

PHIL 5324: Metaethics
Fall 2012 R 3:30-6:15pm MAJWM 225

Professor

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Office Hours: MW 4:00-5:30pm or by appointment (and feel free to drop in if the door is open!)

Course Materials

Readings will be available on Scholar (see list on next page).

Course Schedule

You can track all readings and assignments on the Course Calendar on Scholar (also available through my Filebox site). Readings will be assigned at the end of each class for the following week so as to allow for maximal flexibility in topic choice.

Assessment

Presentation (20%)

Each student is expected to present on (at least) one reading during the semester. You will present the major arguments from the reading to the class and provide some questions to generate discussion. Your initial presentation should last about **20-30 minutes**.

Paper (80%)

You will write a term paper (**12-15 typed, double-spaced pages**) on a (relevant) topic of your choosing. The precise due date is TBA; it will be as late as it can be while still providing me sufficient time to grade.

Class Participation

Considered in borderline cases.

Academic Integrity

Don't cheat. Here's the VT Honor Code: <http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>.

Readings

Week 1: Introduction

- Miller – An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics, Introduction
- Moore – Principia Ethica, Ch. 1. Sect. 4-13

Week 2-4: Naturalism

- Boyd – “How to Be a Moral Realist”
- Schroeder – “Realism and Reduction: the Quest for Robustness”
- Horgan & Timmons – “Troubles for New Wave Moral Semantics”
- Merli – “Return to Moral Twin Earth”
- Lenman – “Moral Naturalism,” Sect. 4 (from SEP)
- Railton – “Moral Realism”

Week 5-6: Expressivism

- Gibbard – “The Reasons of a Living Being”
- Schroeder – Noncognitivism in Ethics, Ch. 2,4,5,8
- Schroeder – Noncognitivism in Ethics, Ch. 3,6,7 (Frege-Geach)
- Drier – “Meta-Ethics and the Problem of Creeping Minimalism”

Week 7-8: Non-Naturalism

- Fitzpatrick – “Robust Ethical Realism, Non-Naturalism and Normativity”
- Parfit – “Normativity”
- Enoch – Taking Morality Seriously: A Defense of Robust Realism, Ch. 3
- McPherson – “Ethical Non-Naturalism and the Metaphysics of Supervenience”

Week 9: Error Theory

- Mackie – Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong, Ch. 1
- Olson – “In Defence of Moral Error Theory”

Week 10-11: Some Unique Approaches

- Korsgaard – The Sources of Normativity, Lecture III
- Enoch – “Agency, Shmagency: Why Normativity Won't Come from What Is Constitutive of Action”
- Dworkin – “Objectivity and Truth: You'd Better Believe It”
- Wedgwood – “The Metaethicists' Mistake”

Week 12: The Evolutionary Challenge to Realism

- Street – “A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value”
- Enoch – Taking Morality Seriously: A Defense of Robust Realism, Ch. 7

Week 13: Final Readings TBD based on interest