School of Humanities and Languages

ARTS3366: Advanced Moral Theory
Semester 1, 2016

Class meetings:
Tuesdays, 9am to 12 noon
Morven Brown Building, LG2

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1. Course Staff and Contact Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Convenor and Lecturer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation Time</td>
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2. Course Details

Units of Credit (UoC) 6

| Course Description | As described in the UNSW Handbook: What ought I do? How ought I live? Answers to the central questions of normative ethics typically draw upon moral theory, or the abstract underpinnings of ethical inquiry. This course introduces students to advanced topics in moral theory. Topics to be considered may include: the nature of moral obligation, egoism, the natural law tradition, the social contract tradition, consequentialism, utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, and virtue ethics. Relevant metaphysical and epistemological questions will be raised as well. Are there objective moral facts, or is morality simply a matter of subjective attitudes? Is human nature the basis of morality? Do we have free will? Is there only one correct moral outlook? This semester, we will focus on contemporary metaethics and virtue ethics.  
  - Metaethics is the enquiry into the epistemological, metaphysical, psychological underpinnings and commitments of moral and normative thought.  
  - Contemporary virtue ethics challenges many of the governing assumptions of modern moral theory, and provides a fruitful framework for considering matters of human moral psychology. |

| Course Aims | 1. To provide a survey of some of the main problems and topics in contemporary moral meta-ethics.  
  2. To relate contemporary discussion of these topics to historical sources (notably Kant, Hume, and Aristotle – but especially Kant this semester).  
  3. To provide students with an introduction to philosophy research in its current state of play, and to teach more advanced skills of research and philosophical writing. |

| Student Learning Outcomes | 1. Awareness of some of the central philosophical debates in moral theory.  
  2. The ability to engage critically with historical and contemporary texts in moral theory.  
  3. The ability to assess the merits and weaknesses of moral arguments.  
  4. The ability to recognise and understand the metaphysical and epistemological underpinnings of various moral theories.  
  5. The ability to compose clear and insightful analytical essays.  
  6. The ability to communicate complex ideas clearly and succinctly. |

| Graduate Attributes | 1. Ability to evaluate and critically analyse beliefs, ideas, and information using a range of techniques of philosophical reasoning  
  2. Ability to present coherent and persuasive arguments |
3. Learning and Teaching Rationale

This is an advanced course in contemporary moral theory, focusing this semester on contemporary metaethics and virtue ethics. One of my goals is to introduce philosophy students pursuing the BA to the current state of play in philosophical research. I am also interested in exploring the historical roots of many of the current debates, in particular with regard to Kant.

It is generally assumed that students will have taken a prior (first- or second-year) course in moral theory. If you have no familiarity with the moral theories of Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant, and Mill, that is OK: but you will need to be willing to get up to speed by reading the relevant background readings, which I will make available on Moodle.

The course is structured around weekly meetings: we will meet once a week, for three hours, over the twelve weeks of the semester. Participation in class discussion is a requirement. You are also encouraged to interject with questions and comments in the course of lecture. Indeed, my aim is not to have a firm division between “lecture” and “discussion” but to proceed as Socratically as possible.

4. Teaching Strategies

See above, and see the assessment package below.

5. Course Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes Assessed</th>
<th>Graduate Attributes Assessed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm quiz</td>
<td>Short answer questions; to be completed within 50 minutes.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Administered at the start of class period in Week 6; lecture will follow from 10am–12 noon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay on metaethics</td>
<td>2500-3000 words</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>6 May (Friday of Week 9), via Turnitin upload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay on Virtue Ethics</td>
<td>1800-2500 words</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>3 June (Friday of Week 13), via Turnitin upload</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Online Discussions | 200-500 words (over two posts), informal writing | 9 over the course of the semester, weighted at 3% each, for a total of 27% | 1-5 | 1-7 | See course schedule.

**Please Note**: The Arts and Social Sciences Protocols and Guidelines state:

A student who attends less than 80% of the classes/activities and has not submitted appropriate supporting documentation to the Course Authority to explain their absence may be awarded a grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).

The Attendance Guidelines can be found in full at: [https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/](https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/)

**Formal Examination**

*There is no formal final examination for this course.*

**Grades**

All results are reviewed at the end of each semester and may be adjusted to ensure equitable marking across the School.

