

Politics & Ethics
Political Science 4098 & Philosophy 4098
Fall – 2015

Introduction: Moral Sense and Sensibility

Mankind's moral sense is not a strong beacon light, radiating outward to illuminating in sharp outline all that it touches. It is, rather, a small candle flame, casting vague and multiple shadows, flickering and sputtering in the strong winds of power and passion, greed and ideology. But brought close to the heart and cupped in one's hands, it dispels the darkness and warms the soul.

James Q. Wilson

Topics: The Origins of the Moral Sense
 The Nature of the Moral Sense
 Conscience & Consciousness
 Thoughtfulness & Judgment

Readings: *Genesis*: 3 (<http://www.breslov.com/bible/Genesis3.htm#3>)
 Plato's *Euthyphro*: (<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyphro.html>)
 **David Corey, "The Religious Dimension of Socratic Citizenship: Delphic Oracle & Divine Sign," *Review of Politics*, 67, no. 2 (2005): 201-228
 **Arendt: "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy" & "Thinking and Moral Considerations" in *Responsibility and Judgment*
 M. Sandel, *Justice*, Chapter 1, "Doing the Right Thing"

The Egoist vs. The Altruist

A race of altruists is necessarily a race of slaves. A race of free men is necessarily a race of egoists.

Max Stirner

Every man must decide whether he will walk in the creative light of altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. This is the judgment. Life's persistent and most urgent question is 'What are you doing for others?'"

Martin Luther King

Topics: Ayn Rand & The Virtue of Selfishness
 The Paradox of Egoism
 The Prisoner's Dilemma
 Ethical Relativism & Ethical Objectivism
 Situational Ethics & The Tragedy of the Commons

Readings: Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, "Introduction," and "Objectivist Ethics"
 (http://www.e-reading.club/bookreader.php/137212/The_Virtue_of_Selfishness.pdf)
 Martin Luther King, Jr., Sermon: "Three Dimensions of a Complete Life"
 (<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/publications/knock-midnight-inspiration-great-sermons-reverend-martin-luther-king-jr-6>)
 Garrett Hardin, Tragedy of the Commons
 (http://www.geo.mtu.edu/~asmayer/rural_sustain/governance/Hardin%201968.pdf)
 M. Sandel, *Justice*, Chapter 3, "Do We Own Ourselves?" Chapter 4, "Hired Help/Markets and Morals" and Chapter 9, "What do We Owe One Another?"

The Ethics of Virtue and the Virtue of Ethics

We are not concerned to know what goodness is, but how we are to become good men, for this alone gives the study [of ethics] its practical value.

Aristotle

- Topics: Aretaic Ethics
Aristotle's Virtue Ethics
Correspondence of Virtues to Principles
Feminist Care Ethics
- Readings: Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Books I, II, III, & V
<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>
Virtue Ethics
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-virtue/#4>
Aristotle's Ethics
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-ethics/>
- Interlude: The Case of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Assassination of Adolph Hitler
**Excerpts from Letters and Papers from Prison
**The Church and the Jewish Question
M. Sandel, *Justice*, Chapter 8, "Who Deserves What?/ Aristotle"

Natural Law Ethics

Since a rational soul is the proper form of humans the natural inclination of a man is to act according to reason. And that is acting virtuously. In this respect all virtuous acts pertain to natural law.

Thomas Aquinas

- Topics: Aquinas and the Natural Law Tradition
Teleology & Intrinsic Values
Is There a Core Morality?
- Readings: Aquinas, Summa Theologica: Part II, Questions 90-97
<http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2.htm>
The Natural Law Tradition in Ethics
<http://plato.stanford.edu/search/searcher.py?query=natural+law+ethics>
Natural Law Theories of Law
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/natural-law-theories/>
**Cicero, Selections from On the Laws
- Interlude: The Case of Pope Francis and Our Common Home
Laudato Si, (http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

The Principle of Duty: Deontological Ethics

Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good, without qualification, except a Good Will.

Immanuel Kant

Topics: The Categorical Imperative
Respect for the Individual
Respect for Autonomy
Republics and Peace

Readings: Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, First Section
http://www.inp.uw.edu.pl/mdsie/Political_Thought/Kant%20-%20groundwork%20for%20the%20metaphysics%20of%20morals%20with%20essays.pdf
Deontological Ethics: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-deontological/>
M. Sandel, *Justice*, Chapter 5, “What Matters is the Motive/Immanuel Kant”

Interlude: The Case of John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*
“A Kantian Conception of Equality”
(<http://www.princetonindependent.com/issue01.03/item10c.html>)
M. Sandel, *Justice*, Chapter 6, *The Case for Equality*”

Utilitarian or Consequentialist Ethics

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne.

Jeremy Bentham

Topics: The Calculus
Act Utilitarianism
Rule Utilitarianism
What Goods Shall We Maximize?

Readings: Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Chapter 1
<http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/278>
John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 2
<http://www.utilitarianism.com/mill2.htm>
Consequentialism
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism/>
Rule Consequentialism
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism-rule/#Oth>
Mill’s *Moral and Political Philosophy*
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mill-moral-political/>
M. Sandel, *Justice*, Chapter 2, *The Greatest Happiness Principle.*”

Interlude: The Case of Harry Truman and the Bomb: Press Release, August 6, 1945:
(http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/bomb/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1945-08-&documentid=59&studycollectionid=abomb&pagenumber=1)
“Why Truman Dropped the Bomb,” by Richard Frank, *Weekly Standard*
(<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/005/894mnyyl.asp>)

Confucianism and Daoism: Ethics of the East

The Master said: “If you govern them with decrees and regulate them with punishments, the people will evade them but will have no sense of shame. If you govern them with virtue and regulate them with the rituals they will have a sense of shame and flock to you.”

