

**Philosophy 168**  
**Kant's Ethical Theory**  
**Fall 2017**

**Instructor:**

Chris Korsgaard  
205 Emerson Hall  
Office: 617-495-3916  
[christine\\_korsgaard@harvard.edu](mailto:christine_korsgaard@harvard.edu)  
Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00-4:00

**Teaching Fellow:**

Thomas Pendlebury  
Emerson 007  
[tpendlebury@g.harvard.edu](mailto:tpendlebury@g.harvard.edu)

**Description:**

A study of Kant's moral philosophy, based primarily on the *Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals*, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and *The Metaphysics of Morals*.

\* This course, when taken for a letter grade, meets the General Education requirement for Ethical Reasoning.

**Required Works:**

Immanuel Kant. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785). 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Translated and edited by Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Practical Philosophy*. (Includes *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), and *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797)). Translated by Mary Gregor. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793). Translated by Allen Wood and George di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Conjectures on the Beginnings of Human History" Posted on the course website.

Christine M. Korsgaard. *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

**Recommended Works ordered at the Coop:**

Barbara Herman. *The Practice of Moral Judgment*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Christine M. Korsgaard. *The Constitution of Agency*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Onora O'Neill. *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

John Rawls. *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Most of the works I have listed as "Recommended" on the reading schedule below come from the six volumes listed above. Nearly all of them can also be found on the course website.

## **Assignments and Grading Policies:**

In order to pass the course you must attend the discussion sections and complete all of the written work.

There will five short (around 1200 word) papers on assigned questions, due on Friday **September 22, Friday October 6, Friday October 20, Friday November 10, and Friday December 1**. A final paper of about 2500 words will be due on **Friday December 15**. Topics for the final paper will be suggested. Papers must be turned into the course website by 5:00 p.m. on the day they are due, in .doc or .docx format. 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. If your paper receives a grade of B- or below for reasons other than lateness you may rewrite it for a higher grade under the guidance of your section leader.

The short papers taken collectively will count for approximately 40% of your grade, the longer paper for approximately 35%, and participation in section discussions approximately 25%. However, an especially good performance in any of these categories or marked improvement over the course of the term will count in your favor.

## **Topics, Reading Assignments, and Recommended Readings:**

Please do the reading before the meetings at which it will be discussed. Please note that the schedule is approximate and tentative.

This course is scheduled for MWF. In fact we will have four Friday meetings, on September 1, September 8, October 13, and October 20. We will meet on additional Fridays if we fall behind or a class has to be cancelled.

**Introduction:** W 8/30

### **1: The Project of the *Groundwork* and the Argument of *Groundwork I***

Meetings: F Sept. 1, W Sept. 6, F Sept. 8, M Sept. 11, W Sept. 13, M Sept. 18

Readings:

*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface and First Section, 43-60 (4:387-405)

Korsgaard, Introduction to the *Groundwork*, vii-xv

Korsgaard, "Kant's Analysis of Obligation: The Argument of *Groundwork I*"

Korsgaard, Sections I and III of "From Duty and for the Sake of the Noble: Kant and Aristotle on Morally Good Action."

Recommended: Rawls, Kant Lecture I "*Groundwork*: Preface and Part I"; Herman, "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty"; "Integrity and Impartiality"; "Rethinking Kant's Hedonism"; Reath, "Hedonism, Heteronomy, and Kant's Principle of Happiness"

## **2. Maxims and Imperatives**

Meetings: W Sept. 20, M Sept. 25, W Sept. 27

Readings:

*Groundwork*, Second Section, 61-73 (4:406-420)

*Critique of Practical Reason*, Analytic, Chapter I, 153-160 (5:1Sept. 26)

Korsgaard, Introduction to the *Groundwork*, xv-xvii

Recommended: Korsgaard, Section 3 of “The Normativity of Instrumental Reason” and Section 1.2 of “The Myth of Egoism.”

\*\*\* *First paper due Friday, September 22* \*\*\*

## **3. The Formula of Universal Law**

Meetings: M Oct. 2, W Oct. 4, W Oct. 11, F Oct. 13, M Oct. 16

Readings:

*Groundwork*, Second Section, 72-77 (4:420-425)

*Critique of Practical Reason*, Analytic, Chapter I, 160-166 (5:27-33); Chapter II, 194-198(5:67-72)

Korsgaard, Introduction to the *Groundwork*, xvii-xxi

Korsgaard, “Kant’s Formula of Universal Law”

Recommended: Rawls, Kant Lecture II “The Categorical Imperative: The First Formulation.”  
O’Neill, “Consistency in Action”; Herman, “Mutual Aid and Respect for Persons”; “Murder and Mayhem”; “Moral Deliberation and the Derivation of Duties”; Reath, “Agency and Universal Law”; Korsgaard: “Natural Motives and the Motive of Duty: Hume and Kant on Our Duties to Others.”

\*\*\* *Second paper due Friday, October 6* \*\*\*

## **4. Moral Psychology**

Meetings: W Oct. 18, F Oct. 20

Readings:

*Groundwork*, Second Section, 76-79 (4:425-428)

*Critique of Practical Reason*, Chapter III up to the “Critical Elucidation,” 198-211 (5:71-89);  
“Doctrine of the Method of Pure Practical Reason,” 261-269 (5:151-162).

*Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Part I, 45-73 (6:1Sept. 53).

Recommended: Rawls, Kant Lecture IX “The Moral Psychology of the *Religion*.”

Reath, “Kant’s Theory of Moral Sensibility: Respect for the Moral Law and the Influence of Inclination”

\*\*\* *Third Paper Due Friday, October 20*\*\*\*

## **5. The Formula of Humanity, Kant's Theory of Value, and Autonomy**

Meetings: M Oct. 23, W Oct. 25, M Oct. 30, W Nov. 1, M Nov. 6

Readings:

*Groundwork*, Second Section, 78-93 (4:427-445)

*Critique of Practical Reason*, Analytic, Chapter II, 186-194 (5:57-68)

"Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History," on the course website.

*The Metaphysics of Morals*, 543-588 (6:417-474)

Korsgaard, Introduction to the *Groundwork*, xxi-xxiii

Korsgaard, "Kant's Formula of Humanity," "The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil"

Recommended: Rawls, Kant Lecture III "The Categorical Imperative: The Second Formulation" and Kant Lecture IV "The Categorical Imperative: The Third Formulation"; Herman, "A Cosmopolitan Kingdom of Ends"; O'Neill, "Between Consenting Adults"; Korsgaard, "Fellow Creatures: Kantian Ethics and Our Duties to Animals."

## **6. The Foundation of Morality**

Meetings: W Nov. 8, M Nov. 13, W Nov. 15, M Nov. 20; (Thanksgiving Recess November 22-26), M Nov. 27, W Nov. 29

Readings:

*Groundwork*, Third Section, 94-108 (4:446-463)

*Critique of Practical Reason*, Preface & Introduction, 13Sept. 149 (5:3-16); Analytic, Chapter I, 156-186 (5:33-58)

Korsgaard, Introduction to the *Groundwork*, xxiii-xxx

Korsgaard, "Morality as Freedom," Part I: "Law as Freedom."

Recommended: Rawls, Kant Lecture VIII "The Moral Law as the Law of Freedom."

Korsgaard, "Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant," O'Neill, "Reason and Autonomy in *Grundlegung* III." Reath, "Autonomy of the Will as the Foundation of Morality"

\*\*\* *Fourth Paper Due Friday November 10* \*\*\*

\*\*\* *Fifth Paper Due Friday, December 1* \*\*\*

***Final Paper Due Friday December 15***