



PHL 403: Advanced Moral Philosophy

Fall Term 2015

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:45-2:05, Morton Hall 337

Instructor: Jeremy Fischer **Email:** Jeremy.Fischer@uah.edu
Office: Morton Hall 332A **Office Hours:** T&Th, 11:00-11:45am;
Phone: 256-824-2644 M&W, 2:10-3:00pm; and by appointment

Course Description

This course will provide both (i) a wide-ranging survey of accounts of particular factors (such as well-being, desert, doing harm, intending harm, lying, promising, and rights) that seem to be relevant to the moral status of our actions, and (ii) a detailed consideration of the moral theories (especially varieties of consequentialism and deontology) that most plausibly explain the relevance of these particular factors.

Required Texts

1. Shelly Kagan, *Normative Ethics* (Westview, 1997).
2. Various recent journal publications which are available via the Canvas website.

Evaluation

1. Two short (5-7 page) essay assignments, the first one of which must be revised and resubmitted in light of my comments. (15% + 5% + 15% = 35%)
 - a. Essay #1, due Sunday, September 13th at 11:59 pm (15% of the final grade).
 - b. Revised Essay #1, due Sunday, September 27th (worth 5% of the final grade).
 - c. Essay #2, due Wednesday, December 2nd (worth 15% of the final grade).
2. Two closed-book in-class exams (15% + 20% = 35%)
 - a. October 1st: 15% of the final grade
 - b. Tuesday, December 8th, 11:30am-2:00pm: 20% of the final grade
3. Four short presentations: (4 x 5% = 20%)
 - a. Each student will deliver four 15 minute-long presentations in four classes of their choosing. Each presentation is of the assigned reading for that day's class.
 - b. Each presentation must include a 1-2 page handout that summarizes the text and raises questions for discussion. Presenters must bring copies of the handout for each member of the class (including the professor).
 - c. Two of each student's presentations must be about Kagan's text; the other two of presentations must be of an assigned article by an author other than Kagan.
 - d. Presenters must meet briefly with the instructor to discuss the presentation, at least two days before the presentation.
4. Class Participation: 10% of the final grade
 - a. Class participation includes participating in classroom discussions, visiting office hours, and emailing about the material of the course.

Grades

1. A passing grade on each of the two main components of the course—essay assignments and exams—is essential if the student is to pass the course as a whole.
2. There will be a penalty for late assignments except in the event of a personal emergency, unless an extension was arranged in advance.
3. Grading Scale:

A+ ≥ 96%	B+ = 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D+ = 67-69%
A = 93-95%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	D = 63-66%
A- = 90-92%	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	D- = 60-62%

Students on the borderline of two grades will be bumped up only if they have completed all assignments and if the final exam reflects the higher score.

Disability Accommodations

Students with disabilities should contact UAH's Disability Support Services at 256.824.1997, 256.824.6672 (Fax), or dssproctor@uah.edu. (Website: <http://www.uah.edu/health-and-wellness/disability-support>) If you have a letter from the Disability Services Office indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so we can discuss accommodations for the class.

Plagiarism

Instances of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Director of Student Conduct at UAH for investigation. If an investigation confirms that plagiarism took place, then the assignment will receive a score of zero and the student will be subject to University penalties.

The following information summarizes UAH's understanding of plagiarism (from <http://libguides.uah.edu/plagiarism>):

"Plagiarism - failing to acknowledge our debts to others - is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information...."

"Give credit whenever you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory.
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings - any pieces of information - that are not common knowledge.
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words.
- a paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.

"Common types of plagiarism include

- quoting material from another source without making citation.
- citing only one source while combining materials from several.
- citing fake sources to hide the amount of quoting/paraphrasing or to shortcut finding all the sources used.
- changing the content of sources to make it sound more relevant.
- copying the general structure, argument, or techniques of a source without attribution."

See <<http://libguides.uah.edu/plagiarism>> for more information.

***Very Tentative* Reading Schedule**

Part I: Moral Factors (Weeks 1-8)

Week 1: Introduction.

8.20: (1) Shelly Kagan, "Preliminaries," pp. 1-22

Week 2: The Good and Well-being (Part 1)

8.25: (1) Shelly Kagan, "2.1 Promoting The Good," 25-29

(2) Christine Korsgaard, "Two Distinctions in Goodness," *PR* (1979): 169-173 only
Recommended:

(1) G.E. Moore, "The Conception of Intrinsic Value"

(2) Peter Valentyne, "Teleology, Consequentialism, and the Past"

8.27: (1) Shelly Kagan, "2.2 Well-Being," 29-34

(2) Roger Crisp, "Hedonism Reconsidered," *PPR* (2006): 619-645

Week 3: The Good and Well-being (Part 2)

9.1: (1) Shelly Kagan, "2.2 Well-Being," 34-41

(2) Dale Dorsey, "Three Arguments for Perfectionism," *Nous* 44 (2010): 59-79

9.3: (1) Shelly Kagan, "2.3 The Total View," 41-48

(2) Taurek, "Should the Numbers Count?"

