

Sample Syllabus: Metaethics

Instructor

Name: David Mokriski

Email: dmokriski@gmail.com

Lectures

Time: TBA

Place: TBA

Office Hours

Time: TBA (or by appointment—please give me at least 24 hours' notice)

Place: TBA

Course Description

This is a course on metaethics, the study of the foundations of moral thought and discourse. We'll cover a number of metaphysical, semantic, epistemological, and psychological issues regarding morality. The metaphysical issues include whether moral facts and properties really exist, and if so, whether they're objective, and how they relate to ordinary, non-moral features of the natural world. The semantic issues include what moral expressions mean, whether they're synonymous with non-moral expressions, whether moral statements are capable of being true or false, and whether moral disputes are genuine or merely verbal. The epistemological issues include how moral judgments can be justified, whether moral knowledge is possible, and how we should respond to moral disagreement. And the psychological issues include how moral motivation works, and what the relationship is between moral judgment, reason, and emotion.

Required Text

There is no text that you must purchase for this class. All the readings will be pdfs of articles or book chapters posted to the course site. See the next page for readings.

Course Requirements

Here is the grading breakdown with tentative due dates:

Seven Weekly Homework Assignments – 35% (5% each) – Due Mondays

Take-Home Midterm Exam – 30% – Due Monday (TBA) of Week 7

Take-Home Final Exam – 35% – Due Wednesday (TBA) of Finals Week

Participation – Can bump grade up

Weekly Homework

The homework assignments consist of several short-answer questions from the material covered in lecture and/or the readings that week. No homework will be assigned during exam weeks.

Take-Home Exams

There are two take-home exams consisting of several short-essay questions on material covered in lecture and/or the readings. The final exam will be cumulative.

Tentative Reading Schedule

<u>Week</u>	<u>Readings (pdfs on Gauchospace)</u>
1	Huemer, M. (2005). "Introduction", in <i>Ethical Intuitionism</i> Timmons, M. (1999). "Metaethics and Methodology", in <i>Morality without Foundations</i>
2	Moore, G. E. (1903). "The Subject Matter of Ethics", in <i>Principia Ethica</i> Ayer, A. J. (1936). "Critique of Ethics and Theology", in <i>Language, Truth and Logic</i>
3	Mackie, J. L. (1977). "The Subjectivity of Values", in <i>Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong</i> Brink, D. (1984). "Moral Realism and the Sceptical Arguments from Disagreement and Queerness"
4	Harman, G. (1977). "Ethics and Observation", in <i>The Nature of Morality</i> Sturgeon, N. (1985). "Moral Explanations", in Rachels, J. (ed.), <i>Ethical Theory I</i>
5	Harman, G. (1996). "Moral Relativism", in <i>Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity</i> Railton, P. (1998). "Aesthetic Value, Moral Value, and the Ambitions of Naturalism", in Levinson, J. (ed.), <i>Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection</i>
6	Street, S. (2006). "A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value" Vavova, K. (2015). "Evolutionary Debunking of Moral Realism"
7	Street, S. (2008). "Constructivism About Reasons", in <i>Oxford Studies in Metaethics</i> <i>Volume 3</i>
8	Enoch, D. (2018). "Non-Naturalistic Realism in Metaethics", in <i>The Routledge Handbook</i> Railton, P. (2018). "Naturalistic Realism in Metaethics", in <i>The Routledge Handbook</i>
9	Olson, J. (2018). "Error Theory in Metaethics", in <i>The Routledge Handbook</i> Camp, E. (2018). "Metaethical Expressivism", in <i>The Routledge Handbook</i>
10	Stojanovic, I. (2018). "Metaethical Relativism", in <i>The Routledge Handbook</i> Srinivasan, A. (2017). "Feminism and Metaethics", in <i>The Routledge Handbook</i>

Disability Policy

If you need accommodations, please speak to me in advance and make arrangements with Disabled Students Services (DSP) at <http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu>.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, such as plagiarizing, will be severely punished. For more info on what constitutes academic dishonesty, see judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/AcademicIntegrity.aspx.

Final Note

Please feel free to bring any concerns about the course to my attention. This syllabus is liable to change, and you are responsible for any changes given adequate notice.