PHIL 2. Ethics  Fall 2013

Meetings
Section 6: Tuesday/Thursday 10:30-11:45. MND 3009
Section 8: Tuesday/Thursday 1:30-2:45. DH 107

Instructor
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Office hours
Monday/Wednesday 10-11:30

Reasonable Accommodation
If your circumstances require accommodation or assistance in meeting the expectations of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. You may need to provide documentation to the University office of SSWD (in accordance with the University policy outlined here: http://www.csus.edu/umanual/acad/UMA00215.htm).

Description
From the catalogue:
Examination of the concepts of morality, obligation, human rights and the good life. Competing theories about the foundations of morality will be investigated.

More!
We interact with others within a moral community. Often, we barely notice this fact. Often, we find ourselves simply doing that which we want to do without taking much notice of what others are doing. We observe a variety of commonsense norms, but, for the most part, we mind our own business. We don’t have much cause to call someone out for their actions, and we don’t provide much cause to others to do so for ours.

Yet things do not always go so smoothly. Sometimes in our interactions with others we feel we have need to do things like assert our rights, make claims on them regarding their duties and obligations, or otherwise direct them in what they must do. In telling them what to do, we make their actions our business. We make moral judgments on them.

This semester we’ll be taking a look at different accounts of whether and how such judgments are justified or legitimate. We’ll be interested in whether and how claims of morality are adequately grounded.

A potential problem with the idea of making moral claims and judgments is that, although it seems clear that in modern diverse societies we need moral rules in order to
have decent social life with others, it seems pretty presumptuous to direct others in what they must do. After all, we typically affirm the idea that everyone is equal in moral status. The days of seeing someone, or some group, as having some kind of natural moral authority to tell others what to do (and seeing someone, or some group, as having an acknowledged duty to simply obey) are over. So how can there be legitimate moral claims made among people who disagree with each other about so much – whose views of what kind of life is truly good diverge so much – yet are still free and equal in moral status?

Objectives
The course will introduce to students to key concepts relating to the idea of morality and major theories concerning the grounding of moral rules. Students will develop an understanding of how philosophers approach moral questions, how they reach conclusions about moral matters and how they argue for them. In addition, students will actually do these things. The course will provide students with resources for reflecting on their own views. It will form a solid foundation for further studies in moral philosophy or philosophy generally, as well as complement their other intellectual pursuits. The course aims to contribute to an educational program that produces well-rounded graduates who are not only equipped to achieve excellence in science, business, industry or whatever, but who also care about how their work affects others.

Outcomes
(1) Students understand how they can employ philosophical tools to answer questions about value and morality. (2) Students understand the nature and methods of moral theorizing as well as how moral theory interacts with cognate disciplines like psychology, evolutionary biology, economics and politics. (3) Students improve their abilities to think critically, analyze complex problems, evaluate arguments, and argue cogently for their own views. (4) Students improve their reading, writing, and oral communication skills. (5) Students understand some of the leading contemporary positions in ethical theory.

Phil 2 is a GE course in area C3. See here: http://www.csus.edu/acaf/portfolios/ge/geareac3.stm

Text
Louis Pojman, How Should We Live? (0534556574 | 978-0534556570) plus other essays available on the internet or SacCT. See below.

Schedule (subject to change – listen for announcements and check SacCt for updates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>September 3, 5 10, 12</th>
<th>Introduction.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Is morality practically authoritative?</td>
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<td>Pojman, 6-15.</td>
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Philippa Foot, ‘Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives,’ (http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/dbrink/courses/other%20pdf%20articles/Morality%20as%20a%20System%20of%20Hypothetical%20Imperatives)

17, 19 Where does practical authority come from?  
Pojman, 50-62; 76-86.

24, 26 Are God’s directives authoritative?  
Pojman, 89-103.
Mark Murphy, Divine authority and divine perfection

October 1, 3 What does value consist in?  
Pojman, 107-115.

8, 10 Approaches to value (I) – consequentialism.  

15, 17 A little about the moral emotions. 
PF Strawson, Freedom and resentment (http://www.phil.uu.nl/~joel/teaching/strawson.pdf)

22 Should we aim at moral value?  

October 24 MIDTERM EXAM

29, 31 Approaches to value (II) – non-consequentialism.  
Pojman, 137-141.

November 5, 7 Contractarian views 
Pojman, 1-5; 30-35.

12, 14 A little about biological and cultural evolution.  
Pojman, 38-40.

19, 21 Kantian views.
Pojman, 142-157.

26 Contractualist views.
Stephen Darwall, Respect and the second-person standpoint ([http://www.personal.umich.edu/~sdarwall/online.html](http://www.personal.umich.edu/~sdarwall/online.html))

December 3, 5 Ethics and society (I) – the individual and community.
Pojman, 193-205.

10, 12 Ethics and society (II) – Towards a good enough society.

December 19 FINAL EXAM
Section 6: 10:15-12:15
Section 8: 12:45-2:45

Assessment
Please do not plagiarize or cheat. *At a minimum*, you will be marked with a zero on the assignment. Multiple and/or flagrant violations will lead to me assigning a failing grade for the course and initiating disciplinary action through the Office of Student Affairs. Familiarize yourselves with the University’s Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures document ([here](http://www.csus.edu/umanual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm))

Your final course mark is based on the following:

a. classroom preparation, attendance and participation (10). See SacCT for a list of things you can do to earn these points.

b. 5 short (1 page) summary assignments (25). Select any 5 reading assignments that come from outside the Pojman textbook to summarize. Your summary should follow the guidelines for the summary section of the philosophical analysis assignment below. **These summary assignments are due at or before the Tuesday meeting of the week we discuss the reading assignment.** I will not accept them later, but you have 15 chances.

c. 1 philosophical analysis essay (25). Select any 1 of your written summary assignments to expand into a full philosophical analysis as described in this link:
http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/How%20to%20Write%20an%20Analysis.htm. Here are some additional guidelines for your writing: http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/WritingGuidelines.html. Here are grading standards: http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/Grading%20Standards.html. This assignment is due December 13 at 5pm. I won’t give a paper submitted late any more than 20 marks. If I don’t have it by December 16, I can’t accept it at all.
d. 1 midterm exam (20)
e. 1 final exam (20)

a + b + c + d + e = final course mark

Grading scale:
93 and above = A
90-92 = A-
87-89 = B+
83-86 = B
80-82 = B-
77-79 = C
73-76 = C-
70-72 = C
67-69 = D+
63-66 = D
60-62 = D-
59 and below = F