

103: Ethics

Reading list and essay questions

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This reading list is divided into two parts (see below). Within each part the readings are organised by topic. It is essential that you read the texts marked with an asterisk (*) if you are to get a reasonable grasp of the relevant issues. Beyond that, the texts are listed in very rough order of importance.

An essay question is appended to each topic's readings. Your essay should be no longer than 2000 words.

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Part I: Metaethics

Introductory reading

- * McNaughton, *Moral Vision*, chs. 1–3
- * Smith, *The Moral Problem*, ch. 1
- Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, ch. 1
- Miller, *An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics*, chs. 1–2

1. Moral motivation 1: self-interest and altruism

Reading

- * Plato, *Republic*, Book 2 (to 367e)
- * Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 11, 13–15, 17
- * Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, secs. 3, 5, and 9, and Appendices II and III
- * Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, pp. 107–120 and pp. 189–192
- * Williams, “Egoism and Altruism”, in his *Problems of the Self*
- Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, Book 1, chs. 6–7; Book 2, ch 1; Book 4, final chapter
- Williams, “The Amoralist”, in his *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics*
- Hare, *Moral Thinking*, ch. 11
- Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, secs. 1–9, 23–24
- Wiggins, “Natural and Artificial Virtues: A Vindication of Hume’s Scheme”, in Crisp (ed.), *How Should One Live?*
- Foot, “Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives”, *The Philosophical Review* 81 (1972). Reprinted in her *Virtues and Vices*
- McDowell, “Are Moral Requirements Hypothetical Imperatives?”, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Supp. Vol. 52 (1978). Reprinted in his *Mind, Value, & Reality*
- Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, chs. 1–2

Question

Could self-interest be the foundation of morality?

2. Moral motivation 2: motivational internalism, internal and external reasons

Reading

- * Williams, “Internal and External Reasons”, in his *Moral Luck*

- * Korsgaard, "Skepticism about Practical Reason", in her *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*
- * McDowell, "Might there be external reasons?", in Altham and Harrison (eds.), *World, Mind, and Ethics*. Reprinted in McDowell, *Mind, Value, & Reality*
- * Williams's reply to McDowell, in Altham and Harrison (eds.), *World, Mind, and Ethics*, pp. 186–194.
- * Smith, *The Moral Problem*, ch. 5, especially pp. 156–74
- Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part III, sec. 3
- Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, chs. 1–2
- McNaughton, *Moral Vision*, ch. 9
- Brink, *Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics*, ch. 3
- Parfit, "Reasons and Motivation", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Supp. Vol. 71 (1997)
- Svavarsdottir, "Moral Cognitivism and Moral Motivation", *Philosophical Review* 108 (1999)
- Scanlon, *What We Owe To Each Other*, ch. 1 and the Appendix

Question

"If all reasons are internal reasons, then morality cannot be objectively binding on all rational agents." Discuss.

3. Hume's metaethics

Reading

- * Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part I and Part III, sec. 3, and Book III, Part I, Part II, secs. 1–2, and Part III, secs. 1–3
- * Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, secs. 1, 3, 5, and 9, and Appendices I–III
- * Mackie, *Hume's Moral Theory*, chs. I, III–V
- * Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, chs. 1–2
- * Wiggins, "A Sensible Subjectivism?", in his *Needs, Values, Truth*
- * Foot, "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives", in her *Virtues and Vices*
- Foot, "Hume on Moral Judgment", in her *Virtues and Vices*
- Smith, *The Moral Problem*, pp. 77–91
- McDowell, "Are Moral Requirements Hypothetical Imperatives?", in his *Mind, Value, & Reality*
- Wiggins, "Categorical Requirements: Kant and Hume on the Idea of Duty", in Hursthouse, Lawrence, and Quinn (eds.), *Virtues and Reasons*
(See also the reading under topics 1–2 above and 5 below.)

Question

Is it Hume's view that morality is a system of hypothetical imperatives?

4. Moral naturalism 1: moral realism and anti-realism

Reading

- * Plato, *Euthyphro*
- * Moore, *Principia Ethica*, secs. 1–14
- * Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, ch. 1. Reprinted in Sayre–McCord (ed.), *Essays on Moral Realism*
- * Harman, *The Nature of Morality*, ch. 1. Reprinted in Sayre–McCord (ed.), *Essays on Moral Realism*
- * Brink, *Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics*, chs. 2, 4, 6–7
- Boyd, “How to be a Moral Realist”, in Sayre–McCord (ed.), *Essays on Moral Realism*
- McDowell, ‘Values and Secondary Qualities’, in his *Mind, Value, & Reality*. Reprinted in Sayre–McCord (ed.), *Essays on Moral Realism*
- Smith, ‘Realism’, in Singer, *A Companion to Ethics*
- Wiggins, ‘Truth as predicated of moral judgments’, in his *Needs, Values, Truth*
- McNaughton, *Moral Vision: an introduction to ethics*, chs. 1, 3–5
- Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, chs. 8–9
- Darwall, *Philosophical Ethics*, ch. 3
- Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, ch. 8, secs. 1–2
- Timmons, *Morality without Foundations*, ch. 2
- Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, ch. 1

Question

Is moral realism defensible?

