Faculty Undergraduate Reading List: Ethics (103)

The current description of this paper in undergraduate Course Handbooks is as follows:

The purpose of this subject is to enable you to come to grips with some questions which exercise many people, philosophers and non-philosophers alike. How should we decide what is best to do, and how best to lead our lives? Are our value judgments on these and other matters objective or do they merely reflect our subjective preferences and viewpoints? Are we in fact free to make these choices, or have our decisions already been determined by antecedent features of our environment and genetic endowment? In considering these issues you will examine a variety of ethical concepts, such as those of justice, rights, equality, virtue, and happiness, which are widely used in moral and political argument. There is also opportunity to discuss some applied ethical issues. Knowledge of major historical thinkers, e.g. Aristotle and Hume and Kant, will be encouraged, but not required in the examination.

Here is the relevant extract from Examination Decrees and Regulations:

Candidates will be given an opportunity to show some first-hand knowledge of some principal historical writings on this subject, but will not be required to do so. Questions will normally be set on the following topics:

1. Ethical concepts: obligation, good, virtue
2. Objectivity and the explanation of value beliefs
3. Moral Psychology: akrasia; conscience, guilt and shame
4. Freedom and responsibility
5. Consequentialism and deontology
6. Self-interest, prudence and amoralism
7. Rights, justice, and equality
8. Kant: The Groundwork

Asterisks below mark works likely to be especially helpful. The readings on particular topics are divided into two sections: assume that the first section is asterisked.

Publication details given for books are usually for first editions; later editions are often available.

Essay questions are not provided here. Consult your tutor and/or recent examination papers.

Key historical readings

*Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics (trans. Crisp, Irwin (2nd edn.), or Ross (OUP World’s Classics, revised L. Brown)
*Hume, An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals
*Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (trans. Beck, Gregor, Hill & Zweig, Paton, or Wood)
*J.S. Mill, Utilitarianism
Reference

In addition to the Stanford and Routledge Encyclopedias (both online in the Oxford domain), see L. & C. Becker (ed.), Encyclopedia of Ethics (Routledge, 2001). These resources all contain helpful bibliographies. See also the websites maintained by Stephen Darwall and by Larry Hinman.

Introductions, Handbooks, Collections

M. Baron, P. Pettit, M. Smith, Three Methods of Ethics (Blackwell, 1998)
C. Broad, Five Types of Ethical Theory (RKP, 1930)
*D. Copp (ed.), Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory (OUP, 2006)
*S. Darwall, Philosophical Ethics (Westview, 1998)
J. Dreier (ed.), Contemporary Debates in Moral Theory (Blackwell, 2006)
J. Glover, Causing Death and Saving Lives (Penguin, 1977)
*J.L. Mackie, Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong (Penguin, 1973)
*J. Rachels, The Elements of Morality (preferably in later edn. rev. by S. Rachels)
*J. Rachels (ed.), Ethical Theory 2: Theories about How We Should Live (OUP, 1998)
H. Sidgwick, Outlines of the History of Ethics (Macmillan, 1886)
P. Singer (ed.), A Companion to Ethics (Blackwell, 1991)
M. Timmons, Moral Theory (Rowman and Littlefield, 2002)
*D. Wiggins, Ethics (Penguin, 2006)
*B. Williams, Morality (Harper & Row, 1972)

Selection of Modern Works

J. Broome, Weighing Lives (OUP, 2004)
*P. Foot, Virtues and Vices (Blackwell, 1978)
J. Griffin, Well-Being (Clarendon Press, 1986)
*R.M. Hare, Moral Thinking (Clarendon Press, 1981)
C. Korsgaard, The Sources of Normativity (CUP, 1996)
A. MacIntyre, After Virtue (Duckworth, 1981)
G.E. Moore, Principia Ethica (CUP, 1903)
I. Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good (RKP, 1970)
*T. Nagel, The View from Nowhere (OUP, 1986)
O. O’Neill, Constructions of Reason (CUP, 1989)
J. Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Harvard UP, 1971)
*W.D. Ross, The Right and the Good (Clarendon Press, 1930)
1. Egoism and Altruism: Why Should I be Moral?

J. Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, chs. on ‘What is Morality?’ and ‘Ethical Egoism’
P. Foot, ‘Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives’, in her *Virtues and Vices*
B. Williams, *Morality*, ch. 1
K. Baier, ‘Egoism’, in Singer, *Companion to Ethics*
J. Mackie, *Ethics*, ch. 5

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H. Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (7th edn., Macmillan, 1907), 2.1; Concluding Chapter
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.7; IX.8
Hume, *Enquiry*, sects. 5, 9; app. 2
J. Butler, *Sermons at the Rolls Chapel*, 1, 11.

2. Utilitarianism and Consequentialism: Overview

J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, esp. chs. 2, 4
J. Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, chs. on ‘The Utilitarian Approach’ and ‘The Debate over Utilitarianism’
J. Smart and B. Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against* (CUP, 1973)
J. Griffin, ‘Modern utilitarianism’, *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 1982
A. Sen and B. Williams, ‘Introduction’ to their (ed.) *Utilitarianism and Beyond* (CUP, 1982)
D. Brink, ‘Some Forms and Limits of Consequentialism’, in Copp (ed.), *Oxford Handbook*

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W. Shaw, et al., ‘Is the Rightness of Action Determined by the Value of Consequences?’, in J. Dreier (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Moral Theory*
R. Crisp, *Mill on Utilitarianism* (Routledge, 1997), ch. 5
P. Vallentyne, ‘Against Maximizing Act Consequentialism’, in Dreier (ed.), *Contemporary Debates*
B. Hooker, ‘Rule consequentialism’, in the *Stanford Encyclopedia*
3. Utilitarianism, Integrity and Character

S. Scheffler, ‘‘Introduction’’ to his (ed.) *Consequentialism and its Critics*
B. Williams, ‘‘Persons, Character and Morality’’, in his *Moral Luck*
B. Williams, ‘‘Utilitarianism and Self-indulgence’’, in *Moral Luck*
P. Railton, ‘‘Alienation, Consequentialism and the Demands of Morality’’, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1984 (repr. in S. Scheffler (ed.), *Consequentialism and its Critics*)
F. Jackson, ‘‘Decision-theoretic Consequentialism and the Nearest and Dearest Objection’’, *Ethics* 1991

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B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, ch. 6
F. Kamm, ‘‘Non-consequentialism, the Person as End-in-itself, and the Significance of Status’’, *Phil. Pub. Aff.* 1992
S. Kagan, ‘‘Does Consequentialism Demand too Much?’’, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1984
M. Slote, *Common-sense Morality and Consequentialism* (Routledge, 1985), chs. 2-3
R. Adams, ‘‘Motive utilitarianism’’, *Jour. Phil.* 1976; repr. in Rachels (ed.), *Ethical Theory* 2
D. McNaughton & P. Rawling, ‘‘Deontology and Agency’’, *The Monist* 1993

4. Kant: Universalizability

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
T. Hill, ‘‘Kantian Normative Ethics’’, in Copp (ed.), *Oxford Handbook*
O. O’Neill, ‘‘Kantian Ethics’’, in Singer, *Companion to Ethics*
C. Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (CUP, 1996), chs. 1, 3
J. Mackie, *Ethics*, ch. 4
P. Winch, ‘‘The Universalizability of Moral Judgements’’, *Monist* 1965; repr. in his *Ethics and Action* (RKP, 1972)

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B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, ch. 4
J. Mackie, ‘‘The Three Stages of Universalization’’, in his *Persons and Values* (Clarendon Press, 1985)
R. Hare, *Moral Thinking*, chs. 5-7
D. Locke, ‘‘The Principle of Equal Interests’’, *Phil. Review* 1981
5. Kant: Acting from Duty

Kant, *Groundwork*
C. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, ch. 5
C. Korsgaard, ‘From Duty and for the sake of the Noble: Kant and Aristotle on morally good
L. Blum, *Friendship, Altruism and Morality* (RKP, 1980), chs. 1-2

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M. Baron, ‘On the Alleged Repugnance of Acting from Duty’, *Jour. Phil.* 1984
Gospel of St John, ch. 15
A. Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Theory* (CUP, 1999), chs. 2-4
in P. Guyer (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Kant* (CUP, 1992)