The proportion of marks lying in each grading range is determined not by any formula or quota system, but by the way that students respond to assessment tasks and how well they meet the objectives of the course. Nevertheless, since higher grades imply performance that is well above average, the number of distinctions and high distinctions awarded in a typical course is relatively small. At the other extreme, on average 6.1% of students do not meet minimum standards and a little more (8.6%) in first year courses. For more information on the grading categories see: [https://student.unsw.edu.au/grades](https://student.unsw.edu.au/grades)

**Submission of Assessment Tasks**

All written work for this course will be submitted electronically via Moodle ([http://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au/](http://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au/)). You must use your zID login to submit your assignments in Moodle.

There are two formal writing assignments that are required to be submitted electronically; there is also the informal writing that is your contribution to 9 online discussions on Moodle (see separate instructions). For all of these, see “Learning Activities” in Moodle labelled according to the appropriate assessment. Please electronically submit your assignment to the correct “Learning Activity”.

Your critical essays and final essays will be submitted via Turnitin on Moodle. Your online threaded discussions will be posted on the discussion board on Moodle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment task to be submitted in Moodle</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay on metaethics</td>
<td>6 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay on virtue ethics</td>
<td>3 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online discussion forum, 9 weeks of semester</td>
<td>Various, see course schedule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Please note the deadline to submit an assignment electronically is 4:00 pm on the due date of the assignment.**

Assignments received after this time will be marked as having been received late.

When you submit your assignment electronically, you agree that:

I have followed the Student Code of Conduct. I certify that I have read and understand the University requirements in respect of student academic misconduct outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and the Student Misconduct Procedure. I declare that this assessment item is my own work, except where acknowledged, and has not been submitted for academic credit previously in whole or in part.

I acknowledge that the assessor of this item may, for assessment purposes:

- provide a copy to another staff member of the University
- communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (such as Turnitin) which may retain a copy of the assessment item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking.

Your formal writing assignments will be available with feedback in soft copy / hard copy within three weeks of the due date. For the online discussion, general feedback will be provided publically online (see assignment information sheet for more on this).

You are required to put your name (as it appears in University records) and UNSW Student ID on every page of your assignments.

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Moodle/Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalsupport@unsw.edu.au. Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year).

If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on its system status on Twitter. For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle

Late Submission of Assignments

The Arts and Social Sciences late submissions guidelines state the following:

- An assessed task is deemed late if it is submitted after the specified time and date as set out in the course Learning Management System (LMS).
- The late penalty is the loss of 3% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part thereof the work is late.
- Work submitted 14 days after the due date will be marked and feedback provided but no mark will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but for the lateness and the work is a compulsory course component, a student will be deemed to have met that requirement. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.
- Work submitted **21 days after** the due date will not be accepted for marking or feedback and will receive no mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course a student will automatically fail the course.

The Late Submissions Guidelines can be found in full at: [https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/](https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/)

The penalty may not apply where students are able to provide documentary evidence of illness or serious misadventure. Time pressure resulting from undertaking assignments for other courses does not constitute an acceptable excuse for lateness.

### 6. Extension of Time for Submission of Assessment Tasks

The Arts and Social Sciences Extension Guidelines apply to all assessed tasks regardless of whether or not a grade is awarded, except the following:

1. any form of test/examination/assessed activity undertaken during regular class contact hours
2. any task specifically identified by the Course Authority (the academic in charge of the course) in the Course Outline or Learning Management System (LMS), for example, Moodle, as not available for extension requests.

A student who missed an assessment activity held within class contact hours should apply for Special Consideration via myUNSW.

The Arts and Social Sciences Extension Guidelines state the following:

- A student seeking an extension should apply through the Faculty’s online extension tool available in LMS.
- A request for an extension should be submitted before the due time/date for the assessment task.
- The Course Authority should respond to the request within two working days of the request.
- The Course Authority can only approve an extension up to five days. A student requesting an extension greater than five days should complete an application for Special Consideration.
- The Course Authority advises their decision through the online extension tool.
- If a student is granted an extension, failure to comply will result in a penalty. The penalty will be invoked one minute past the approved extension time.

