

## **PHI 447A Moral Thinking**

Even Semester (2023-24); M,Th 10:00 am – 11:00 am; M 11:00 am- 12 noon; L05

Instructor – Dr Sushruth Ravish  
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TA – Ms Priyanka Pragati  
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### **Objectives of the Course:**

The aim of this course is to help you think philosophically about moral issues. The course hopes to develop in you an accurate recognition of moral thinking and develop your skills to engage with moral questions in your own life. We'll look at normative, meta, and applied ethics.

### **Course Content:**

#### Week 1– Orientation

Introduction to the Course. Understanding What Morality is and what we intend by “thinking” about morality. Differentiating it from Legality, Religiosity, and Cultural mores and customs.

#### Weeks 2 and 3 ‘Threats’ to Moral Thinking

We'll discuss ethical egoism, psychological egoism, cultural relativism and subjectivism. I'll try to impress upon you that there are some ways of thinking about morality that are more reasonable than others.

#### Weeks 4 – 7 Normative Ethics: Utilitarianism, Deontology and Virtue Ethics

We'll discuss the three main schools of ethical thought. We'll also attempt to look at feminist ethics and non-western theories regarding morality.

#### Week 8 – Mid-semester exam

#### Week 9 – 12 Metaethical Theories

We'll dive deeper into philosophical questions about morality. We'll inquire into the nature of morality itself and ask what we can say about the metaphysics of moral statements and moral facts, how we come to know about them and how we use them linguistically and semantically.

#### Weeks 13 Mid-sem Recess

#### Weeks 14-16 Applied Ethics

We'll take up traditional issues in applied ethics like euthanasia and capital punishment. We'll also try to look at contemporary problems that we face in our everyday lives through our newly acquired lens of moral thinking.

Primary readings:

- Rachels and Rachels (2018). *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*
- Suikkanen, Jussi (2015). *This is Ethics*.
- Blackburn, Simon (2001). *Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*

References:

- Frankena, W.K. (1999). *Ethics*. Prentice Hall
- LaFollette, Hugh (Ed.), (1997). *Ethics in Practice: An Anthology*. Blackwell
- Pojman, Louis (Ed.) (1998). *Ethical Theory: Classical and Contemporary Readings*

## **Assignments and Grading**

Attendance

- Attendance is NOT compulsory. Please note that there are, however, marks for class participation (see below).

Class Participation – 5 marks

- 5 marks if you consistently contribute to discussions, are attentive to others' comments, read assigned readings and always respond to instructor's prompts and questions.
- 4 marks if you almost always do the readings and contribute to discussions and often initiate discussions.
- 3 marks if you always wait until you are called to answer questions. You infrequently initiate discussions but lack engagement with the contents of the course.
- 2 marks if you respond with little attention, reflection and thoughtfulness to the questions and do not initiate discussions.
- In case you have not been able to participate in the class to your satisfaction, initiating meaningful discussions on the Hello IITK portal and responding to others' comments may also count.

Quizzes – 20 marks

- 3 surprise quizzes for 10 marks each would be conducted during the lecture hours. The best 2 scores out of the 3 tests would be considered.

Mid-sem written examination – 30 marks

- A combination of objective and subjective type questions will be asked. It'll cover both discussions in the class as well as the readings.

End-sem written examination – 35 marks

- End-sem will follow the format of the mid-sem. The syllabus for the End semester would contain only those topics covered after the mid-semester examination.

## Grading

| Grade          | Grade Points | Grade | Grade Points | Grade | Grade Points | Grade | Grade Points |
|----------------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|
| A*             | 10           | B     | 8            | D+    | 5            | F     | 0            |
| A              | 10           | C+    | 7            | D     | 4            | I     | 0            |
| B <sup>+</sup> | 9            | C     | 6            | E     | 0            | -     | -            |

Office Hours: Meetings can be scheduled upon request by sending me an email at least a day in advance. My office is 579, FB.

## Academic Integrity and Honesty

The institute has a zero tolerance policy for any adoption of unfair means during examinations. In every other respect also, students are expected to do their academic work with integrity, with proper acknowledgement if material from other sources is included in their own work. Plagiarism, whether intended or not, is an act of academic dishonesty and penalized as such. If there is any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, students should consult their instructors to ensure maintenance of academic honesty in their work. Any case of cheating will be dealt with strictly by the Institute [UG Programmes Manual].