

Phil 693: Moral and Political Philosophy Proseminar

Course time and location: 621 Skytop Room 1116 South Campus

Instructor: Jan Dowell

Email: jldowell@syr.edu

Office hours: Zoom, by appointment

Course description: This course is an advanced introduction to topics in normative ethics, metaethics, and political philosophy and serves as a grounding for further graduate study.

Learning Outcomes:

Course Requirements:

1. Three short 4–5-page, double-spaced papers, one for each section of the course. The topics are of your choosing. Approximate due dates below. Final due dates to be announced.
2. One 10–14-page, double-spaced term paper. The topic must be discussed with me beforehand and may be a revision of one of your three short papers.
3. One class presentation on your term paper topic.
4. Exactly one weekly question or comment based on the assigned readings. The question or comment should be the basis for a *short* class discussion. Please save longer topics for your papers. These are due via email 24 hours prior to class. (jldowell@syr.edu) (2 weeks may be missed, no questions asked.)

Grading:

3 short papers: 10% each.

Discussion questions: 10%

Presentation: 10%

Term paper: 50%

Readings: All readings will be posted on Blackboard under the “content” tab.

Policy on Incompletes: Per department rules, incompletes for proseminars will be granted *only in exceptional circumstances*. Paperwork must be filled

out in advance. Please contact me asap if you think you might need to take an incomplete.

Required syllabus language

Academic Integrity:

As a pre-eminent and inclusive student-focused research institution, Syracuse University considers academic integrity the forefront of learning, serving as a core value and guiding pillar of education. Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy provides students with the necessary guidelines to complete academic work with integrity throughout their studies. Students are required to uphold both course-specific and university-wide academic integrity expectations such as crediting your sources, doing your own work, communicating honestly, and supporting academic integrity. The full Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy can be found by visiting class.syr.edu, selecting "Academic Integrity" and "Expectations and Policy".

Upholding Academic Integrity includes the protection of faculty's intellectual property. Students should not upload, distribute, or share instructors' course materials, including presentations, assignments, exams, or other evaluative materials without permission. Using websites that charge fees or require uploading of course material (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero) to obtain exam solutions or assignments completed by others, which are then presented as your own violates academic integrity expectations in this course and may be classified as a Level 3 violation. All academic integrity expectations that apply to in-person assignments, quizzes, and exams also apply online.

Students found in violation of the policy are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered. Students may not drop or withdraw from courses in which they face a suspected violation. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

Statement on Artificial Intelligence:

Based on the assignments in this course and our specified learning outcomes, the full use of artificial intelligence as a tool, with disclosure and citation, is permitted in this course. Students do not need to ask permission to use these tools before starting an assignment or exam, but they must explicitly and fully indicate which tools were used and describe how they were used.

Disability Statement:

Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course. I invite any student to contact me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be essential to your success and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process.

If you would like to discuss disability-accommodations or register with CDR, please visit the Center for Disability Resources. Please call (315) 443-4498 or email disabilityresources@syr.edu for more information.

The CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop and access plan. Since academic accommodations may require early planning and are generally not provided retroactively, please contact the CDR as soon as possible to begin this process.

Discrimination or harassment:

The University does not discriminate and prohibits harassment or discrimination related to any protected category including creed, ethnicity, citizenship, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, gender, pregnancy, disability, marital status, age, race, color, veteran status, military status, religion, domestic violence status, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender.

Any complaint of discrimination or harassment related to any of these protected bases should be reported to Sheila Johnson-Willis, the University's Chief Equal Opportunity & Title IX Officer. She is responsible for coordinating compliance efforts under various laws including Titles VI, VII, IX and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. She can be contacted at Equal Opportunity, Inclusion, and Resolutions Services, 005 Steele Hall, Syracuse University, Syracuse 13244-1120; by email: titleix@syr.edu; or by telephone: 315-443-0211.

Religious Observances:

Syracuse University's Religious Observances Policy recognized the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their traditions. Under the policy, students are given an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors no later than the academic drop deadline. For observances occurring before the drop deadline, notification is required at least two academic days in advance. Students may enter their observances in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.

Class Schedule (subject to revision):

Metaethics

1/12: Course overview, overview of 20th century metaethics

1/19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day (no class)

1/26: *Challenges to Objectivism*

- Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, chapter 1 "The Subjectivity of Values" (chapter 2 optional)
- Harman, *The Nature of Morality*, Section 1, chapter 1, "Ethics and Observation".

2/2: *Moral Explanations*

- Harman, *The Nature of Morality*, Section 1, chapter 1, "Ethics and Observation".

- Sturgeon “Moral Explanations”

2/9: Challenges to Cognitivism

- Smith, *The Moral Problem* (selections); Dreier, “Internalism and Speaker Relativism”

2/16: Challenges to Naturalism

- G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, chapter 1, sections A & B.
- <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/53430/53430-h/53430-h.htm>
- Parfit, *On What Matters* (selections) Triviality Objection
- *Optional*: Sobel & Dowell, “Advice for the Non-analytic Naturalist”

2/19: Short metaethics paper due on Blackboard by 11:59

Normative Ethics

2/23: Consequentialism

- Parfit, “Prudence, Morality, and the Prisoner’s Dilemma”
- Sobel, “The Impotence of the Demandingness Objection”.

3/2: Deontology

- Korsgaard, “Kant’s Formula of Universal Law”
- O’Neill, “Between Consenting Adults”

3/9: Spring Break (no class)

3/16: Virtue Ethics

- Hursthouse, “Normative Virtue Ethics”
- Cokelet, “Competitive Virtue Ethics and Narrow Morality”.

3/19 Short paper on normative ethics due on Blackboard by 11:59 p.m.

Political Philosophy

3/23: Libertarianism

- Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (selections).

3/30: Liberalism

- Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (selections)
- Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political, Not Metaphysical”.

4/6: *Rawls's critics*

- Okin, "Justice and Gender".

4/13: *Equality*

- Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?"

4/20: *Corrective Justice*

- Bernard Boxill, "A Lockean Argument for Black Reparations".

4/23: Short paper on political philosophy due on Blackboard by 11:59

4/27: Presentations

5/5: Final papers due on Blackboard by 11:59 p.m.