6. Virtue and Virtue Ethics

R. Crisp, ‘Modern Moral Philosophy and the Virtues’, intro. to his (ed.), *How Should
One Live?* (Clarendon Press, 1996)
P. Foot, ‘Virtues and Vices’, in her *Virtues and Vices*; repr. in R. Crisp & M. Slote (ed.), *Virtue
Ethics* (OUP, 1997), as are Hursthouse, McDowell, Anscombe
J. McDowell, ‘Virtue and Reason’, *Monist* 1979
T. Hurka, ‘Against Virtue Ethics’, ch. 8 of his *Virtue, Vice, and Value* (OUP, 2001)

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G. Trianosky, ‘What is Virtue Ethics All About?’, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1990
C. Swanton, *Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View* (OUP, 2003), ch. 11
R. Johnson, ‘Virtue and Right’, *Ethics* 2003
7. Hume: Reason and Passion


R. Norman, *The Moral Philosophers*, ch. 5

J. Mackie, *Hume’s Moral Theory*, chs. 3-4


C. Korsgaard, ‘Skepticism about Practical Reason’, *Jour. Phil.* 1986; repr. in her *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (CUP, 1996)

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B. Williams, ‘Internal and External Reasons’, in his *Moral Luck*

M. Smith, *The Moral Problem*, chs. 1, 3, 5


D. Wiggins, *Ethics*, chs. 3-4

T. Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, ch. 5

8. Moral Realism and Objectivity

J. Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, chs. on ‘Cultural Relativism’ and ‘Subjectivism’

J. Mackie, *Ethics*, ch. 1


T. Nagel, *The View From Nowhere*, ch. 8

G. Harman, *The Nature of Morality* (OUP, 1977), chs. 1, 3-4

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P. Railton, ‘Moral Factualism’, in J. Dreier (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Moral Theory*


S. Blackburn, *Spreading the Word* (Clarendon Press, 1984), ch. 6

D. McNaughton, *Moral Vision*, chs. 1, 3-5


J. McDowell, ‘Values and Secondary Qualities’, in T. Honderich (ed.), *Morality and Objectivity*
9. Freedom and Responsibility

P. Strawson, ‘Freedom and Resentment’, *Proc. British Academy* 1962; repr. in Watson (ed.) (as are Frankfurt’s 1st paper below, van Inwagen, Chisholm)

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J. Mackie, *Ethics*, ch. 9
H. Frankfurt, ‘Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person’, *Jour. Phil.* 1971
R. Young, ‘The Implications of Determinism’, in P. Singer, *Companion to Ethics*
P. van Inwagen, ‘The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism’, *Phil. Studies* 1975

10. Happiness, Well-being, and the Meaning of Life

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, bk. 1; bk. 10, chs. 6-9
J. Griffin, *Well-Being*, pt. 1
T. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, ch. 3

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H. Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (7th edn), ch. 14
T. Hurka, *Perfectionism* (OUP, 1993), chs. 2, 7
D. Haybron, ‘What Do We Want from a Theory of Happiness?’, *Metaphilosophy* 2002
G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, ch. 6

11. Conscience, Guilt, and Shame

Butler, *Sermons at the Rolls Chapel*, 1-3
B. Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (UCal. Press, 1993), ch. 4; endnote 1
R. Wollheim, *The Thread of Life* (CUP, 1984), ch. 7
F. Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, Essay 2
G. Taylor, *Pride, Shame, and Guilt* (Clarendon Press, 1985), chs. 3-4

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S. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, ch. 7
J.D. Wallace, *Virtues and Vices* (Cornell UP, 1978), ch. 4
J. Bennett, ‘The conscience of Huckleberry Finn’, *Philosophy* 1974
R. Wollheim, *On the Emotions* (Yale UP), ch. 3
12. Rights

H.L.A. Hart, ‘Are there any Natural Rights?’, Phil. Review 1955; repr. in J. Waldron (ed.), Theories of Rights (OUP, 1984), as are ...
R. Dworkin, ‘Rights as Trumps’, in Waldron (ed.)
J. Waldron, ‘Introduction’ to Waldron (ed.)
J. Griffin, On Human Rights (OUP, 2008), ch. 2
J.L. Mackie, ‘Can there be a Rights-based Moral Theory?’, Midwest Studies in Philosophy 1978
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R. Frey, Rights, Killing and Suffering (Blackwell, 1983), chs. 7-9
J. Finnis, Natural Law and Natural Rights (Clarendon Press, 1980), chs. 1, 2, 8
L.W. Sumner, The Moral Foundation of Rights (Clarendon Press, 1989), chs. 1, 2, 7