

VIRTUES AND VICES

PHIL 420/673	Instructor: Mathieu Doucet
Winter 2012	Office: HH 328
Tuesday, 1:00-3:50	Email: mdoucet@uwaterloo.ca
HH 357	Phone: 888-4567 ext. 32824
Office Hours: Mon, Wed 3:00-4:00 or by appointment or by chance	

DESCRIPTION:

The course explores the reemergence of interest in the virtues in moral philosophy. Among the topics to be considered are: the nature of the virtues, the connection between virtue and rationality, the prospects for developing a distinctive moral theory focused on the virtues, the empirical plausibility of claims about the virtues, whether virtue is unified, and the nature of the (alleged) virtue of modesty and the vice of hypocrisy.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES (What you should get out of the course):

This course will develop your understanding of one of the central topics in moral philosophy: the nature of virtue. In so doing, you will learn the details of several contemporary debates in moral philosophy, and learn how questions of *philosophical* significance have genuine *moral* significance outside of the seminar room.

The course will help to develop several important skills, including: writing clear, well-structured explanations of concepts and arguments in moral philosophy; critically evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, implications, and assumptions of philosophical arguments; developing, in writing, your own clearly articulated philosophical arguments; and engaging in active philosophical discussion and debate—asking questions and critically evaluating arguments verbally, ‘on your feet’.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES (What you should do to get it):

This course is a senior seminar, and so it will run differently from many of the courses you are used to. I will be doing a minimum of lecturing in the course: my role is rather to ask questions and guide discussion. That means that much of the burden of the course falls on you, as a group—to ask questions of your own, to offer answers to the questions asked by others, to articulate and defend arguments, and to offer assessments of the arguments offered in the reading and in discussion. The best seminars are long, interesting conversations and debates between all of the members of the class—in order to achieve this goal, everyone’s participation is required. In particular, you are all expected to:

- Do the readings **prior to class**.
- Bring your copy of the texts to class.
- Be in your seat ready to participate at the beginning of class, and remain until the end of class.

- Participate in discussion and debate—ask and answer questions, offer arguments and objections, and share your views.
- Restrict the use of your laptop in class to taking notes and reviewing readings.
- Refrain entirely from the use of cell phones, including for texting. (Just put them away.)
- Ask questions when you are unclear about concepts (if it doesn't make sense to you, it almost certainly doesn't make sense to several other people as well).
- Put serious thought into your written assignments, including the Weekly Questions and Commentaries.
- Generally, come to class ready to participate in a discussion about interesting and important questions about virtue and the good life.

REQUIRED READINGS:

All readings will be made available through the course website on UW's new LEARN system. See the complete list below.

EVALUATION:

Commentaries:	25%
Short Paper:	25%
Term Paper:	50%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Weekly Question:

Each week, you should arrive in class with a question about the reading(s). The question can seek simple clarification, raise an objection, or inquire about a possible connection between the reading and other readings. The purpose is to help prompt discussion and debate, and so we'll begin each meeting by sharing our questions. Questions are mandatory, but are not a component of the course grade.

Commentaries:

Through the term, you must submit 5 commentaries. A commentary should not simply summarize the reading(s), though some summarization is fine. Instead, it should engage with the reading(s) critically in some way, by, for example: raising an interpretive question, raising an objection, identifying an implication or presupposition of the argument, drawing a connection or contrast between two readings, or extending the argument of the reading to a further case.

Commentaries are intended to help you engage critically and analytically with the readings, to get you used to writing about the ideas raised in the readings, to prompt you to think about term paper topics, and to facilitate discussion during our meetings. You should therefore bring a copy of your commentary to class.

Commentaries should be a *maximum* of 300 words. The ability to *concisely* explain a concept, mount an objection, or set out a distinction is crucial to good philosophical writing.

Commentaries are due by Monday at 1:00 pm for Tuesday's meeting. Late commentaries will not be accepted (you have 11 weeks in which to submit 5). *At least 2 must be submitted by Feb. 14th.*

Short Paper:

Due: Monday, Feb. 27th by 5:00 pm.