Confucius

Heaven is permanent and earth, everlasting. The reason why heaven and earth can be permanent and everlasting is that they do not live for themselves. Therefore, they can live permanently. Hence, the sage man withdrew himself to the back, yet found himself in front; cast himself aside, yet found himself preserved. Is it not because he was selfless that he could fulfill the self?

Lao Tzu

Topics: Confucianism during the Day; Daoism at Night
Confucianism and Intersubjectivity
Confucianism and Ritual
Daoism and the Disruption of the Natural Order
Daoism and the Harmony of Opposites

Readings: Confucius, *Analects*
Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*

Interlude: East or West: What Difference does it Make?
On the Beginning of Life and Abortion
On Punishment
On Work
On Marriage & the Family
On Public Life

Thoughtfulness & Judgment Revisited

For there is but one essential justice which cements society, and one law which establishes this justice. This law is right reason, which is the true rule of all commandments and prohibitions. Whoever neglects this law, whether written or unwritten, is necessarily unjust and wicked.

Cicero

God could create only by hiding himself. Otherwise there would be nothing but himself. Holiness should then be hidden too, even from consciousness in a certain measure. And it should be hidden in the world.

Simone Weil

Readings: Arendt: “Some Questions of Moral Philosophy” & “Thinking and Moral Considerations” in *Responsibility and Judgment*
**Howes, Dustin. “Consider If This is a Person: Primo Levi, Hannah Arendt, and the Political Significance of Auschwitz”
M. Sandel, *Justice*, Chapter 10, “Justice and the Common Good”

Course Objectives & Requirements

Our tasks in this course are fourfold: to become acquainted with a variety of ethical theories; to consider a diverse collection of political cases that raise important ethical questions; and to examine how the ethical theories may or may not apply to these cases. Most important, we shall constantly be examining the role of moral thinking in our dialogue with ourselves and with our communities of discourse. Toward these ends, critical and analytical thinking are essential ingredients of our inquiries. The ultimate objective of the course is to encourage all of us to be ethically sensitive and knowledgeable, so that we can hold ourselves and our public officials and the policies they endorse to high standards of ethical excellence.

The course requirements are as follows:

Two Self-Examinations: Who are we, morally speaking? (Total of 30%)

The first of these self-examinations will take place during the first week of the semester. The second will be the final examination. The first will count 10%; the second will count 20%. It is expected that the second self-examination will be informed by what we read and discuss during the semester.

Four Interludes: Hypotheticals on an Ethical Problem of Some Note and in the context of a particular ethical theory. (Total of 40%)

I will give you the hypotheticals; you will indicate in a short essay how a particular way of thinking might resolve the issues presented in the hypotheticals.

A Group Presentation of An Assigned Problem of What Constitutes Justice in a Particular Substantive Realm (For example: What would be a just tax policy?) (Total = 30%)

The class will be divided into several groups, approximately 6-8 individuals. Each group will arrive at a reasoned stance on an assigned issue of justice and present that stance before the entire class. The class, in turn will assist in the grading of the assigned project. (Half of the grade will be determined by the class; half by me.)

The Grading Scale for the course, and for each assignment, will be as follows (in percentiles).

97-100 = A+	77-79 = C+	Below 60 = F
93-96 = A	73-76 = C	
90-92 = A-	70-72 = C-	
87-89 = B+	67-69 = D+	
83-86 = B	63-66 = D	
80-82 = B	60-62 = D-	

Readings:

The required readings for the course include a “text” by Michael Sandel, entitled *Justice*; a collection of essays by Hannah Arendt, entitled *Responsibility and Judgment*; *The Tao Te Ching* and *The Analects of Confucius*. These items can be purchased at area bookstores or on-line. The other assigned readings are either available at various web-sites (links are provided) or as articles on electronic reserve and available on Moodle (signified with a double asterisk**).

Office Hours:

My office hours are as follows: MWF 9:00 to 10:30AM and 12:30 to 1:30PM or, by appointment at your convenience. My office is Room 237 Stubbs Hall. Phone: 578-1944. E-Mail Address: poebk@lsu.edu. Professional website: <http://sites01.lsu.edu/faculty/poebk/>

Presence:

To be present is to be mindful, aware, sensitive, engaged. It begins, of course, in physical presence, but quickly moves to all of the aforementioned states of being, and more. This course needs your presence; the subject needs your presence. We need your presence. Mostly, you need your presence. Rather than be punitive in the absence of presence, I will give you yet another incentive, beyond meaning.

Beginning on the last day to add classes, I shall assume that everyone has the occasional desire to meet a friend, sleep late, or recover from a difficult moment. Thus, three absences will be discounted, unquestioned. Similarly, some will have good and excusable reasons for absence. They will be honored. The remaining class days of the semester will be counted and a 90% attendance rate will be granted four bonus points; 80% will be given three; 70% two bonus points; and 60% will be given one. Below 60% - none will be granted. The bonus points will be added to your course total.