

PHIL0024: Ethics

Term 2, 2020/2021

Lecture: Uploaded to Moodle on Friday mornings

Module leader: Kacper Kowalczyk, kacper.kowalczyk@ucl.ac.uk

Teaching assistants:

Leora Sung, leora.sung.17@ucl.ac.uk

Euan Allison, euan.allison.17@ucl.ac.uk

Requirements

- (1) Watch my lecture *before* the seminar.
- (2) Attend your seminars. Come with *at least one* question prepared. (Could be about the reading or the lecture.)
- (3) There is no need to buy books. Links to all of the readings will be posted on Moodle.
- (4) There is a formative essay and a summative essay assignment for this course. The topics will be posted on Moodle in due course, along with submission guidelines.

Week 1: Introduction

No reading!

Week 2: Death

- **Required:**
 - Epicurus, Letter to Menoecus. In *Epicurus: The Extant Remains*, Cyril Bailey, trans. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 83–92. https://archive.org/details/EpicurusTheExtantRemainsBaileyOxford1926_201309 (6 pages)
 - Thomas Nagel (1979). Death. In his *Mortal Questions*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–10. (10 pages)
- **Optional:**
 - Bernard Williams. (1973). The Makropulos case: reflections on the tedium of immortality. In his *Problems of the Self*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 82–100. (19 pages)

Week 3: Wellbeing

- **Required:**
 - Robert Nozick (1974). The Experience Machine. In his *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Basic Books, pp. 42–45. (4 pages)
 - Derek Parfit (1987 [1984]). Appendix I. What Makes Someone's Life Best? In his *Reasons and Persons*. Oxford University Press, pp. 493–502. (10 pages)

- **Bonus:**
 - Larissa MacFarquhar, “How to Be Good”. Profile of Derek Parfit in the New Yorker: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/09/05/how-to-be-good>

Week 4: Demands of affluence

- **Required:**
 - John Rawls (1999 [1971]). Section 5. Classical Utilitarianism. In his *A Theory of Justice*, Second Edition, Harvard University Press, pp. 19-24. (6 pages)
 - Peter Singer (1972). Famine, affluence, and morality. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1(3), pp. 229-243. (15 pages)
- **Bonus:**
 - Amia Srinivasan (2015). Stop the Robot Apocalypse, London Review of Books. Discussion of effective altruism: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v37/n18/amia-srinivasan/stop-the-robot-apocalypse>

Week 5: Paradox of Deontology

- **Required:**
 - Robert Nozick (1974). *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Basic Books, pp. 28-35. (8 pages)
 - Otsuka, Michael (2011). Are deontological constraints irrational? In Ralf Bader & John Meadowcroft (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nozick*. Cambridge University Press. (21 pages)

Reading week

No reading! No seminars! No lectures!

Week 6: Trolley Problem

- **Required:**
 - Judith Jarvis Thomson (2008). Turning the trolley. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 36(4), pp. 359-374. (16 pages)
- **Bonus:**
 - Frances Kamm on the trolley problem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guyBWVPw6Bs>

Week 7: Survival Lottery

- **Required:**
 - Caspar Hare (2016). Should We Wish Well to All? *Philosophical Review* 125 (4):451-472. (22 pages)
- **Optional:**
 - John Harris (1975). The Survival Lottery. *Philosophy* 50(191), pp. 81-87. (7 pages)

Week 8: Numbers

- **Required:**
 - John Taurek (1977). Should the numbers count? *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 6 (4):293-316. (24 pages)

Week 9: Contractualism

- **Required:**
 - Thomas Scanlon (1998). Chapter 5 (selections) from *What We Owe to Each Other*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, sections 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9. (36 pages)
- **Bonus:**
 - Interview with Scanlon about his life and work:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdLmdhvOXno>

Week 10: Future generations

- **Required:**
 - Greaves, Hilary (2017). Population axiology. *Philosophy Compass* 12 (11):e12442. (15 pages)
- **Optional:**
 - Broome, John (2005). Should We Value Population? *Journal of Political Philosophy* 13 (4):399-413. (15 pages)