### 7. Attendance

The Arts and Social Sciences Attendance Guidelines state the following:

- A student is expected to attend **all** class contact hours for a face-to-face or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.
- If a student is unable to attend all classes for a course due to timetable clashes, the student must complete the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Permitted Timetable Clash form (see information at Item 8 below). A student unable to attend lectures in a
course conducted by the School of Education can apply for “Permission to Participate in Lectures Online”.

- Where practical, a student’s attendance will be recorded. Individual course outlines/LMS will set out the conditions under which attendance will be measured.

- A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.

- If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.

- Reserve members of the Australian Defence Force who require absences of more than two weeks due to full-time service may be provided an exemption. The student may also be permitted to discontinue enrolment without academic or financial penalty.

- If a Course Authority rejects a student’s request for absence from a class or activity the student must be advised in writing of the grounds for the rejection.

- A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance.

- A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the course’s learning outcomes and/or volume of learning.

- A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.

- The Dean will only grant such a request after consultation with the Course Authority to ensure that measures can be organised that will allow the student to meet the course’s learning outcomes and volume of learning.

- A student who attends less than 80% of the classes/activities and has not submitted appropriate supporting documentation to the Course Authority to explain their absence may be awarded a final grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).

- A student who has submitted the appropriate documentation but attends less than 66% of the classes/activities will be asked by the Course Authority to apply to discontinue the course without failure rather than be awarded a final grade of UF. The final decision as to whether a student can be withdrawn without fail is made by Student Administration and Records.

Students who falsify their attendance or falsify attendance on behalf of another student will be dealt with under the Student Misconduct Policy.

8. Class Clash

Students who are enrolled in an Arts and Social Sciences program (single or dual) and have an unavoidable timetable clash can apply for permissible timetable clash by completing an online application form. Students must meet the rules and conditions in order to apply for permissible clash. The rules and conditions can be accessed online in full at:
https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/media/FASSFile/Permissible_Clash_Rules.pdf
For students who are enrolled in a non-Arts and Social Sciences program, they must seek advice from their home faculty on permissible clash approval.

9. Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s thoughts or work as your own. It can take many forms, from not having appropriate academic referencing to deliberate cheating.

In many cases plagiarism is the result of inexperience about academic conventions. The University has resources and information to assist you to avoid plagiarism.

The Learning Centre assists students with understanding academic integrity and how to not plagiarise. Information is available on their website: https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/. They also hold workshops and can help students one-on-one.

If plagiarism is found in your work when you are in first year, your lecturer will offer you assistance to improve your academic skills. They may ask you to look at some online resources, attend the Learning Centre, or sometimes resubmit your work with the problem fixed. However, more serious instances in first year, such as stealing another student’s work or paying someone to do your work, may be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures.

Repeated plagiarism (even in first year), plagiarism after first year, or serious instances, may also be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures. The penalties under the procedures can include a reduction in marks, failing a course or for the most serious matters (like plagiarism in an Honours thesis) or even suspension from the university. The Student Misconduct Procedures are available here: http://www.gqs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf

10. Course Schedule

To view course timetable, please visit: http://www.timetable.unsw.edu.au/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting day:</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Lecture Content</th>
<th>Assignments due</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>The map of contemporary ethics and metaethics: or, Error Theory and the Euthyphro Problem</td>
<td>No required readings, but I have posted some recommended background readings on Moodle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>METAETHICS</td>
<td>Korsgaard on the normative question</td>
<td>Online discussion on Moodle: Discussion 1</td>
<td>Korsgaard, Sources of Normativity, Prologue and Lecture 1 (pp. 1-48).</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>METAETHICS</td>
<td>Korsgaard’s Kantian constructivism</td>
<td>Discussion 2</td>
<td>Korsgaard, <em>Sources of Normativity</em>, Lectures 3 &amp; 4 (pp. 90-166)</td>
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<td>15 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>METAETHICS</td>
<td>Constructivism, Kantian and non-Kantian</td>
<td>Discussion 3</td>
<td>Sharon Street, “Constructivism about Reasons” + Street, “Coming to Terms with Contingency”</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>METAETHICS</td>
<td>Expressivism</td>
<td>Discussion 4</td>
<td>Alan Gibbard, “An Expressivistic Theory of Normative Discourse” + Gibbard, “Normative Objectivity” [and Hume background reading]</td>
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<td>5 April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>METAETHICS</td>
<td>Kant’s metaethics?</td>
<td>Midterm QUIZ administered in class, 9am; lecture to follow</td>
<td>Immanuel Kant, <em>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</em> §II</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>METAETHICS</td>
<td>Kantian Moral Realism</td>
<td>Discussion 5</td>
<td>Rae Langton “Objective and Unconditioned Value” + Melissa Merritt, “Practical Reason and Respect for Persons”</td>
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<td>19 April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>METAETHICS</td>
<td>Moral Realism</td>
<td>Discussion 6</td>
<td>William Fitzpatrick, “Robust Ethical Realism, NonNaturalism, and Normativity”</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>METAETHICS</td>
<td>The Big Picture</td>
<td>Metaethics Essays due,</td>
<td>No new reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 May</td>
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(review of metaethics unit) & essay consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>VIRTUE ETHICS UNIT</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Week</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIRTUE ETHICS UNIT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion 7</td>
<td>Friday 6 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>VIRTUE ETHICS UNIT</td>
<td></td>
<td>17 May</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| VIRTUE ETHICS UNIT |                  | Discussion 8 | Iris Murdoch, 
|              |                    |            | *The Sovereignty of Good* (first and third chapters) |
| Week 12    | VIRTUE ETHICS UNIT |            | 24 May        |
| VIRTUE ETHICS UNIT |                  | Discussion 9 | John McDowell, 
|              |                    |            | “Virtue and Reason” |
| Week 13    | No class meeting during week 13. Essay consultation. | Virtue Ethics essays due 3 June (Friday). |

11. Course Resources

Textbook Details

Required books, available from the bookstore:
- Christine Korsgaard, *Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge University Press, 1996)

There are many other required readings – mostly journal articles – which will be made available as PDFs on Moodle.

I will also make available on Moodle some further supplementary readings (not mentioned here), which will be strictly speaking optional, but recommended (especially for students who are lacking the relevant historical background).

See the Moodle page for our course for complete bibliographic data on the readings posted there.

12. Course Evaluation and Development

Courses are periodically reviewed and students’ feedback is used to improve them. Feedback is gathered using various means including UNSW's Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) process.

13. Student Support

The Learning Centre is available for individual consultation and workshops on academic skills. Find out more by visiting the Centre’s website at: 
[http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au)
14. Grievances

All students should be treated fairly in the course of their studies at UNSW. Students who feel they have not been dealt with fairly should, in the first instance, attempt to resolve any issues with their tutor or the course convenors.

If such an approach fails to resolve the matter, the School of Humanities and Languages has an academic member of staff who acts as a Grievance Officer for the School. This staff member is identified on the notice board in the School of Humanities and Languages. Further information about UNSW grievance procedures is available at: https://student.unsw.edu.au/complaints

15. Other Information

myUNSW

myUNSW is the online access point for UNSW services and information, integrating online services for applicants, commencing and current students and UNSW staff. To visit myUNSW please visit either of the below links:
https://my.unsw.edu.au
https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/ABC.html

OHS

UNSW's Occupational Health and Safety Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others. For all matters relating to Occupational Health, Safety and environment, see https://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/

Special Consideration

In cases where illness or other circumstances produce repeated or sustained absence, students should apply for Special Consideration as soon as possible.

The application must be made via Online Services in myUNSW. Log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services channel > Online Services > Special Consideration.

Applications on the grounds of illness must be filled in by a medical practitioner. Further information is available at:
https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration

Student Equity and Disabilities Unit

Students who have a disability that requires some adjustment in their learning and teaching environment are encouraged to discuss their study needs with the course convener prior to or at the commencement of the course, or with the Student Equity Officers (Disability) in the Student Equity and Disabilities Unit (9385 4734). Information for students with disabilities is available at: http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au/

Issues that can be discussed may include access to materials, signers or note-takers, the provision of services and additional examination and assessment arrangements. Early notification is essential to enable any necessary adjustments to be made.