5. Moral naturalism 2: projectivism and secondary qualities

Reading

- * Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part III, sec. 3, and Book III, Part I and Part III, secs. 2–3
- * Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, sec. I and Appendix I
- * Williams, “Ethics and the Fabric of the World”, in his *Making Sense of Humanity*
- * McDowell, “Aesthetic Value, Objectivity, and the Fabric of the World”, in his *Mind, Value & Reality*
- * Dancy, ‘Two Conceptions of Moral Realism’, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, SUPP 60 (1986)
- * Blackburn, ‘How to be an ethical anti-realist’, in his *Essays in Quasi-Realism*
- McDowell, “Projection and Truth in Ethics”, given as the Lindley Lecture, University of Kansas. Reprinted in his *Mind, Value & Reality*
- Blackburn, *Spreading the Word*, ch. 6
- Blackburn, “The Flight to Reality”, in Hursthouse, Lawrence, and Quinn (eds.), *Virtues and Reasons*
- Wiggins, “A Sensible Subjectivism?”, in his *Needs, Values, Truth*

Johnston, "Are Manifest Qualities Response-Dependent?", *The Monist* 81 (1998)
Menzies and Pettit, "Found: the Missing Explanation", *Analysis* 53 (1993)

Question

Are there any useful analogies to be drawn between values and secondary qualities?

6. Moral naturalism 3: emotivism, expressivism, prescriptivism

Reading

- * Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, Introduction (entitled 'The Emotive theory of Ethics') and chapter 6
- * Stevenson, "The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms", *Mind*, 46:181 (1937).
Reprinted in Stevenson, *Facts and values : studies in ethical analysis*
- * Hare, *The Language of Morals*, Part II
- * Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, Parts I-II
- * Smith, *The Moral Problem*, ch. 2
- Hare, *Moral Thinking*
- Blackburn, *Spreading the Word*, ch. 5-6
- Harman, *The Nature of Morality*, Part II
- Gibbard, *Thinking How To Live*, ch. 3

Question

Can expressivism provide an account of amorality?

7. Moral naturalism 4: quasi-realism and the Frege-Geach problem

Reading

- * Blackburn, *Spreading the Word*, ch. 6
- * Blackburn, *Ruling Passions*, chs. 3, 9, and the Appendix
- * Miller, *An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics*, ch. 4
- * Blackburn, *Essays in Quasi-Realism*, Introduction and chs. 8-10
- Geach, "Assertion", *Philosophical Review* 74 (1965)
- Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, ch. 5
- Hale, "Can there be a logic of attitudes?", in Haldane and Wright (eds.), *Reality, Representation, and Projection*
- Unwin, "Quasi-Realism, Negation, and the Frege-Geach Problem", *Philosophical Quarterly* 49 (1999)

Question

What is the Frege-Geach problem facing expressivism? Can it be solved?

8. Moral relativism

Podcast

Simon Blackburn on moral relativism:

<http://cdn3.libsyn.com/philosophybites/BlackburnRelMixSess.mp3>

Reading

- * Harman, "What is Relativism?", in Goldman and Kim (eds.), *Values and Morals*
- * Harman, "Moral Relativism", in Harman and Thomson (eds.), *Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity*
- * Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History*, ch. 7
- * Davidson, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme", in his *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*
- * Williams, *Morality*, ch. 3
- * Harman, "Moral Relativism Defended", in his *Explaining Value*
- Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, ch. 9
- MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, chs. 18–19
- Thomson, "Moral Objectivity", in Harman and Thomson (eds.), *Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity*
- Nagel, *The Last Word*, chs. 1–3, 6–7

Question

'Moral relativism is the moral theory which best supports toleration of others' moral views'. Is this true?

9. Freedom of the will

Podcast

Thomas Pink on free will: <http://cdn1.libsyn.com/philosophybites/PinkMixSes.mp3>

Reading

- * Van Inwagen, "The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism", in Watson (ed.), *Free Will*
- * Garson, 'Modal Logic', <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/logic-modal/>, secs. 1–2
- * Strawson, "Freedom and resentment", in Watson (ed.), *Free Will*
- * Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility", in his *The Importance of What We Care About*
- * Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person", in Watson (ed.), *Free Will*
- * Otsuka, "Incompatibilism and the Avoidability of Blame", *Ethics* 108 (1998)
- * Wiggins, "Towards a Reasonable Libertarianism", in his *Needs, Values, Truth*
- Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, the Third Antimony, A445/B473ff
- Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sec. 8

Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part 3, Secs. 1–3

Ayer, “Freedom and Necessity”, in Watson (ed.), *Free Will*

Dennett, “On Giving Libertarians What They Say They Want”, in his *Brainstorms*

Young, “The Implications of Determinism”, in Singer (ed.), *A Companion to Ethics*

Williams, “How free does the will need to be?”, in his *Making Sense of Humanity*

Question

‘Since determinism is true, we can never be held morally responsible.’ Is that correct?

