

Philosophy 118P
Early Modern Ethics
Winter 2018
TuTh 10:30-11:50a
Building 420, Room 286

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Early Modern Ethics



During the early modern period—roughly the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—established conceptions of morality as obedience to external authority came increasingly to be contested by and ultimately gave way to newly-emerging conceptions of morality as self-governance. The latter conceptions of morality and their coordinate conception of ourselves as moral agents is still influential in much of current moral thought. In this course, we investigate the circumstances under which we came to this distinctly modern way of thinking about morality and about ourselves.

Requirements

Lectures

Regular attendance is expected, and participation is encouraged; these account for 15% of students' final grades. Students should avoid the use of distracting applications during lecture, including email, web browsing, chat programs, etc.

Writing assignments

A short paper (roughly 1000-1500 words in length) is due at midterm. It will account for 35% of each student's final grade. I'll be handing out possible paper topics in advance. A longer term paper (roughly 3000-3500 words) is due during the end-quarter exam period. Students may either design their own topic for this essay or write on one of several that I will hand out in advance. It will account for 50% of each student's grade.

Late Assignments

Late writing assignments will be penalized one third of one letter grade (i.e., A- becomes B+) every 24 hours, starting ten minutes after the deadline. Exceptions to the lateness policy will be made only in cases I deem exceptional.

Accessible Education Information

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: <http://oae.stanford.edu>).

Texts

Kant, I., *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge, 2012).

Schneewind, J.B., ed., *Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant* [MP] (Cambridge).

Schedule¹

Introduction

1. *No reading*
2. Montaigne, “Of Repentance”; from “Of Physiognomy”, “Apology for Raymond Sebond” (MP, 37-55, 56-59)

Natural Law

3. Grotius, Prolegomena to *On the Law of War and Peace* (MP, 90-96); Hobbes, *De Cive*, from Dedication, Preface, ch. 1 (MP, 112-21)
4. Hobbes, *De Cive*, from chs. 2-5 (MP, 121-35)
5. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, from chs. 14, 15, & 21 [handout]
6. Pufendorf, from *On the Duty of Man and Citizen & The Law of Nature and of Nations* (MP, 156-81)

Self-Perfection

7. Du Vair, from *The Moral Philosophy of the Stoics* (MP, 212-14); Descartes, from *Discourse on Method, Principles of Philosophy, Correspondence, Replies to Objections* (MP, 218-35)
8. Leibniz, from *Principles of Nature and Grace*, “Meditation on the Common Concept of Justice”,

¹ Schedule is subject to change

“The Principles of Pufendorf” (MP, 313-18, 322-24, 327-29)

9. Leibniz, “On Wisdom”, “Felicity”, Preface to *Codex iuris gentium* (MP, 318-22, 324-27); Wolff, from *Reasonable Thoughts about the Actions of Men* (MP, 333-42)

Morality and sentiment

10. Locke, from the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* II.xxi (MP, 186-89); Mandeville, from *The Fable of The Bees* (MP, 390-96); Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, through II.III (MP, 505-13)
11. Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, from II.III (MP, 513-18); Butler, *Sermons*, from Sermons I-III and XII, and from the *Dissertation on Virtue* (MP, 527-36, 539-43)
12. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, from Section 1 & Appendix 1 (MP, 547-50, 562-65)
13. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, from Sections 2, 3, 5, 6 & 9 (MP, 550-562)

Autonomy

14. Diderot, “Natural Right”, from the *Encyclopedia* <<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0001.313>>; Rousseau, from the *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality Among Men* (MP, 607-615)
15. Rousseau, from the *The Social Contract* and *Emile* (MP, 615-628)
16. Kant, *Groundwork*, Section 1
17. Kant, *Groundwork*, Section 2
18. Kant, *Groundwork*, Section 3

Conclusion

19. Nietzsche, “First Treatise” from *On the Genealogy of Morality* [handout]
20. No reading