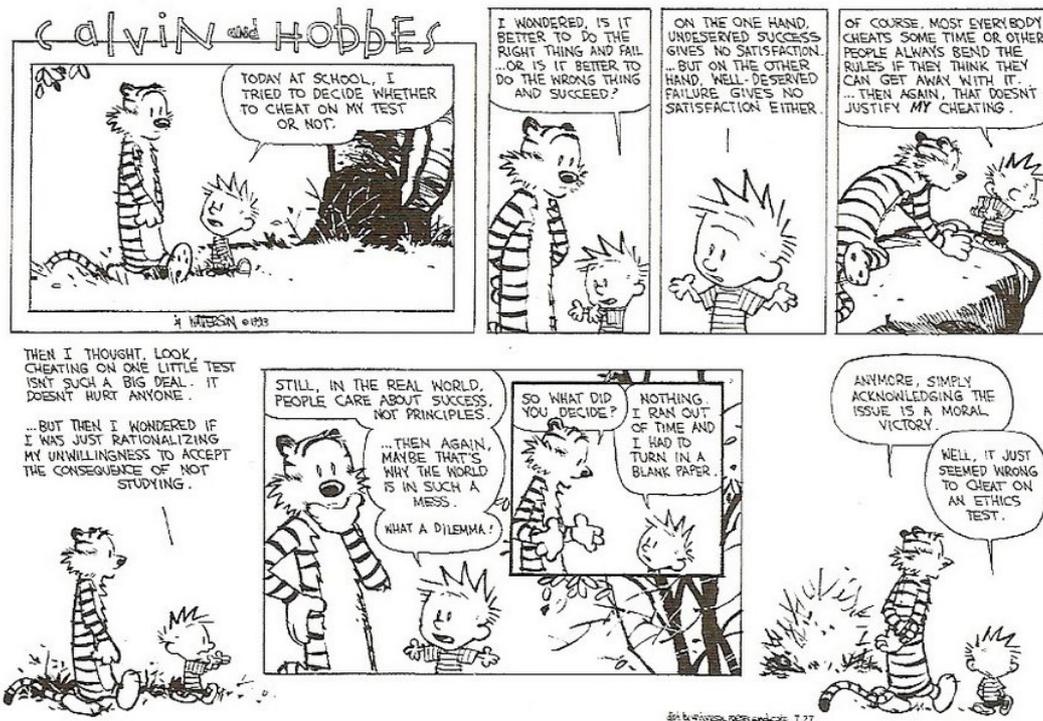


Advanced Ethics



Course Organiser

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Course aims and objectives

Our focus in this course is on Normative ethics. Normative ethical theory aims to answer the questions 'How should I act?' and 'How should I live?'. This course provides a systematic comparison of some of the major normative traditions. The organizing theme will be the debate between theory and anti-theory in normative ethics. To that end we will spend some time on Bernard Williams' seminal work in this area: *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*.

Broadly speaking, there are some (e.g. Mill and Kant) who think that philosophy can give us theories that answer the questions of how we ought to live and act; and there are some (e.g. Williams, Dancy and, on some interpretations, Aristotle) who think that such theories are not possible.

More specifically, the course aims and objectives are:

1. To learn about the main normative ethical approaches
2. To see how they have been, and could be, applied to practical ethical questions.
3. To understand how and why they support similar and different verdicts.
4. To read classic works in ethics

5. To think about difficult practical questions and be able to defend one's view.

Intended learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students should:

- ☑ Have a grasp of fundamental issues and views in normative theory and anti-theory
- ☑ Be able to critically analyse and engage with literature by key philosophers in this field.
- ☑ Be able to present arguments clearly and concisely both within a classroom context and in a 2,500 word essay.
- ☑ Gain transferable skills in research, analysis and argumentation

Assessment

Mid-term Project: (15%) Due Tuesday 16th March 2021 at 12 noon

Details Below

Final Essay 3000 words (85%) Due Tuesday 20th April 2021 at 12 noon

Formative Essays (non-assessed, for feedback only): 1500 words. This essay cannot be draft of your final essay but it can be on the same topic. **Due Thursday 4th March 2021 at 12 noon**

You will find the submission links for the essays on the Assessment page of the Learn site for the course.

Mid-Term Project worth 15% of the overall mark.

- Basic idea: A creative project based on the content of the course.
- The task is as follows: explain, analyse, evaluate some theory, idea, argument, or objection from the course (in any format except a written essay or a PowerPoint-type presentation).

You'll be assessed against the following criteria: clarity, accuracy, understanding. I'll grade them *coarsely* and *generously*, taking account of the fact that different forms of project will allow for different amounts of content. Don't worry about what form gets you the best grade. Instead, focus on producing something in the form that you'd find most interesting and fulfilling. Suggestion: use it as a way of exploring and presenting the ideas you want to explore in your final essay.

As to the form of your project, the following kinds of thing are possible:

Making a simple website (using e.g. weebly)

Writing a wikipedia entry (please create a before and after, so I can see precisely what you did).

Poster

Short story

Song

Song

Children's book
Poems
Leaflet / infographic

If you have another idea for a format, that's fantastic, just run it by me first.

Syllabus

	Week 1	Introduction to Normative Ethics: Socrates' Question
Theory	Week 2	Consequentialism
	Week 3	Kant's Ethics
	Week 4	Contractualism
	Week 5	Virtue Ethics
Anti-Theory	Week 6	Williams against Utilitarianism
	Week 7	Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy
	Week 8	Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy
	Week 9	Moral Particularism
	Week 10	Moral Particularism
	Week 11	Review

Week 1: Introduction to Normative Ethics: Socrates' Question

Class reading

Bernard Williams 'Socrates' Question' *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, Chapter one.

Week 2: Consequentialism

Class reading

J. S. Mill *Utilitarianism* (chapter 3 optional)

Week 3: Kant's Ethics

Class reading

Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, (Chapter one and chapter two)

Week 4: Contractualism

Class reading

T. Scanlon 'The Structure of Contractualism' in *What We Owe To Each Other*.

Week 5: Virtue Ethics

Class reading

John McDowell 'Virtue and Reason' *The Monist* 62 (3):331-350 (1979)

Week 6: Williams against Utilitarianism

Class reading

Bernard Williams 'A Critique of Utilitarianism' in Smart and Williams *Utilitarianism For and Against*

Week 7: Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy I

Class reading

Bernard Williams, Chapters two and three of his *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*

Week 8: Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy II

Class reading

Bernard Williams, Chapters four and five of his *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*

Week 9: Particularism

Class reading

Jonathan Dancy 'What are the Options' Chapter one of his *Ethics without Principles*

Week 10: Particularism

Class reading

Jonathan Dancy 'Holism and its Consequences' Chapter five of his *Ethics without Principles*