Week 4: Other Goods and Consequentialism

9.8: (1) Shelly Kagan, "2.4 Equality," 48-54

(2) Shelly Kagan, "2.5 Culpability Fairness and Desert," 54-59

9.10: (1) Shelly Kagan, "2.6 Consequentialism," 59-69

Recommended:

(1) Philippa Foot, "Utilitarianism and the Virtues"

(2) Julia Driver, *Consequentialism*, "Subjective and Objective Accounts"

*****Paper #1 Due by Sunday, 9.13, at 11:59 pm*****

Week 5: Constraints

9.15: (1) Shelly Kagan, "3.1 Deontology," 70-78

(2) Shelly Kagan, "3.2 Thresholds," 78-84

(3) Shelly Kagan, "3.3 The Scope of the Constraint," 84-94

9.17: (1) Shelly Kagan, "3.4 Doing and Allowing," 94-100

(2) Shelly Kagan, "3.5 Intending Harm, 100-106"

Recommended:

(1) Thomson, "Self-Defense"

(2) F.M. Kamm, "Non-Consequentialism, the Person as an End-in-Itself, and the Significance of Status"

(3) Foot, "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect"

Week 6: More Constraints

- 9.22: (1) Shelly Kagan, "4.1 Lying," 106-116;
(2) Thomas Hill, "Autonomy and Benevolent Lies," *JVI* 18 (1984): 251-267.
- 9.24: (1) Shelly Kagan, "4.2 Promises," 116-125.

*****Paper #1 Revisions Due Sunday, September 27th*****

Week 7: Constraints Without Harm

- 9.29: (1) Shelly Kagan, "4.5 Duties to Oneself," 145-152;
(2) Robin Dillon, "How to Lose Your Self-Respect," *APQ* 29 (1992): 125-139.

10.1: *****Midterm Exam*****

Week 8: The Demandingness Objection

- 10.6: (1) Shelly Kagan, "5.1 Demanding Too Much," 153-161;
Recommended:
- (1) Bernard Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality," in A. O. Rorty, ed., *The Identities of Persons* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976): 197-216
 - (2) Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 13:2 (Spring 1984)
 - (3) F.M. Kamm, "Supererogation and Obligation," *Journal of Philosophy* 82 (1985): 118-138.

10.8: *****No Class (Fall Break)*****

Week 9: Options and Particularism

- 10.13: (1) Shelly Kagan, "5.2 Options," 161-170
(2) Options Paradox Article
- 10.15: (1) Shelly Kagan, "5.4 Interaction," 177-186
(2) Jonathan Dancy, "Moral Particularism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-particularism/>

Part II: Foundational Theories (Weeks 9-13)

Week 10: Egoistic and Character-Focused Foundations

- 10.20: (1) Shelly Kagan, "6.1 Foundational Theories," 189-194
(2) Shelly Kagan, "6.2 Egoism," 194-204
- 10.22: (1) Shelly Kagan, "6.3 Virtues," 204-212
(2) Christine Swanton, "A Virtue Ethical Account of Right Action," *Ethics* 112 (2001): 32-52.

Week 11: Act- and Rule-Focused Foundations

10.27: (1) Shelly Kagan, "6.4 Act Consequentialism," 212-223
(2) Henry Sidgwick, "Utilitarianism," *Utilitas* 12, No. 3 (2000)

10.29: (1) Shelly Kagan, "6.5 Rules," 223-239
(2) R.B. Brandt, "Some Merits of One Form of Rule Utilitarianism," from *Utilitarianism with Critical Essays*, ed. By Gorovitz, Bobbs-Merrill (1971)

Week 12: Kantian Foundations

11.3: (1) Shelly Kagan, "7.1 Contractarianism," 240-256
(2) T.M. Scanlon, "Contractualism and Utilitarianism"

Recommended:

(1) David Gauthier, "Why Contractarianism?"
(2) Geoffrey Sayre-McCord: "Contractualism"

11.5: (1) Shelly Kagan, "7.2 Universalizability," 256-271
(2) Onora O'Neill, "Universal Laws and Ends-in-Themselves," from *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1989)

Week 13: Other Deontological Foundations (Part 1)

11.10: (1) Shelly Kagan, "7.3 The Ideal Observer," 271-280
(2) Roderick Firth, "Ethical Absolutism and the Ideal Observer," *PPR.* (1952): 317-345.

11.12: (1) Shelly Kagan, "7.4 Reflection," 280-294
(2) Sarah Buss, "Valuing Autonomy and Respecting Persons: Manipulation, Seduction, and the Basis of Moral Constraints," *Ethics* 115 (2005)

Week 14: Other Deontological Foundations (Part 2)

11.17: (1) Shelly Kagan, "7.5 Foundational Pluralism," 294-303
(2) Shelly Kagan, "7.6 Possibilities," 294-303

11.19: Students' Choice

Week 15: Students' Choice

11.24: Students' Choice
11.26: No Class (Thanksgiving)

Week 16: Students' Choice

12.1: Students' Choice

*****Paper #2 Due on Wednesday, 12.2, by 11:59 pm*****

Tuesday, 12.8, 11:30am-2:00pm: *Final Exam*