PHI 540/420

Fall 2022

Th 3-5:50

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**Positive Moral Philosophy**

This course is devoted to exploring what a new subfield of ethics—positive moral philosophy—might look like. The inspiration comes from Martin P. Seligman’s 1998 presidential address to the American Psychological Association in which he drew attention to psychology’s almost exclusive focus on mental pathology. He proposed a new field—positive psychology—that would focus on mental health, including well-being and happiness, and the positive human traits, like hope, resilience, optimism, and gratitude that support human flourishing. Positive Psychology is now a flourishing field.

Insofar as normative ethics steers us toward improved moral performance by determining what we are obligated to do or to avoid, all of normative ethics is positive moral philosophy. Yet normative ethics is, even so, generally not focused on moral success and what enables a successful moral life. The focus often is on wrongdoing, culpability, and the negative reactive attitude of resentment—in short, with what does or might go wrong in moral life. A fully positive moral philosophy would instead focus on what goes right in moral life and what enables both it to go right and us to be good persons. Positive moral philosophy is thus devoted to investigating the nature of and the social, interpersonal, and intrapersonal contributors to moral success and progress; it attends to the reparative, appreciative, generous, and hopeful dimensions of our relation to self and other, as well as to the attractions of morality and aspirational ideals; it emphasizes varieties of elective, non-demandable moral action over demandable moral requirements.

This course is divided into three sections. We begin, at the more negative end, with constructive approaches to the fact of wrongdoing. We then turn to everyday successful moral behavior and some of what enables that success. In the last section we turn to moral excellence.

**Course Goals for You:**

To become knowledgeable about ways of doing positive moral philosophy

To enhance your reading, oral presentation, manuscript review, and writing skills

To practice the art of sustaining a philosophical discussion of a shared reading

To produce an essay suitable for use as a writing sample in graduate school admission (undergraduates) or conference presentation (undergraduates and graduate students) or publication (undergraduate and graduate students).

**Texts:**

Articles available through the ASU library or downloadable via links from the electronic syllabus.

**Office Hours:**

I’m happy to chat with you outside of class in my Zoom room or office. Email me so we can set up a convenient time. Assume that Tuesdays and Fridays 11-3 will normally be available.

**Attendance Policy:**

Missing more than three seminar sessions (three weeks!) will result in a failing course grade.

**Course requirements and grade percentages:**

**one class precis presentation (10%):**

You will sign up to give a precis of one of the readings using a PowerPoint slides. Your presentation should be 15 minutes, and you should practice your presentation before delivering it in class to make sure that you do not exceed the limit. Your primary task is to1) remind us of the main philosophical question or issue that the article aims to address, 2) summarize the main line of argument, and time permitting, 3) focus in on some portion of the text that you think is important and that we need to be clear on.

**You will be graded on:**

* organization and clarity of your presentation
* correctness of your re-presentation of the author’s views
* clarity of your slides (which includes not having so much text on them that we cannot read and listen at the same time)
* intellectual engagement (e.g., using your own examples, pointing out unclear passages in the text and providing your own interpretation, explaining technical terminology or definitions)
* taking a leading role in class discussion of this essay

**Two commentaries (5% each):**

You will sign up to present comments on two of the readings. You may, but are not required to, share PowerPoint slides. Your presented commentary should be 5 minutes. Your primary task is to *comment* on (not re-present) the essay. How you do so is up to you. You might critique an argument, spell out the implications of the author’s view, draw connections between this essay and other readings, provide relevant empirical information, and/or raise questions about the text that you think we need to address.

**Canvas discussion contributions (15%):**

Seminars work best if everyone comes with something in mind that they think it is important for us to discuss. So, **1pm** of each seminar day, you are to post a thoughtful engagement with one of the readings for the day. This may be, for example, a critical comment on

or speculation about a particular passage’s meaning and implications. Your focus should be on what you take to be important for us to cover in order to understand and critically engage with the material. It should be written professionally, and that includes using correct grammar and spelling. [*No posts on the two days you post your commentaries. You should still post on the day of your precis.]* You will be graded on the number of acceptable posts: 9=A+, 8=A, 6-7=B, 5=C, 4=D, 3 or less=F

**7-page essay (20%):**

The central question you are raising and addressing must be stated (*as a question*) within the first paragraph. The (complete) draft of our essay will be reviewed by two individuals. You will then revise it, making use of your reviewers’ comments and your own critical judgment. The final revised draft will receive separate grades on (1) the philosophical quality of the essay, and (2) your responsiveness to your reviewers’ critiques. Be sure to read the Guidelines for Writing and Revising and the Style Guide.