Part II: The structure and content of morality

1. Virtue ethics

Podcast

Roger Crisp on the virtues:

http://cdn4.libsyn.com/philosophybites/Roger_Crisp_on_the_Virtues.mp3

Reading

- * Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, Book II, Book VI, chs. 5–13, Book VII, chs. 1–10, and Book X, chs. 6–9
- * Urmson, *Aristotle's Ethics*, chs. 2, 6–7
- * Foot, "Virtues and Vices", in her *Virtues and Vices*. Reprinted in Crisp and Slote (eds.), *Virtue Ethics*
- * Hursthouse, "Normative Virtue Ethics", in Crisp (ed.), *How Should One Live?*
- * McDowell, "Virtue and Reason", in Crisp and Slote (eds.), *Virtue Ethics*
- Harman, "Moral philosophy meets social psychology: virtue ethics and the fundamental attribution error", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 99 (1999)
- Kamtekar, "Situationism and Virtue Ethics on the Content of our Character", *Ethics* 114 (2004)
- Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix IV
- MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, ch. 12
- Trianosky, "What is Virtue Ethics All About?", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 27.4 (1990)
- Schneewind, "The Misfortunes of Virtue", in Crisp and Slote (eds.), *Virtue Ethics*
- Crisp, "Modern moral philosophy and the virtues", in his *How Should One Live?*

Question

What is a virtue, and why are the virtues important to ethics?

2. Kantian ethics 1: universalizability

Reading

- * Korsgaard, 'Introduction' to the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy edition of Kant's *Groundwork* (edited by Mary Gregor)
- * Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, secs. I–II
- * Guyer, *Kant*, ch. 5
- * Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*, chs. 1 & 3
- * Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, ch. 4
- * Wiggins, *Ethics: Twelve Lectures on the Philosophy of Morality*, ch. 4
- Hare, *Moral Thinking*, chs. 5–7
- Aune, *Kant's Theory of Morals*, chs. 1–3

Wiggins, "Universalizability, Impartiality, and Truth", in his *Needs, Values, Truth*
Dancy, *Moral Reasons*, ch. 5

Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, ch. 4

Question

How far can universalization get us in ethics?

3. Kantian ethics 2: freedom

Reading

* Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, especially secs. II–III

* Aune, *Kant's Theory of Morals*, chs. 3–4

* Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*, ch. 6

* Darwall, *Philosophical Ethics*, chs. 14–15

* Wiggins, *Ethics: Twelve Lectures on the Philosophy of Morality*, ch. 5

Schneewind, "Autonomy, Obligation, and Virtue: An Overview of Kant's Moral
Philosophy", in Guyer (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*

Wiggins, "Categorical Requirements: Kant and Hume on the Idea of Duty", in
Hursthouse, Lawrence, and Quinn (eds.), *Virtues and Reasons*

Wood, "Autonomy as the Ground of Morality", given as the O'Neil Memorial Lecture
1999: <http://www.stanford.edu/~allenw/papers/Autonomy.doc>

Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, Appendix

Question

Does Kant think that I must act morally to act freely? Wouldn't that make the
imperative to act morally merely a hypothetical one?

4. Consequentialism and non-consequentialism

Podcast

Brad Hooker on consequentialism:

<http://cdn1.libsyn.com/philosophybites/Hooker1MixSess.MP3>

Reading

* Pettit, "Consequentialism", in Singer (ed.), *A Companion to Ethics*

* Broome, *Weighing Goods*, ch. 1

* Broome, *Weighing Lives*, ch. 3

* Scheffler, *The Rejection of Consequentialism*, especially ch. 2

* Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism and the Demands of Morality", *Philosophy &
Public Affairs* 13 (1984). Reprinted in Scheffler (ed.), *Consequentialism and its
Critics*

- * Foot, "Utilitarianism and the Virtues", *Mind* 94 (1985). Reprinted in Scheffler (ed.), *Consequentialism and its Critics*
- Scheffler, "Introduction", in his (ed.), *Consequentialism and its Critics*
- Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 26–33. Reprinted as "Side-Constraints", in Scheffler (ed.), *Consequentialism and its Critics*
- Hooker, "Rule-Consequentialism", *Mind* 99 (1990)
- Nagel, "War and Massacre", in his *Mortal Questions*. Reprinted in Scheffler (ed.), *Consequentialism and its Critics*
- Bales, "Act-consequentialism: Account of right-making characteristics or decision-making procedure?", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (1971)

Question

Does consequentialism fail to take account of the importance of individuals' rights and duties?

