

Philosophy 174
Recent Ethical Theory
Spring 2005

Instructor:

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Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00-4:00

Teaching Fellow:

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Required Books:

Thomas Nagel. *The Possibility of Altruism*. Princeton, 1970.
T. M. Scanlon. *What We Owe to Each Other*. Harvard, 1998.
Simon Blackburn. *Ruling Passions: A Theory of Practical Reasoning*. Oxford, 1998.
Christine M. Korsgaard. *The Sources of Normativity*. Cambridge, 1996.
Christine M. Korsgaard, Coursepack, on sale at the Science Center, containing:
“Realism and Constructivism in Twentieth-Century Moral Philosophy.” *Philosophy in America at the Turn of the Century*. APA Centennial Supplement to the Journal of Philosophical Research, Philosophy Documentation Center.
“Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant.” *The Journal of Ethics* 3: 1-29, 1999.

Assignments and Grading Policies:

In order to pass the course you must attend the discussion sections and complete all of the written work. For undergraduates, there will be three five-eight page papers, due on Monday March 7, Monday April 4, and during reading period on Friday May 13. Students admitted to the graduate section will be required to write two of these papers and to give a 20-30 minute presentation in the graduate section in place of one of them. This presentation must be accompanied by a handout and is to be handed in the day before it is given. Paper topics will be suggested. All students will be required to take a final examination, consisting of essay questions selected from a set of questions handed out in advance, which is scheduled for Friday May 20.

Extensions on the midterm papers must be requested before the date on which the paper is due. Work that is late without an extension or beyond an extension will be discounted at the rate of one-third of a grade per day (A to A-, A- to B+, and so forth). No extensions will be granted on the final paper. Papers that receive a grade of B- or below for reasons other than lateness may be rewritten for a higher grade under the guidance of your section leader. The three papers (or, in the case of members of the graduate section, two papers and presentation) and the final exam will each count for approximately one-fourth of your grade, but active participation in section discussions and marked improvement in your written work will weigh in your favor.

Topics, Reading Assignments, and Recommended Readings:

Please note: Monday March 21 is President's Day Holiday. I will be out of town on Wednesday, March 23, so we will not be meeting that week.

Monday, February 7 & Wednesday, February 9

Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, Part I and Part II, pp. 1-76

Monday, February 14 & Wednesday, February 16

Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, Part II, continued, and Part III, pp. 79-124

Monday, February 21: University Holiday: President's Day

Wednesday, February 23: No class

Monday, February 28 & Wednesday, March 2

Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, Part III, pp. 124-146

Monday, March 7 & Wednesday, March 9

Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Part I, Chapter 1, pp. 17-77

First Paper Due Monday March 7

Monday, March 14 & Wednesday, March 16

Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Chapter 4, pp. 147-188

Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Chapter 5, Sections 1-3, pp. 189-202

Monday, March 21 & Wednesday, March 23

Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Chapter 5, Sections 4-10, pp. 202-247

March 26-April 3: Spring Break

Monday, Monday, 4 & Wednesday, April 6

Blackburn, *Ruling Passions*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-23

Blackburn, *Ruling Passions*, Chapter 3, pp. 48-83

Second Paper Due Monday April 4

Monday, April 11 & Wednesday, April 13

Blackburn, *Ruling Passions*, Chapter 4, pp. 84-121

Blackburn, *Ruling Passions*, Chapter 7, pp. 200-237

Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, Lecture II, 2.5.2-2.5.3, pp. 86-89

Monday, April 18 & Wednesday, April 20

Korsgaard, "Realism and Constructivism in 20th Century Moral Philosophy" (in Coursepack)

Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*: Lecture 1, §§ 1.1.1-1.2.3, pp. 7-21

Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, Lecture 3, pp. 90-130

Monday, April 25 & Wednesday, April 27

Blackburn, *Ruling Passions*, Chapter 8, Sections 1-4, pp.238-278

Monday, May 2 & Wednesday, May 4

Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, Lecture 4, pp. 131-166

Korsgaard, "Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant" (in Coursepack)

Third Paper Due: Friday May 13

Final Examination: Friday May 20