Bring two copies to class on the due date, one for each of your reviewers.

**Peer Reviews, Responses to Critics (15% total):**

You will review two 7-page and two professional essays following the Peer Reviewing Guidelines.

**Professional Essay (30%):**

The (complete) draft of your professional essay will be reviewed by two members of the class. The final revised draft will receive separate grades on (1) the philosophical quality of the essay,you’re your responsiveness to your reviewers’ critiques.

*Undergraduate*: 10 page maximum for the draft. The goal is to produce an essay of sufficient philosophical caliber and writing sophistication to be used as a writing sample in graduate school applications. Accordingly, heightened standards of assessment will be in play. **You must use at least one source other than course texts** (I’ve provided suggested additional readings for some of the topics we cover). Be sure to review the Guidelines for Writing and Revising and the Style Guide.

Bring two copies to class, one for each of your reviewers.

*Graduate*: 15 page maximum for the draft. The goal is to produce an essay of sufficient intellectual caliber, originality, and writing sophistication to be submitted for conference presentation. Accordingly, heightened standards of assessment will be in play. **You are to use at least one source other than course texts** (I’ve provided suggested additional readings for some of the topics we cover). Be sure to review the Guidelines for Writing and Revising and the Style Guide.

*Final revised essays are due by noon on the scheduled final exam date* in my office Coor 3330 or my THIRD (not fourth!!) floor mailbox. Early submissions welcome.

**Grading scale for essays, peer reviews, response to critics, and presentations:**

A+=4.2-4.3, A=3.9-4.1, A-=3.7-3.8, B+=3.3-3.6, B=2.9-3.2, B-=2.7-2.8, C+=2.3-2.6, C=2.0-2.2, C-=1.7- 1.9, D=1.0-1.6, E=below 1.0.

**Syllabus**

8-18 Introduction

* Cheshire Calhoun, “Positive Moral Philosophy: A Proposal”

1. **Constructive Approaches to Wrongdoing**

8-25 Reducing Blame Responses

* Ryan Preston-Roedder, “Faith in Humanity,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 87, no. 3 (2013): 664-687.
* Karen Stohr, “The Veil of Philanthropy” in her *Minding the Gap: Moral Ideals and Moral Improvement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), ch. 10. (*Minding the Gap* is available electronically through the ASU Library).

Related Literature:

* + Victoria McGeer and Philip Pettit, “The Empowering Theory of Trust,” in *The Philosophy of Trust*, eds. Paul Faulner and Thomas Simpson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), ch. 2 (Ask me for a copy.)
  + Andrea Westlund, “Anger, Faith, and Forgiveness,” *The Monist* 92, no. 4 (2009): 507-536.
  + Karen Stohr, “Keeping the shutters closed: the Moral Value of Reserve,” *Philosopher’s Imprint* 14, no. 23 (2014): 1-25.
  + Ryan Preston-Roedder, “Three Varieties of Faith,” *Philosophical Topics* 46, no. 1 (2018): 173-199.
  + Adrienne Martin, “Normative Hope” in her *How We Hope: A Moral Psychology* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2014), ch. 5. (available electronically from the ASU library)

9-1 Taking Responsibility (sometimes without Being Responsible)

* Elinor Mason, “Taking Responsibility,” in her *Ways to Be Blameworthy: Rightness, Wrongness, and Responsibility* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), ch. 8.
* Stephen Bero, “Holding Responsible and Taking Responsibility,” *Law and Philosophy* 39, no. 3 (2020): 263-296.

Related Literature:

* + Elinor Mason, “Respecting Each Other and Taking Responsibility for Our Biases,” in *Social dimensions of Moral Responsibility*, eds. Katrina Hutchison, Catriona Mackenzie, and Marina Oshana (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). Copy of chapter available from me.
  + David Enoch, Being Responsible, Taking Responsibility, and Penumbral Agency,” in *Luck, Value, and Commitment: Themes from the Ethics of Bernard Williams.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
  + Cheshire Calhoun, “Responsibility and Taking on Responsibilities,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 190, part 3 (2019): 1-21.

