

Practical Ethics Tutorials (Trinity 2021)

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General Instructions: Essays should not exceed 2000 words and must be emailed to me in .doc format to no later than 24 hours before the tutorial. Weekly essay questions are included. Where there are multiple questions, choose *one*. Note that your essays do not necessarily need to discuss of all the readings for that week.

Materials: Everything should be available through the Bodleian system. If you can't find something, try scihub or libgen (google them). If you still can't find something, email me and I'll send it to you.

Tip: Articles in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy provide overviews of topics that are often useful. The SEP tends to focus on surveying the literature. The IEP is often less comprehensive but better at explaining views and arguments. For every topic we will cover, it will be useful to read the relevant SEP and IEP entries, where they exist.

Other Stuff: Here are some very useful links about writing philosophy essays:

1. <https://tinyurl.com/retc4>
2. <https://tinyurl.com/y2p7qrq7>
3. <https://tinyurl.com/y45bmf4b>
4. <https://tinyurl.com/y3h3h5ha>

Here's an example of a first-class exam answer (according to examiners at Cambridge, anyway):

- <https://tinyurl.com/y6rwpl36>

Note: This syllabus is provisional; we may decide to modify it as the term progresses.

WEEK 1: BENEFICENCE

Essay Question: How much must we give?

Readings:

- Peter Singer, 1972. "Famine affluence, and morality" *Philosophy & Public Affairs*
- Liam Murphy, 1993. "The demands of beneficence" *Philosophy & Public Affairs*
- Peter Unger, 1996. *Living High and Letting Die: Our Illusion of Innocence*. Oxford University Press. Pages 3-13 and 24-61
- Frances Kamm, 2000. "Does distance matter morally to the duty to rescue?" *Law and Philosophy*
- Garrett Cullity, 2003. "Asking too much" *The Monist*

WEEK 2: EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM

Essay Questions:

- On what bases is it permissible to determine to whom to give?
- Is charity always a second-best response to injustice?

Readings:

- Jeff McMahan, 2017. "Doing Good and Doing the Best", in Paul Woodruff (ed.), *The Philosophy of Giving*, Oxford University Press.
- Iason Gabriel, 2016. "Effective Altruism and its Critics", *The Journal of Applied Philosophy*.
- Elizabeth Ashford, 2017. "Severe Poverty as an Unjust Emergency", in Paul Woodruff (ed.), *The Ethics of Giving*, Oxford University Press.
- Amia Srinivasan, 2018. "Stop the Robot Apocalypse", *New York Review of Books*
- Christine Korsgaard, 2018. "The Claims of Animals and the Needs of Strangers: Two Cases of Imperfect Right", *The Journal of Practical Ethics*.

WEEK 3: THE MORAL STATUS OF NON-HUMAN ANIMALS

Essay Question: Is there any moral difference between eating the meat of a human animal and eating the meat of a non-human animal?

Readings:

- Peter Singer, 1975. *Animal liberation*, Ch. 1.
- Tom Regan, 1980. "Animal rights, human wrongs", *Environmental Ethics*.
- Jeff McMahan, 2008. "Eating animals the nice way", *Daedalus*.
- Shelly Kagan, 2016. "What's wrong with speciesism?" *Journal of Applied Philosophy*.
- Barbara Herman, 2018. "We are Not Alone: A Place for Animals in Kant's Ethics", Eric Watkins (ed.) *Kant on Persons and Agency*, Cambridge University Press.
- Christine Korsgaard, 2011. "Interacting with Animals: A Kantian Account" in R.G. Frey (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*

WEEK 4: PREDATION

Essay Question: Ought we intervene in predation among other animals?

Readings:

- Jeff McMahan, 2016. "The Moral Problem of Predation" in *Philosophy Comes to Dinner: Arguments About the Ethics of Eating*
- Clare Palmer, 2011. "The Moral Relevance of the Distinction between Domesticated and Wild Animals" in *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*.

- Tom Regan, 1983. *The Case for Animal Rights*, Chapter 9, Section 3 “How to Worry about Endangered Species”: 359-361
- Christine Korsgaard, 2018. *Fellow Creatures: Our Obligations to the Other Animals*. §10.1, §10.4, §10.5

WEEK 5: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Essay Question: ‘People should be treated as individuals’. Is this a good objection to affirmative action?

Readings:

- Judith Thomson, 1973, “Preferential hiring”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*
- Alan H. Goldman, 1975, “Limits to the Justification of Reverse Discrimination”, *Social Theory and Practice*
- Bernard Boxill, 1978, “The Morality of Preferential Hiring,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*
- Louis P. Pojman, 1998. “The case against affirmative action”, in LaFollette (ed.), *Ethics in Practice*, 4th ed. (Blackwell): 433-43.
- George Sher, 1999, “Diversity”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 28, 85-104
- Elizabeth Anderson, 2010. *The Imperative of Integration*, Princeton University Press. chs. 7-8.

WEEK 6: RACIAL PROFILING

Essay Question: ‘People should be treated as individuals’. Is this a good objection to racial profiling?

Readings:

- Mathias Risse & Richard Zeckhauser, 2004. “Racial profiling”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*
- Anabelle Lever, 2005. “Why racial profiling is hard to justify: a response to Risse and Zeckhauser”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*
- Paul Bou-Habib, 2011. “Racial profiling and background injustice,” *Journal of Ethics*.
- Adam Omar Hosein, 2018. “Racial Profiling and the Reasonable Sense of Inferior Political Status”, *Journal of Political Philosophy*

WEEK 7: CONSENT IN MEDICAL ETHICS

Essay Question: Some medical procedures are permissible even if the subject does not consent. Some are impermissible even if the subject consents. So what is the significance of consent?

Readings:

- Julian Savulescu & R. W. Momeyer, 1997. “Should Informed Consent Be Based on Rational Beliefs?” *Journal of Medical Ethics*

- Jukka Varelius, 2006. "Autonomy, Wellbeing, and the Case of the Refusing Patient" *Medicine, Health Care, and Philosophy*
- Onora O'Neill, 2002. *Autonomy and Trust in Bioethics*. Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2.
- Rebecca L. Walker, 2009. "Respect for Rational Autonomy" *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*.

WEEK 8: THE NON-IDENTITY PROBLEM

Essay Question: Can you benefit or harm someone in determining whether they will exist?

Readings:

- Derek Parfit, 1984. *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford University Press, Ch. 16.
- James Woodward, 1986. "The Non-Identity Problem" *Ethics* 86: 804-31
- Elizabeth Harman, 2004. "Can we harm and benefit in creating?" *Philosophical Perspectives*
- Jeff McMahan, 2013. "Causing people to exist and saving people's lives" *Journal of Ethics*.