- PHIL 673: *maximum* 2,000 words
- PHIL 420: *maximum* 1,500 words

The short paper addresses a single reading. In it, you should both *explain* the central argument of the reading, and *critically evaluate* that argument. This does not mean that you must attack or reject the argument—you might defend it from an objection or extend it in a novel way.

Term paper:

Due Tuesday April 10th by 5:00 pm.

- PHIL 673: Approximately 4,000 words
- PHIL 420: Approximately 3,000 words.

The term paper is on a topic of your own choosing, relating to one or more of the readings. Final paper topics **must** be approved by Friday March 30th—either email me your proposed topic or arrange a meeting to discuss it.

METHOD OF SUBMISSION:

Commentaries:

Submitted via LEARN in the 'Commentaries' Dropbox by Monday at 1:00 pm in one of the following file formats: **.doc, .docx, .rtf, or PDF.**

Commentaries should be named as follows: Name_commentary#.doc (or .pdf, or whatever file format you chose). For example: 'Doucet_commentary3.doc'

Hard copies will not be accepted (though you should bring a copy to consult in class).

Short paper and term paper:

Submitted via LEARN in the relevant Dropbox by the deadline in one of the following file formats: **.doc, .docx, .rtf, or PDF.** Hard copies will not be accepted.

Papers should be named as follows: Name_Xpaper.doc. For example:

'Doucet_shortpaper.doc'

LATE POLICY:

Commentaries: No late submissions will be accepted—you have 11 opportunities to submit 5 Commentaries.

Midterm and final papers: Late papers will be penalized 10% per week. Except in the case of documented medical excuses, no late papers will be accepted once marked papers have been returned (typically within 2 weeks).

LEARN SITE AND EMAIL:

The LEARN site is an important component of the learning environment for the class. It is where you will find all of the readings for the course and submit assignments. It is also where you will find the most up-to-date version of this syllabus, along with helpful links for writing philosophy assignments, and suggestions for further reading. It is the individual student's responsibility to check the LEARN site on a regular basis.

From time to time, I will send students important emails regarding (for instance) readings and assignments (or -- if they should arise -- last minute emergencies that affect a scheduled lecture). I will also return marked assignments via email. If you would rather receive these emails at your home account (e.g., hotmail, gmail, rogers...), then you must enter that email address on your UWDir entry. To log on to UWDir and update your entry, follow this link: <https://ego.uwaterloo.ca/~uwdir/Update>. It is your responsibility to stay current with course news by regularly checking whichever email account is listed on your UWDir entry.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

Date	Topic	Reading
Jan. 3	Introduction	None
Jan. 10	The return to virtue	Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Optional:</i> Stocker, 'The schizophrenia of modern ethical theories'
Jan. 17	Classical foundations	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> <i>Required:</i> Book I, Ch 7; Book I, Ch 13 to Book III, Ch. 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Optional:</i> Rest of Books I and III.
Jan. 24	Rationality and virtue	Foot, 'Virtues and vices' Foot, 'Rationality and virtue'
Jan. 31		McDowell, 'Virtue and reason' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Optional:</i> Audi, 'Moral virtue and reasons for action'
Feb. 7	Virtue ethics as moral theory	Hursthouse, 'Virtue ethics and abortion' (esp. pp. 1-12) Swanton, 'A virtue ethical account of right action'
Feb. 14		Slote, 'Agent-based virtue ethics'
Feb. 21	Reading Week	
Feb. 28	Critiques of virtue ethics	Das, 'Virtue ethics and right action' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Optional:</i> Nussbaum, "'Virtue ethics" a misleading category?'
Mar. 6	Situationism and the empirical critique of virtue	Doris, 'Persons, situations, and virtue ethics' Sreenivasan, 'Errors about errors' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Optional:</i> Harman, 'Moral philosophy meets social psychology'
Mar. 13	The unity of virtue	Wolf, 'Moral psychology and the unity of virtue' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Optional:</i> Sreenivasan, 'Disunity of virtue'
Mar. 20	Modesty	Driver, 'The virtues of ignorance' Flannagan, 'Ignorance and virtue'
Mar. 27	Hypocrisy	MacKinnon, 'Hypocrisy, with a note on integrity' Doucet, 'Hypocrisy, deception, and self-regard' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Optional:</i> Wallace, 'Hypocrisy, moral address, and the equal standing of persons'