9-8 More/Other than Blaming Responses to Wrongdoers

* Miranda Fricker, “Forgiveness—An Ordered Pluralism,” *Australasian Philosophical Review* 3 (2019): 241-260.
* John Braithwaite, “Repentance Rituals and Restorative Justice” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2000): 115-131.

Related Literature:

* + Glen Pettigrove, “Forgiveness and Grace,” in his *Forgiveness and Love* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), ch. 7.
  + Lucy Allais, “Elective Forgiveness,” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 21, no. 5 (2013): 637-653.
  + Margaret Urban Walker, “Forgiving,” in her *Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations After Wrongdoing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), ch. 5 (electronic book available from ASU library)
  + Michelle Moody-Adams, “The Enigma of Forgiveness,” *Journal of Value Inquiry* 49 (2015): 161-180.
  + Glen Pettigrove, “Meekness and ‘Moral’ Anger,” *Ethics* 122, no. 2 (2012): 341-370.
  + Linda Radzik, “Moral Repair and the Moral Saints Problem,” *Religious Inquiries* 2, no. 4 (2013): 5-19.
  + Linda Radzik, “Tort Processes and Relational Repair,” in John Oberdiek, ed., *Philosophical Foundations of the Law of Torts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 231-249. [Ask me for a copy if you want to see it.]
  + Linda Radzik, *Making Amends: Atonement in Morality, Law, and Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

9-15 Moral Progress and Revolutions

* Michele M. Moody-Adams, “Moral Progress and Human Agency,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 20, no. 1 (2017): 153-168.
* Allen Buchanan and Russell Powell, “Toward a Naturalistic Theory of Moral Progress,” *Ethics* 126 (2016): 983-1014.

Related Literature:

* + Dale Jamieson, “Slavery, Carbon, and Moral Progress,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 20, no. 1 (2017): 169-183.
  + Julia Hermann “The Dynamics of Moral Progress,” *Ratio* 32, no. 4 (2019): 300-311.
  + Cecile Eriksen, “The Dynamics of Moral Revolutions—Prelude to Future Investigations and Interventions,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 22 (2019): 779-792
  + Michele M. Moody-Adams, “The Idea of Moral Progress,” *Metaphilosophy* 30, no. 3 (1999): 168-185.
  + Allen Buchanan and Russell Powell, *The Evolution of Moral Progress: a Biocultural Theory* (New York: OUP, 2018). (electronic copy available through ASU library)
  + Nigel Pleasants, “Moral Argument is not Enough: The Persistence of Slavery and the Emergence of Abolition,” *Philosophical Topics* 38, no. 1 (2010): 159-180.
  + Nigel Pleasants, “The Structure of Moral Revolutions,” *Social Theory and Practice* 44, no. 4 (2018): 567-592
  + Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Honor Code: How Moral Revolutions Occur* (New York: Norton, 2010).

1. **Successful Moral Performance**

9-22 Manners

* Amy Olberding, “Etiquette: A Confucian Contribution to Moral Philosophy,” *Ethics* 126, no. 2, (2016): 422–446
* Nancy Sherman, “Of Manners and Morals,” *British Journal of Educational Studies* 53, no. 3 (2005): 272-289.

Related Literature:

* + Karen Stohr, *On Manners* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
  + Erin M. Cline, “The Boundaries of Manners: Ritual and Etiquette in Early Confucianism and Stohr’s *On Matters*,” *Dao: a Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 15, no. 2 (2016): 241-255.
  + Amy Olberding, *The Wrong of Rudeness: Learning Modern Civility from Ancient Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).
  + Anja Berninger, “Manners as Desire Management,” *Journal of Value Inquiry* 55 (2021):155-173.
  + Felicia Ackerman, “A Man By Nothing Is So Well Betrayed as by his Manners: Politeness as a Virtue,” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 13 (1988): 250-258.
  + Karen Stohr, “The Etiquette of Eating,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics*, ed. Tyler Doggett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 700-721.
  + Sarah Buss, “Appearing Respectful: The Moral Significance of Manners,” *Ethics*, Vol. 109, No. 4, (1999): 795–826;
  + Cheshire Calhoun, “The Virtue of Civility,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol 29, No. 3, (2000): 251–275
  + Thomas Nagel, “Concealment and Exposure,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 27, no. 1 (1998): 3-30.

