

PHIL 230
Fall 2013
lectures MW 11:35 am-12:25 pm
lecture hall: Chancellor Day Hall 100
+ mandatory discussion conference on Fridays, for which you must register on Minerva

Prof. Sarah Stroud
office: Leacock 942
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office hour: Monday afternoon, time TBA

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. Irwin, Hackett, 2nd ed. 1999]
- David Hume (1711-1776), *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) [ed. Selby-Bigge, Oxford U. Press, 2nd ed. 1978]
- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* [trans. Abbott, ed. Denis, Broadview Press 2005]
- Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), *Utilitarianism and Other Essays* [ed. Ryan, Penguin 1987]
- G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (1903) [Prometheus Books 1988]

Students are expected to use the above editions. All of these texts are for sale at Paragraphe Books (2220 McGill College Avenue) and on reserve at Redpath/McLennan Library, as is an optional supplementary text which you may find helpful: Vaughn and McIntosh, *Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students* [Oxford U. Press Canada].

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 9-12 days before each due date.

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.

- 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.

In order to pass the course, you must hand in all three papers by the last day of classes (Dec. 3) and take the final exam.

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.*

Summary Course Schedule (note that a detailed schedule of readings for each unit will be posted on MyCourses)

Unit 1: Aristotle

readings, lectures, and conferences on Aristotle Sept. 9-23, plus conference Sept. 27
Aristotle paper due Oct. 2

Unit 2: Hume

readings, lectures, and conferences on Hume Sept. 25-Oct. 11, plus conference Oct. 18
Hume paper due Oct. 23

Unit 3: Kant

readings, lectures, and conferences on Kant Oct. 16-Nov. 1
Kant paper due Nov. 12

Unit 4: Bentham and Mill

readings, lectures, and conferences on Bentham and Mill Nov. 4-22

Unit 5: Moore

readings, lectures, and conferences on Moore Nov. 25-Dec. 3

Course Policies

Use of technology. I will be happy to grant individual students an accommodation if they require one for a valid academic or medical reason—see below for more details on this. Except for students to whom I have granted such an accommodation, however, *the use of electronic devices during lectures and conferences is forbidden*. In particular, all of the following are forbidden:

- using or holding handheld devices such as cell phones
- wearing earbuds or headphones
- using a computer

Students who are seen to be violating this policy will be asked to exit the lecture or conference in question.

If you feel that for a legitimate academic or medical reason you must use a computer to take notes, you may approach the instructor in office hours (NOT in the lecture hall or via e-mail) to request permission to do so. In order to receive permission you will need to pledge to use the computer only to take notes; if you subsequently violate your pledge, permission will be rescinded for the remainder of the term.

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.

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.

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 (available on line at www.mcgill.ca/students/courses/calendars/), 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. 5 to Dec. 18 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.