REQUIRED READINGS:

Anscobme, GEM. (1958). "Modern moral philosophy". *Philosophy* 33: 1-19.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3749051>

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. (2000). Trans. Roger Crisp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
<http://books.scholarsportal.info/viewdoc.html?id=/ebooks/ebooks2/cambridge/2009-12-01/1/0521632218>

Das, Robert. (2003). "Virtue ethics and right action". *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 81: 324-339.
<http://www.tandfonline.com.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/doi/abs/10.1080/713659702>

Doris, John. (1998)/ "Persons, situations, and virtue ethics". *Nous* 32: 504-30.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2671873>

Doucet, Mathieu. "Hypocrisy, deception, and self-regard". Manuscript.

Driver, Julia. (1989). "The virtues of ignorance". *The Journal of Philosophy* 89: 373-84.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2027146>

Foot, Philippa. (1977). "Virtues and vices" from *Virtues and Vices*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1-18.
<http://www2.econ.iastate.edu/classes/econ362/hallam/Readings/VirtureViceChap1.pdf>

Foot, Philippa. (1994). "Rationality and virtue", reprinted in *Moral Dilemmas*. (2002). Oxford: Oxford University Press: 157-174.

Flanagan, Owen. (1990). "Virtue and ignorance". *The Journal of Philosophy* 87: 420-28.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2026736>

Hursthouse, Rosalind. (1991). "Virtue theory and abortion". *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 20: 223-246. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2265432>

MacKinnon, Christine. (1991). "Hypocrisy, with a note on integrity". *American Philosophical Quarterly* 28: 321-330. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/20014387>

McDowell, John. (1979). "Virtue and Reason". *The Monist* 62: 331-350.
http://www.pdcnet.org/collection/monist_1979_0062_0003_0331_0350&pdfname=monist_1979_0062_0003_0069_0088.pdf

Slote, Michael. (1995). "Agent-based virtue ethics" *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 20: 83-101. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1475-4975.1995.tb00306.x/pdf>

Swanton, Christine. (2001). "A virtue ethical account of right action" *Ethics* 112: 32-52.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/322742>

Wolf, Susan. (2006). "Moral psychology and the unity of virtue". *Ratio* 20: 145-167.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9329.2007.00354.x/full>

Sreenivasan, Gopal. (2003). "Errors about errors: virtue theory and trait attribution".
Mind 111: 47-68. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3093787>

OPTIONAL READINGS:

Audi, Robert. (2009) "Moral virtue and reasons for action" *Philosophical Issues*
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1533-6077.2009.00156.x/pdf>

Nussbaum, Martha. (1999) *The Journal of Ethics* "Virtue ethics: a misleading category?" pp. 163-201. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25115613>

Sreenivasan, Gopal. (2009) 'Disunity of virtue', *Journal of Ethics*
http://journals2.scholarsportal.info.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/details.xqy?uri=/13824554/v13i2-3/195_dov.xml

Stocker, Michael. (1976) "The schizophrenia of modern ethical theories", *Journal of Philosophy* 73, 453-466.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2025782.pdf?acceptTC=true>

Wallace, R. Jay (2010) 'Hypocrisy, moral address, and the equal standing of persons'
Philosophy and Public Affairs 38 (4) 307-41
http://resolver.scholarsportal.info.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/resolve/00483915/v38i0004/307_hmaatesop

THE FINE PRINT:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline,

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4,

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

Academic Integrity website (Arts):

http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (University): <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.