

PHI 420F/591H: TOPICS IN PHILOSOPHY/SEMINAR
Reasons and Values
Spring 2007

1. Contact Information:

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- Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00-12:00 PM and other days and times by appointment.

2. Required Texts:

- A course reader that will be available for purchase at the [Alternative Copy Shop](#) at 715 South Forest Avenue. I recommend that you call ahead (480.829.7992) to make sure that they will have a copy ready for you when you arrive.
- Selected articles that will be made available online through the ASU Blackboard website at myASU Courses (<http://myasucourses.asu.edu>). These are PDF files that require [Adobe Reader](#), which can be downloaded for free by click on the provided link.

3. Blackboard and Email:

The course is supported by the ASU Blackboard website at myASU Courses (<http://myasucourses.asu.edu>). Blackboard is an online course management system. Using the Blackboard website, you will be able to access important course content online: handouts, announcements, lecture outlines, the syllabus, and the instructor's contact information. You will also be able to check your grades on various assignments and to send emails to your fellow students (but note that I receive a copy of any email sent through the system and will be monitoring emails to ensure that they pertain to the course). I will also use Blackboard to email you. Blackboard will be an important source of information, so please check Blackboard at least twice a week for new announcements.

In order to get key course announcements, you must not only check the Blackboard website but also regularly check your ASU-sponsored email. If you would like to use an alternate (non-ASU) email address, you must redirect your ASU email address to the one you more commonly use. To do so, go to www.asu.edu/emma. Click EPO update on the left, and then change your destination address. Make sure the email you redirect it to is currently active/valid. And please make sure that your mailbox is not full. As an instructor, I will not know if course emails are not getting to you, so the responsibility is on you.

For more information on using Blackboard, see the handout entitled: "MyASU and Blackboard."

4. Course Description: This course will focus on reasons, values, desires, actions, and the relations between them. Some of the issues to be addressed include: (1) Can the notion of a reason be analyzed, or is it a primitive/indefinable notion? (2) Do all reasons require? That

is, is it the case that, for all reasons R, if R is a reason to ϕ , then R would, if sufficiently weighty and unopposed by countervailing reasons, generate a requirement to ϕ ? (3) What is the connection between reasons and motivation? Are all reasons for action internal reasons, such that, for S to have a reason to do x, it must be the case that S would be motivated to do x if S knew all the relevant facts and deliberated in a procedurally rational way? What is the distinction between procedural and substantive rationality? (4) Are there reasons to desire certain ends, or is instrumental rationality all there is? Can an agent be open to rational criticism for lacking a desire even if she couldn't come to have this desire simply by rationally deliberating on her current beliefs and desires? (5) Does the fact that an agent desires some end, E, provide her with any reason to pursue E? (6) Is the teleological conception of reasons for action correct? That is, is it true that all and only facts concerning the desirability and undesirability of outcomes provide reasons for action? (7) Does the fact that E is valuable provide an agent with any reason to desire or pursue E, or is the property of being valuable just the higher-order property of having other properties that provide reasons to desire and/or pursue it? Is this buck-passing account of value correct, and can it be salvaged in light of the wrong-kind-of-reasons problem? (8) Is all value the kind that's to be promoted, or is there also a kind of value that's to be honored/respected? What, if any, implications does this have for normative ethics? (9) Is it always rational (is there always sufficient reason) to do what's best for oneself? Is it always rational (is there always sufficient reason) to do what's impartially best?

5. Course Requirements and Grading Policy:

Track A: For Most Undergraduate Students:

➤ Attendance, Preparation, and Participation:	50 Points ¹
➤ Five Reading Summaries (2-3 pp. each/10 points each):	50 Points
➤ Short Critical Paper (4-5 pp.):	100 Points
➤ Proto-Outline of Term Paper (optional):	0 or 25 Points
➤ Term Paper (8-10 pp.):	175 or 200 Points

Total Points: 400 Points

Track B: For Graduate Students (and Advanced Undergrads):

➤ Attendance, Preparation, and Participation:	50 Points
➤ Short Paper (8-10 pp.):	100 Points
➤ Term Paper (15-20 pp.):	250 Points

Total Points: 400 Points

¹ But see item 7 below.

