

University of Waterloo
Department of Philosophy
Phil 674/676: Moral Epistemology
Winter 2017
Wednesdays 11:30-2:20 HH 345

Instructor Information

Instructor: Patricia Marino

Office: HH 332

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30- 3:30 and by appointment

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Course Description

This course on moral epistemology will focus on the role of intuitions and "considered judgments" in moral reasoning and justification. Topics will include: 1) the role of intuitions in contemporary approaches such as reflective equilibrium; 2) the recent debate -- drawing on neuroscience and evolution -- over whether intuitions are untrustworthy and unreliable and thus ought to be jettisoned in favor of consequentialist reasoning; and 3) whether relying on intuitions promotes or hinders the incorporation of different perspectives -- such as lessons from philosophy of disability -- into moral theory.

Course Requirements

Since this is a seminar, attendance at each meeting is essential. If you expect to miss any of the meetings let me know as soon as possible and we can discuss the reasons. If you miss any meetings, it may impact your grade; if you miss more than three meetings for any reason you cannot pass the course. I will use LEARN for announcements etc. so please check it daily.

Every week, you'll have to submit a 300-600 word paper on the readings. This paper should examine critically some particular idea from one of the texts assigned for that day, and should have a thesis and argument. These will be graded out of 10 points. These must be submitted via the LEARN dropbox, in pdf format, before 5:00pm the Monday before the class for which they apply. Participation in class discussion is also an important part of the course. If you raise questions or offer comments or responses twice at each meeting of the seminar the participation part of your grade will be a B or 75. More frequent participation will raise your grade, less frequent participation will lower it. If you attend class without participating, your grade for participation will be D or 55. Participation is worth 10% of your grade.

There is one long paper required, which should be 4500-6000 words. Everyone will do a presentation during the last two weeks of class. The idea is for you to present a work-in-progress version of your final paper, which you can then revise in response to feedback and questions. When you do your presentation you must also submit a version of your paper that represents the content of your presentation. You can present in any style you like -- slides, talking, reading, whatever -- but this paper should contain the ideas of your presentation expressed in written-paper style. This presentation paper should be 3,000 words. I will comment on this, and you

should use these comments to improve the final version of the paper to be handed in during the exam period. The final version of the final draft will be due April 17th at 5:00pm, again via the LEARN dropbox. Students enrolled in Phil 676 have the option of different assignment formats; if you are taking the course as Phil 676 please talk to me during the first two weeks of class to discuss.

Course Schedule and Readings (all readings will be posted on LEARN):

Week 1: Introduction

- No reading assigned beforehand, but we'll discuss W. D. Ross, "What Makes Right Acts Right," Chapter 2 of *The Right and the Good* (Oxford University Press, 1930). If you've never read this, take a look at it.

Week 2: Rawls and reflective equilibrium

- John Rawls, "Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics," *The Philosophical Review* 60 (1951), 177-197.
- R. M. Hare, "Rawls' Theory of Justice" (I and II), *Philosophical Quarterly* 23 (1973) 144-55; 241-51.

Week 3: Reflective equilibrium and the problems of justification

- Norman Daniels, (1979) "Wide Reflective Equilibrium and Theory Acceptance in Ethics," *Journal of Philosophy* 76 (1979), 256-282.
- Patricia Marino, "Moral Coherence and Value Pluralism," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 43 (2013), 117-135.

Week 4: Reflective equilibrium, contemporary perspectives

- Margaret Urban Walker, "Feminist Skepticism, Authority, and Transparency," from Walter Sinnott-Armstrong and Mark Timmons, eds., *Moral Knowledge? New Readings in Moral Epistemology* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 267-92, reprinted in *Ethical Theory: An Anthology*, Second Edition, edited by Russ Shafer-Landau (John Wiley & Sons, 2013).
- Patricia Marino, "Moral Coherence and Principle Pluralism," *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 11/6 (2014), 727-749.