9-29 Norm Compliance and Norm Change. **1st Essay Draft Due**

* Cheshire Calhoun, “Compliance Responsibility” (draft)
* Cristina Bicchieri, “Shrieking Sirens: Schemata, Scripts, and Social Norms. How Change Occurs,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 35, no. 1 (2018): 23-53

Related Literature:

* + Harold Garfinkel, “Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities,” *Social Problems* 11, no. 3 (1964): 225-250.
  + Lynn Stout, “Blind to Goodness: Why We Don’t See Conscience,” in *Cultivating Conscience: How Good Laws Make Good People*, ch. 3 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). (electronic copy of book available through ASU library)
  + Trudy Govier, “Trusting Strangers?” in her *Social Trust and Human Communities*, ch. 5 (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997). (electronic copy of book available through ASU library)
  + D’Cruz, “Humble Trust,” *Philosophical Studies* 176 (2019): 933-953.
  + Johnny Brennan, “Recognition Trust,” *Philosophical Studies*, 178 (2021): 3799-3818.
  + Cristina Bicchieri, *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose, Measure, and Change Social Norms* (New York: OUP, 2017). (hardcopy available at West Campus’s library)
  + Jules Holroyd, “A Communicative Conception of Moral Appraisal,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 10: 267-278.
  + Cheshire Calhoun, “Common Decency,” in *Setting the Moral Compass*, ed. Cheshire Calhoun (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

10-6 Presentation & Discussion of Your Papers. **Peer Reviews Due.**

10-13 Solidarity and Belonging. **Revised 1st Essay Due.**

* Adam Cureton, “Solidarity and Social Moral Rules,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 15, no. 5 (2011): 691-706.
* Victor Fernandez Castro and Elisabeth Pacherie, “Joint Actions, Commitments, and the Need to Belong,” *Synthese* 198 (2021): 7597–7626.

Related Literature:

* + Nicolas Bommarito, “Private Solidarity” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 19 (2016): 445-455.
  + Karen Stohr, “Moral Neighborhoods,” in her *Minding the Gap, Moral Ideals and Moral Improvement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), ch. 5. (electronic book available through ASU library)
  + Bennett W. Helm, “Accountability and Some Social Dimensions of Human Agency,” *Action Theory* 22 (2012): 217-232.

10-20 Conscience

* Lynn Stout, “The Jekyll/Hyde Syndrome: A Three-factor Social Model of Unselfish, Prosocial Behavior,” in *Cultivating Conscience: How Good Laws Make Good People*, ch. 5
* Kimberley Brownlee, “Conscience,” in her *Conscience and Conviction: the Case for Civil Disobedience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), ch. 2, **pp. 51-71** (you don’t need to read the section on an Ideal of Conscience) (pdf to be provided by me)

Related Literature:

* + J. Mark Weber and J. Keith Murnighan, “Suckers or Saviors? Consistent Contributors in Social Dilemmas,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 95, no. 6 (2008): 1340-1353.
  + William Lyons, “Conscience—an Essay in Moral Psychology” *Philosophy* 84 (2009): 477-494 OR
  + Larry May, “On Conscience” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1983): 57-67
  + David B. Wong, “Early Confucian Philosophy and the Development of Compassion,” *Dao* 14 (2015) 157-194.

1. **Beyond Obligation and Blame**

10-27 Beyond Obligation and Blame

* Michael Ferry, “Beyond Obligation: Reasons and Supererogation,” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 77 (2015): 49-65
* Cheshire Calhoun, “Appreciating Responsible Persons,” *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics, Vol. 11,* ed. Mark Timmons (Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 9-28 (copy supplied by me)

Related Literature:

* + Michael Ferry, “Does Morality Demand our Very Best? On Moral Prescriptions and the Line of Duty,” *Philosophical Studies* 165 (2013): 573-589.
  + Alfred Archer, “Supererogation, Sacrifice, and the Limits of Duty,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 54, no. 3 (2016): 333-354.
  + Nathan Stout, “On the Significance of Praise,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2020): 215-226.
  + Daniel Telech, “Praise as Moral Address,” in *Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility*, vol. 7, ed., David Shoemaker, 154-181 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021). (Ask me for a copy)
  + Daniel Telech, “Demanding More of Strawsonian Accountability Theory,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 28 (2020): 926-941.

11-3 Saints & co.

