

PHIL 434 Metaethics

Instructor: Andrew Reisner

Office: 933 Leacock

Email: andrew.reisner@mcgill.ca

Course Location and Time: Leacock 109, Tuesday and Thursday 16:05-17:25

Synopsis:

This course provides an advanced, contemporary introduction to the field of *metaethics*. Metaethics does not look specifically at theories of *right* and *wrong* or *good* and *bad*, but rather at questions about the metaphysics, psychology, and linguistics of notions deployed in first order moral theories. Topics covered will include error theory, reductive and non-reductive realism, expressivism, analytic descriptivism, and the fitting attitude analysis of final value.

Requirements: Students who take this course **must be prepared to complete readings on time**, as lectures will assume that students have read that week's texts closely. Students are expected to have their texts with them at each class, and students may be called upon at random to discuss or explain parts of the week's readings. **Please note that there is a penalty for missing more than three classes, effective from week 3 onwards. No excuses will be granted.**

Prerequisites: PHIL 334. It is helpful, but not necessary, to have taken at least one course in a core area of analytic philosophy.

Format: There will be two classes per week that combine lecture and discussion.

Assessment: The final mark for this course will be determined in the following way:

1. Two essays: 30% each
2. A final examination: 40%
3. **See attendance policy below for deductions for absences**

Attendance: This course is designed to work as a combination of lectures, discussions, handouts, and readings. Consequently, students who miss classes have effectively not met all the course requirements. Starting with week 3 (inclusive), students may miss up to three classes without penalty. After that, each missed class will result in a 3% deduction from the overall mark in the course. **No excuses will be granted.**