Week 5: The challenges from neuroscience and evolution

- Joshua Greene, "The Secret Joke of Kant's Soul," in *Moral Psychology, Vol. 3: The Neuroscience of Morality: Emotion, Disease, and Development*, W. Sinnott-Armstrong, Ed., MIT Press 2007 at <http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/~jgreene/GreeneWJH/Greene-KantSoul.pdf> (just read the article not the comments and replies).
- Peter Singer, "Ethics and Intuitions," *The Journal of Ethics* 9 (2005), 331-352.

Week 6: Responses to the challenges from neuroscience and evolution

- Anders Sandberg and Niklas Juth, "Ethics and Intuitions: A Reply to Singer," *The Journal of Ethics* 15 (2010), 209-226.
- Sabine Roeser, (2010). "Intuitions, Emotions and Gut Reactions in Decisions about Risks: Towards a Different Interpretation of 'Neuroethics,'" *Journal of Risk Research*, 13 (2010), 175-190.

Week 7: Methodology and race

- Charles Mills, "'Ideal Theory' as Ideology," *Hypatia*, 20(3) (2005), 165–183
- Tommie Shelby, Racial Realities and Corrective Justice: A Reply to Charles Mills," *Critical Philosophy of Race* 1 (2013), 145-162.

Week 8: Methodology and themes from philosophy of disability

- Jeff McMahan, "Cognitive Disability, Misfortune, and Justice," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 25 (1996), 3-35.
- Eva Feder Kittay, "The Ethics of Philosophizing: Ideal Theory and the Exclusion of People with Severe Cognitive Disabilities, in Lisa Tessman, "Feminist Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy: Theorizing the Non-Ideal" (Springer, 2009), Chapter 8.

Week 9: Reflective equilibrium in bioethics

- Peter Nichols, "Wide Reflective Equilibrium as a Method of Justification in Bioethics," *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 33 (2012), 325-341.
- Carson Strong, "Theoretical and Practical Problems with Wide Reflective Equilibrium in Bioethics," *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*, 31(2010), 123-140.

Week 11: Multiculturalism, pluralism and reflective equilibrium

- Leigh Turner, "Bioethics in a Multicultural World: Medicine and Morality in Pluralistic Settings," *Health Care Analysis* 11 (2003), 99-117.
- Donald Ainslie, "Bioethics and the Problem of Pluralism," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 19 (2002), 1-28.

Week 10: TBA OR (tentatively) epistemology and ameliorative reflective equilibrium

- TBA or Sally Haslanger, "What knowledge Is and What it Ought to Be: Feminist Values and Normative Epistemology. *Noûs* 33 (Supplement s13) (1999): 459-80.
- TBA or Deborah Mühlebach, "Reflective Equilibrium as an Ameliorative Framework for Feminist Epistemology," *Hypatia* (forthcoming).

Week 12: presentations

Assessment

- Participation: 10%
- Short papers: 10%
- Presentation: 10%
- Presentation paper: 20%
- Final paper: 50%

Late Work

If you experience unexpected difficulties like illness or personal difficulties, please let me know as soon as possible. Obviously it's best to just submit everything on time. But if you must be late, I will subtract one point per day (out of ten) for the weekly papers and three percentage points (out of 100) per day for the presentation and final paper. If anything arises that gets in the way of you doing your work for this class, please do not hesitate to talk to me: I'm here to help and I'll do what I can.

Information on Plagiarism Detection

No formal or technological plagiarism detection mechanisms will be used in this class.

Electronic Device Policy

There is no formal policy against the use of laptops or tablets in class, but there are two rules: 1) you may not use any technology in ways that are distracting to me or to the other students and 2) you must be mentally present for what is going on in the classroom. This means no videos, no social networking, no email, no checking your phone during class. If you must use your phone, please leave the classroom to do so. You may return when you're done.

Cross-listed course (requirement for all Arts courses)

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.