* Julia Markovitz, “Saints, Heroes, Sages, and Villains,” *Philosophical Studies* 158, no. 2 (2012): 289-311.
* Vanessa Carbonell, “The Ratcheting-Up Effect,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 93 (2012): 228-254.

Related Literature:

* + Dougherty, “Altruism and Ambition in the Dynamic Moral Life,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*  95, no. 4 (2017): 716-729.
  + Valerie Tiberius and Jason Swartwood “Wisdom Revisited: A Case Study in Normative Theorizing,” *Philosophical Explorations* 14, no. 3 (2011): 277-295.
  + Julia Markowitz, “Acting for the Right Reasons,” *Philosophical Review* 119, no. 2 (2010): 201-242.
  + Nomy Arpaly, “Moral Worth,” *Journal of Philosophy* 99 (2002):223.
  + Vanessa Carbonell, “What Moral Saints Look Like,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 39, no. 3 (2009): 371-398.
  + Logan Mitchell, “Hastening Moral Progress,” unpublished manuscript. (Ask me for a copy)
  + Vanessa Carbonell, “Sacrifices of Self,” *Journal of Ethics* 19 (2015): 53-72.

11-10 Being a Good Person

* Nomy Arpaly, “Duty, Desire, and the Good Person: Towards a Non-Aristotelian Account of Virtue,” *Philosophical Perspectives* 28 (2014): 59-74.
* Andreas Schmidt, “Being Good by Doing Good: Goodness and the Evaluation of Persons,” *Utilitas* 29, no. 1 (2017): 3-26.

Related Literature:

* + Julia Annas, “The Phenomenology of Virtue,” *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 7, no. 1 (2008): 21-34.
  + Julia Driver, “A Consequentialist Theory of Virtue,” in her *Uneasy Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), ch. 4 (electronic copy of book available through ASU library).
  + Nomy Arpaly, “On Benevolence,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 92 (2018): 2017-223
  + Melissa Seymour Fahmy, “Kantian Practical Love,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 91 (2010): 313-331
  + Erasmus Mayr, “Kantian Benevolence” [a response to Arpaly’s essay on benevolence], *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* *Supplementary Volume* 92 (2018): 225-245.
  + Stephen Darwall, “Empathy, Sympathy, Care,” *Philosophical Studies*, 89 (1998): 261-282.

11-17 Ideals and Exemplars. **Professional Essay Draft Due.**

* Kimberley Brownlee, “Moral Aspirations and Ideals,” *Utilitas* 22, no. 3 (2010): 241-257.
* Bart Engelen, Alan Thomas, Alfred Archer, Niels van de Ven, “Exemplars and Nudges: Combining Two Strategies for Moral Education,” *Journal of Moral Education* 47, no. 3 (2018): 346-365.

Related Literature:

* + Kimberley Brownlee, “Conscience,” in her *Conscience and Conviction: the Case for Civil Disobedience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), ch. 2, **pp. 72-83 on an ideal of conscience.**
  + Ian James Kidd, “Admiration, attraction and the aesthetics of exemplarity,” *Journal of Moral Education* 48, no. 3 (2019): 369-380.
  + Alfred Archer, “Admiration and Motivation,” *Emotion Review* 11, no. 2 (2019): 140-150.
  + Jonathan Haidt, “The Positive Emotion of Elevation,” *Prevention & Treatment* 3, Article 3, March 7, 2000.
  + Andrew L. Thomson and Jason T. Siegel, “Elevation: A Review of Scholarship on a Moral and Other-Praising Emotion” *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12 (2016): 628-638.
  + Linda Zagzebski, “Moral Exemplars in Theory and Practice,” *Theory and Research in Education* 11, no. 2 (2013): 193-206
  + J. David Velleman, “Motivation by Ideal,” *Philosophical Explorations* 5, no. 2 (2002): 89-103.
  + Amy Olberding, “Dreaming of the Duke of Zhou: Exemplarism in the *Analects*,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 35, no. 4 (2008): 625-639.
  + Glen Pettigrove, “Moral Ambition,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 87 (2009): 285-299.

11-24 Thanksgiving

12-1 Presentation & Discussion of papers. **Peer Reviews Due.**

Revised Professional Essays due Tuesday December 6th. Bring your professional essay and two peer reviewers’ comments to our classroom between 4:00 and 4:15, and upload a copy to Canvas. Early submissions welcome.