

Philosophy 265: Value Theory

Spring 2018

Instructor: J. Miller — j1miller@haverford.edu

Meetings: Mon/Wed, 2:15-3:45pm

Office/Hours: Hall 210; M 3:45-5pm, W 3:45-4:30

A historical study of various strains of metaethics and value theory. In this class we consider the nature and function of value. What does it mean, we will ask, for something to have an evaluative valence, i.e., to express qualitative features or resonances? By what capacities do we apprehend the values of objects and beings? Can we still grasp those same entities independent of value? The objective of this course is to better understand the historical development of the relationship between value, knowledge, and consciousness. To do this, we will focus on issues of narrative and language, embodiment, and temporality.

Texts

Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, The Classical Utilitarians

Immanuel Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals

Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power

Aesop, The Complete Fables

St. Augustine, City of God

G. E. Moore, Principia Ethica

Additional Readings on Moodle (m)

Requirements

Two 4-5 page papers, presentation, final exam, and diligent course participation.

Attendance

Regular attendance and informed participation at each seminar is expected of all students. Informed participation is especially important, meaning that your success in the course (and the success of the class overall) depends not only on your reading the assigned texts but also on your having thought deeply about the material prior to each meeting.

Papers

Paper topics will be provided. Please make good note of paper due dates. You must hand in a hard copy of your paper—*emailed papers will not be accepted*.

Presentation

Details on presentations will be covered in class.

A number of resources on campus are available to you as a student to maximize your academic potential, including the Office of Academic Resources and the Office of Disabilities Services. If you think you may need accommodations because of a disability you should contact Access and Disability Services at hc-ads@haverford.edu. If you have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and would like to request accommodations in this course because of a disability, please provide a verification letter to me at the beginning of the semester (ideally within the first two weeks).

Readings/Assignments

Week One

Jan 22: [Introductory Lecture to Value Theory]

Jan 24: [Lecture on History of Value (no required reading)]

Week Two

Jan 29: Aesop, *The Complete Fables*, pp. 1-50 + any 20 additional fables

Jan 31: Anthony Skillen, "Aesop's Lessons in Literary Realism" (m)

Week Three

Feb 5: Jean-François Lyotard, *Postmodern Fables* (selections) (m)
David Sedaris, *Squirrel Seeks Chipmunk* (selections) (m)
[Optional: Film, *Burn After Reading*, Ethan and Joel Coen (2008)]

Feb 7: Plato, *The Republic*, selections (m)
King James Bible, Genesis:1-10 (m)

Week Four

Feb 12: St. Augustine, *City of God*, XII: 1-9, 27-28; XIII: 1-3, 13-17, 21

Feb 14: St. Augustine, *City of God*, XIV: 1, 3, 10-15, 17-19, 25; XV: 1-2, 4-7; XVI: 1-3

Week Five

Feb 19: G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Chpt I

Feb 21: G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Chpt I [cont.]

Week Six

Feb 26: [In class discussion of papers]

Feb 28: [no class] [**Paper 1 due 4pm in my Hall 101 faculty box**]

Week Seven

Mar 5: Bentham/Mill, *The Classical Utilitarians*, 92-122

Mar 7: Moore, Chpt III (sects. 36-44)

—Spring Break—

Week Eight

Mar 19: Moore, Chpt. VI (sects. 110-121)

Mar 21: G. Santayana, "Hypostatic Ethics" (m)

Week Nine

Mar 26: C. L. Stevenson, "The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms" (m)

Mar 28: H. Sidgwick, "Ethical Judgments" (m)
Moore, Chpt III (sects. 45-57)

Week Ten

Apr 2: Kant, *Groundwork*, Sections I and II

Apr 4: [no class] [**Paper 2 due 4pm in my Hall 101 faculty box**]

Week Eleven

Apr 9: Kant, *Groundwork*, Sections I and II [cont.]

Apr 11: Moore, Chpt IV

Week Twelve

Apr 16: Moore, Chpt IV [cont.]

Apr 18: Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 146-162

Week Thirteen

Apr 23: Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 200-219

Apr 25: Nietzsche, Will to Power, pp. 370-381

Week Fourteen

Apr 30: [Final presentations]

May 2: [Final Exam Review]

Seniors: Exams due 5pm, Saturday, May 12

Non-Seniors: Exams due 12 noon, Friday May 18.