

**PHIL 6800: FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR
MORAL PRACTICE ACROSS SPECIES AND SOCIETIES
FALL 2016**

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CLASS LOCATION: S432 Ross Building (Yolton Library)

CLASS TIME: Fridays, 11.30am-2.30pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The focus of our seminar will be the concept of moral practice. Over the course of the semester, we will examine the origins, development, and nature of morality – not conceived as systems of abstract principles and their application, but as a family of interpersonal practices, concerned with mutual accountability, responsiveness, empathetic engagement and related values. We will discuss the nature of moral practice, the origins of moral practices in empathy and social norms (in human and non-human animals), the possibility of moral progress, and what it might mean to be an expert practitioner. We will conclude by examining practices of moral disagreement, drawing on debates over the personhood of non-human animals.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Evaluation will be based primarily on the following requirements:

8 SHORT WEEKLY PAPERS (70%):

Students will be required to submit a 1200-1500 word paper each week and will often be called upon to briefly present and defend their papers in class. Students must submit eight papers in all, four in each half of the course (four in Weeks 2-6, and four in Weeks 7-11). Papers are due 24 hours before the seminar (11:30 am on Thursday) and should be submitted electronically (as an email attachment) to both course directors. The lowest grade paper will be dropped. Late papers will not be accepted.

PARTICIPATION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (20%)

Discussion questions: You will each be required to post a discussion question to the *entire* class, via email, by 11.30am on Thursdays. You should include a brief introduction to your question when you post it (1-2 sentences), and will be sometimes expected to say a few remarks to frame it for the class when we meet. These will not be evaluated – so don't feel too much pressure – but keep in mind that we may use your question as a basis for some of our class discussion each week. You should post 9 questions in total, before 9 different classes.

Participation: By participation, we mean the following: doing the reading, being prepared to ask questions about others, submitting a discussion question each week (with one pass), presenting and defending your weekly papers in class; and attending all departmental talks *and* all philosophy talks in the Cog Sci and the Nathanson (Osgoode) speaker series; going to professional development/placement meetings.

OGS/SSHRC DRAFT: (10%)

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As a graduate student in this program, you are expected to apply to all scholarships for which you are eligible, and a strong application is typically the result of several revisions following feedback. One of your requirements for this class is the submission of a draft project/personal statement for a SSHRC or OGS application, on which you will receive feedback from both course directors. Since the deadline for SSHRC and OGS is October 26, we expect these by **OCTOBER 7**. We will discuss how to apply for both scholarships briefly in class on September 23 – in preparation for the workshop at 2.30pm.

COURSE READINGS: All readings will be available in a course Dropbox folder. Please consult the weekly reading schedule for further details. We will be reading multiple chapters from the following books, should you wish to purchase them:

- Gruen, Lori. 2014. *Entangled Empathy*. Lantern Books.
Kitcher, Philip. 2011. *The Ethical Project*. Harvard University Press.
Walker, Margaret Urban. 2007. *Moral Understandings* 2nd ed. Oxford University Press.
Wong, David. 2006. *Natural Moralities: A Defense of Pluralistic Relativism*. Oxford University Press.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES:

We aspire to provide a classroom and course environment that meets the needs of all students, and which enhances your studies and your research. If you face circumstances that will impair or disrupt your contributions to this seminar or if you have concerns about the course requirements and your learning needs, please speak to one of us as soon as possible.

York students are required to maintain high standards of academic integrity and are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty:

<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/acadhone.htm>

Students are also expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity website.

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SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, TOPICS, AND READINGS FOR PHIL 6800

September 9: Introduction to the Course

- No readings

September 16: Morality as Thinking, Feeling, or Doing

- Walker Ch 1, “The Subject of Moral Philosophy, with Postscript”
- MacIntyre Ch 14, “The Nature of the Virtues”
- Haidt, “The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail”

September 23: Evolution of Moral Practice: Origin of Norms and Value

- Bicchieri, Cristina and Muldoon, Ryan, "Social Norms"
- Kitcher, Ch 1 “The Springs of Sympathy”
- Kitcher, Ch 2 “Normative Guidance”

September 30: No Class (to be rescheduled – see below)

October 7: Evolution of Moral Practice II

- De Waal, “Natural Normativity: the ‘is’ and ‘ought’ of animal behavior”
- Korsgaard, “The Origin of the Good and Our Animal Nature”
- Vincent et al. “Moral practice in other animals”

October 14: Perception and Moral Expertise

- Varela, Lectures I and II, “Know How and Know What”; “On Ethical Expertise”
- Garfield “Ethics” in *Engaging Buddhism*
- Lawrence Blum, “Moral Perception and Particularity”

October 20 (Thursday*): A Case of Moral Perception: Gruen’s *Entangled Empathy*

We will consult as a group to find an alternate time for this class

- Lori Gruen *Entangled Empathy* (144 pp.)

October 28: No Class (Fall reading days)

November 4 No class

November 11: Moral Practice in Social Context

- Urban Walker Ch 3, “Authority and Transparency: The Case of Feminist Skepticism”
- Kitcher Ch 3, “Experiments in Living”
- Calhoun, “Moral Failure”

November 18: Challenges of Relativism

- Wong, Introduction, Ch 1, Ch 2, *Natural Moralities*
- Appiah, “Relativism and Cross-Cultural Understanding”

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- Ivanhoe, “Pluralism, Toleration, and Ethical Promiscuity”

November 25: The Possibility of Moral Progress

- Moody-Adams, “The Idea of Moral Progress”
- Rorty, “Solidarity or Objectivity”
- Kitcher, Ch 4 “One Thing After Another?”, Ch 6 “Possibilities of Progress”

Dec 2: Practices of Disagreement I

- Manne and Sobel, “Disagreeing about How to Disagree”
- Rini, “Moral Disagreement is Special”
- Wong Ch 9, “Coping with Moral Difference”

Dec Makeup Class A: Practices of Disagreement II

- Calhoun, “The Virtue of Civility”
- Warren, “What Should and Should Not Be Said”
- Comments on Warren by Lenard, Adler, and response from Warren

Makeup Class B: Moral Disagreement Test Case: Animals and Personhood

- Rowlands, “Are animals persons?”
<http://animalstudiesrepository.org/animsent/vol1/iss10/1/>
- Degrazia “Animal persons”
- Andrews “The stereotype diagnosis of personhood” (to be written!)