B.C.), *Nicomachean Ethics* [trans. Crisp, Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed. 2014]
- David Hume (1711-1776), *A Treatise of Human Nature* [ed. Selby-Bigge, Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. 1978]
- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* [trans. Abbott, ed. Denis, Broadview Press 2005]
- John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), *Utilitarianism* [ed. Bailey, Broadview Press 2016]; plus selections from Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* [in Mill volume and/or posted on myCourses]
- G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (1903) [selections posted on myCourses]

Students are expected to use the above editions. All of these texts are for sale at Paragraphe Books (2220 McGill College Avenue) (the Moore text in limited copies, since selections from it will be made available on line), as is an optional supplementary text which you may find helpful: Vaughn and McIntosh, *Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students* [Oxford University Press Canada, 2nd ed. 2012].

Course Requirements and Method of Assessment

- three five-page (double-spaced) papers, worth 2/3 (two-thirds) of the final course mark in total (so about 22% each): one on Aristotle, one on Hume, one on Kant. (See the course schedule on the next page for due dates.) A choice of topics for each of the papers will be posted on myCourses 10-12 days before each due date.

- a formal three-hour final examination (essay format) during the exam period, worth 1/3 (one-third) of the final course mark. The final exam will consist entirely of essay questions. Some of the questions will pertain to Bentham, Mill, and Moore; these will not be given out in advance. The remaining questions will range over all course readings; these will be drawn from a list of review questions handed out in advance.

Papers turned in late without an extension will be penalized at the rate of 1/3 of a grade (e.g., from a B to a B-) per *calendar* day of lateness. No extensions will be given on the papers except for medical reasons. Requests for extensions must be directed to your teaching assistant (Prof. Stroud does not handle such requests) and supported by appropriate medical documentation. The deadline for requesting an extension is one business day before the paper is due.

Discussion is an important part of philosophical endeavour. Students are therefore expected to attend conference each week and to contribute to conference discussions; conference should be viewed as mandatory, not optional. If your final mark is borderline, your conference attendance and participation may be used as the deciding factor. *Because conference attendance is mandatory, you should not register for this course unless you are free to attend the conference for which you have registered every week.*

You cannot pass the course unless you hand in all three papers by the last day of classes (Dec. 5) and write the final exam.

Summary Course Schedule (a detailed schedule of reading assignments for each unit will be posted on myCourses)

Unit 1: Aristotle

readings, lectures, and conferences on Aristotle Sept. 7-23

Aristotle paper due **Wednesday Oct. 5**

Unit 2: Hume

readings, lectures, and conferences on Hume Sept. 26-Oct. 14

Hume paper due **Wednesday Oct. 26**

Unit 3: Kant

readings, lectures, and conferences on Kant Oct. 17-Nov. 4

Kant paper due **Wednesday Nov. 16**

Unit 4: Bentham and Mill

readings, lectures, and conferences on Bentham and Mill Nov. 2-25

Unit 5: Moore

readings, lectures, and conferences on Moore Nov. 23-Dec. 5

Course Policies

Use of technology. It is forbidden to use, hold or touch a cell phone, or to wear earbuds or headphones, in class (lecture and conference). The use of a computer or tablet is permitted *exclusively for course activities* (taking notes or viewing required readings). Students who are observed violating this policy will be asked to exit the lecture or conference in question.

Bringing texts to class. It is highly recommended that you bring the text we are currently discussing to lecture. It is *required* that you bring the text we are currently discussing to conference.

Recording lectures. Lectures will not be recorded: you will need to come to class in person in order to hear the lecture. No student may record a lecture without the express permission of the instructor.

myCourses. Students are expected to check the myCourses page at least once a week for any announcements or postings.

Text-matching software. Be advised that essays may be submitted to text-matching software.

Special arrangements for the final exam. Please note that all formal final examinations at McGill are *centrally scheduled and administered*. This means that the instructor has no control over the date of the exam for his or her course, which will be set by the Examination Office. (A preliminary draft of the examination schedule is released in October.) Nor is it possible to arrange to sit the exam at an alternative time which is more convenient for you: as specified in section 3.6.2.1. of the [Calendar](#), instructors are not permitted to make special arrangements for final exams with individual students. Given these facts, all students must plan to be in Montreal and available to write final exams during the *entire* exam period, which runs from Dec. 7 to Dec. 20 this year (and which includes evening sessions).

Language. In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Academic integrity. McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

Copyright. Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, outlines, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor.