

PHIL 230  
Fall 2014  
Lectures: MW (+ F Sept. 5), + conferences  
Location: LEA 219  
Time: 12:35 – 13:25

Instructor: Bruno Guindon  
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Office Hours: W 13:30 – 15:00

## Introduction to Moral Philosophy

This course offers 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, G.E. Moore, H.A. Prichard, and W.D. Ross. Some of the fundamental questions we may investigate include: What things are worth pursuing? What constitutes a good life? What constitutes a moral life? What is the relation between the two? Can reason determine how one ought to live, or how one ought to treat others? Can reason motivate action? Why be moral? What makes an action right/wrong? What are moral judgements? Throughout the term, we will take note of the ways in which these authors differ, not just in the answers to give to some of these questions, but in the questions they take to be most central.

### Required texts

We will read selections from:

- Aristotle (4th century B.C.E.), *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Irwin, Hackett, 2nd ed. 1999
- David Hume (1711-1776), *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), 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
- Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), *Utilitarianism and Other Essays*, ed. Ryan, Penguin, 1987
- G. E. Moore (1873-1958), *Principia Ethica*, Prometheus Books, 1988

All of these texts are for sale at Paragraphe Books (at 2220 McGill College Avenue) and on three-hour reserve at the library. Students are expected to use the editions specified above.

We will also read the paper “Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?” (1912) by H.A. Prichard and selections from W.D. Ross’s (1930) *The Right and the Good*. Copies of these readings are available online through McGill’s Library Services.

### Course requirement and method of evaluation

The course requirements consist of the following:

- One argument analysis (10%)
- Two five-page essays (each worth 27.5%)
- A final exam (30%)
- Class participation (5%)

The first paper is due 15 October. The second is due 19 November. Choice of topics for each paper will be posted on MyCourses 7-10 days before the due date. The argument analysis is due 22 September. The argument to analyze will be posted on MyCourses 7 days before the due date. In order to pass the course, you must hand in your argument analysis and your two papers by the last day of classes (Dec. 4) and take the final exam.

The final exam will consist entirely of essay questions. Some of the questions will pertain to Moore, Prichard, and Ross; 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. Paper topics and review questions will be posted on MyCourses.

Five percent of your final grade consists in class participation. This involves being present at lecture, but it also involves having an *active presence in conference*. It is therefore not sufficient to simply show up to conferences; you must come prepared by having done the readings beforehand. Be prepared to pose questions and discuss the material with your TA and colleagues.

### **Policy on Lateness**

Assignments and essays which are turned in late without an extension will be penalized at the rate of 5% *per calendar day*. No extensions will be given on assignments or essays except for medical reasons. Requests for extensions should be directed to your teaching assistant and must be supported by appropriate medical documentation. The deadline for requesting an extension is one business day before an assignment is due. Differed exams will not be considered except for medical reasons.

### **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.

### **Text-matching software**

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

### **MyCourses**

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

### **Copyright**

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

**McGill Policy Statements**

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 <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/> for more information).

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.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.