5. Utilitarianism 1: utility and happiness

Reading

- * Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chs. 3–4
- * Crisp, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Mill on Utilitarianism*, chs. 2–3
- * Griffin, *Well-Being*, chs. 1–5
- * Goodin, "Utility and the Good", in Singer (ed.), *A Companion to Ethics*
- * Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, Book I, ch. 4
- Moore, *Principia Ethica*, ch. 3, secs. 36–46
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VII, chs. 11–14, and Book X, chs. 1–5
- Nagel, "Aristotle on *Eudaimonia*", in Rorty (ed.), *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*
- Hare, *Freedom and Reason*, ch. 7, sec. 5
- Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, ch. 3
- Smart, "An outline of a system of utilitarian ethics", sec. 3, in Smart and Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against*
- Austin, "Pleasure and Happiness", in Schneewind (ed.), *Mill*

Question

What account of happiness should utilitarians offer?

6. Utilitarianism 2: forms of utilitarianism

Reading

- * Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chs. 2 and 5
- * Crisp, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Mill on Utilitarianism*, ch. 5
- * Hare, *Moral Thinking*, ch. 2

- * Griffin, "Modern Utilitarianism", *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 36 (1982)
- * Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, ch. 6
- Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, Book IV
- Hare, "Ethical Theory and Utilitarianism", in Sen and Williams (eds.), *Utilitarianism and Beyond*
- Lyons, *Forms and Limits of Utilitarianism*, Preface and ch. 4
- Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, pp. 105–9
- Smart, "An outline of a system of utilitarian ethics", secs. 2 and 7, in Smart and Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against*
- Williams, "A critique of utilitarianism", secs. 1 and 6, in Smart and Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against*
- Rawls, "Two Concepts of Rules", in his *Collected Papers*

Question

Can any form of utilitarianism escape fatal criticism?

7. Utilitarianism 3: the integrity objection

Reading

- * Williams, "A critique of utilitarianism", in Smart and Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against*
- * Crisp, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Mill on Utilitarianism*, ch. 6
- * Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality", *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 13 (1984). Also in Scheffler (ed.), *Consequentialism and its Critics*
- * Scheffler, *The Rejection of Consequentialism*, chs. 3–4
- * Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories", *The Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1976)
- Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality", in his *Moral Luck*
- Scheffler, "Introduction", in Scheffler (ed.), *Consequentialism and its Critics*
- Davis, "Utilitarianism and responsibility", *Ratio* 1980
- Conly, "Utilitarianism and integrity", *The Monist* 1983
- Harris, "Integrity and Agent Centered Restrictions", *Nous* 23 (1989)
- Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, ch. 6
- Kamm, "Non-Consequentialism, the Person as an End-in-Itself, and the Significance of Status", *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 21 (1992)
- Crisp, "Utilitarianism and the Life of Virtue", *The Philosophical Quarterly* 42 (1992)

Question

What is the integrity objection to utilitarianism? Can it be met?

8. Contractualism

Reading

- * Scanlon, *What We Owe To Each Other*, Introduction and chs. 1, 4–5
 - * Parfit, “Justifiability to Each Person”, in Stratton–Lake (ed.), *On What We Owe To Each Other*
 - * Scanlon, “Replies”, especially his reply to Parfit, in Stratton–Lake (ed.), *On What We Owe To Each Other*
 - * Brink, “The separateness of persons, distributive norms, and moral theory”, in Frey and Morris (eds.), *Value, Welfare, and Morality*
 - * Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, ch. 1, secs. 1–4, and ch. 2, sec. 17
- Scanlon, “Contractualism and Utilitarianism”, in his *The Difficulty of Tolerance*
- Nagel, *Equality and Partiality*, ch. 4
- Nagel, “Equality”, in his *Mortal Questions*
- Darwall, “Contractualism, Root and Branch”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 34 (2006)
- Ridge, “Saving Scanlon: Contractualism and Agent–Relativity”, *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 9.4 (2001)
- Raz, “Numbers, with and without contractualism”, in Stratton–Lake (ed.), *On What We Owe To Each Other*
- Otsuka, “Saving Lives, Moral Theory, and the Claims of Individuals”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 34 (2006)
- O’Neill, “Constructivism versus contractualism”, in Stratton–Lake (ed.), *On What We Owe To Each Other*

Question

How plausible is Scanlon’s Individualist Restriction? Does contractualism have any distinctive content without it?