The plus/minus system will be used. Course grades will be assigned according to the following point distributions:

A+	400-388	Points	(100-97%)
A	387.9-372	Points	(96.9-93%)
A-	371.9-360	Points	(92.9-90%)
B+	359.9-348	Points	(89.9-87%)
B	347.9-332	Points	(86.9-83%)
B-	331.9-320	Points	(82.9-80%)
C+	319.9-300	Points	(79.9-75%)
C	299.9-280	Points	(74.9-70%)
D	279.9-240	Points	(69.9-60%)
E	239.9-0	Points	(59.9-0%)

Undergraduate Students: Unless I tell you otherwise, you must take Track A.

6. Attendance, Preparation, and Participation: Your grade will be a function of the following: (1) the extent to which you are regularly present, alert, and attentive in class; (2) the quality and regularity of your participation in class discussions; (3) the extent to which your participation indicates that you have prepared for class, having read the required readings and having come prepared with questions and comments about those readings, and (4) the extent to which you observe proper classroom etiquette:
- Raise your hand and wait to be called on before speaking.
 - You should make every effort to avoid coming in late or leaving early. If you ever are late for class, enter in complete silence and avoid walking between the class and the professor.
 - Never leave during class unless you absolutely must. Leaving for a short break and then returning is not acceptable. The professor is not a TV set, but is a person addressing the class, and it is rude to leave when someone is addressing you.
 - Likewise, it is rude and unacceptable to talk with classmates while the professor (or another student who has the floor) is talking.
 - Visible and/or noisy signs of restlessness or inattentiveness are rude as well as disruptive to others—this includes, for instance, sleeping, reading the paper, listening to music, surfing the web on your laptop, etc. If you cannot sit still, stay awake, and pay attention, you should not be taking a college class and you will be asked to leave.

- Do not begin packing up your things or otherwise indicate that you think it is time for class to come to an end; wait for the professor or TA to dismiss class.
- Always address others in the class (including your fellow students) in a respectful manner.
- Failing to turn off pagers and cell phones before coming to class is unacceptable.

Students are expected to participate regularly in class. It is partly the students' responsibility to make the class a lively one. And please note that good participation involves more than just speaking out during class; quality counts just as much as, if not more than, quantity. What you say should be informed and constructive. You should be able to speak intelligently about that day's reading assignment. During class discussions, you should be respectful of others even when they have radically different viewpoints. Do not monopolize class discussions; give others a chance to have their say. And note that asking an intelligent question counts as participation.

7. Failing the Course due to Excessive Absences:

Typically, a student who exceeds four absences will be given a failing grade (an "E") for the course regardless of how he or she is doing on the other assignments. If the absences are excessive, but the student provides a documented medical excuse for those absences, the student will receive an "I" or "W," depending on the circumstances.

8. Reading Summary (Track A Only): A brief 2-3 pp. typed summary of one of the required readings (see item 21 below). Students have to turn in five, but may choose any five required readings to summarize.

9. Short Critical Paper (Track A Only): A 4-5 pp. typed paper that explains and critically assesses the views and arguments presented in one of the required readings. Be sure to consult the [Grading Rubric for Philosophy Papers](#) before commencing work on this assignment so that you will be aware of the criteria that I will be using to assess your papers.

10. Short Paper (Track B Only): The same as the term paper only shorter (8-10 pp. typed). The hope is that the line of argument presented in this paper will prove promising and will be developed further in the term paper. So if all goes well, the term paper will be just a longer and more developed version of this short paper. This must be submitted electronically to douglas.portmore@asu.edu either as an MS Word document (with .doc extension) or as a file in Rich Text Format (with .rtf extension). Be sure to consult the [Grading Rubric for Philosophy Papers](#) before commencing work on this assignment so that you will be aware of the criteria that I will be using to assess your papers.

11. Proto-Outline (Track A Only): Proto-outlines (3-4 pp. typed) will in, outline form, lay out one's thesis, one's arguments for that thesis, and one's rebuttals to potential objections and counterarguments. For a template and a sample of a proto-outline, see "Handouts" on Blackboard. This assignment must be submitted electronically to douglas.portmore@asu.edu

either as an MS Word document (with .doc extension) or as a file in Rich Text Format (with .rtf extension).

12. Term Papers (Both Tracks): Term papers (15-20 pp. typed) are to be thesis-defense papers that address one of the issues identified in the course description above and make heavy use of at least two of the readings from the list below. Be sure to consult the [Grading Rubric for Philosophy Papers](#) before commencing work on this assignment so that you will be aware of the criteria that I will be using to assess your papers. Undergraduates should be sure to read my “Tips on Writing a Philosophy Paper” under “Handouts” in Blackboard.

13. Policy on Academic Dishonesty and Violations of the Student Code of Conduct: Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. The minimum penalty for any act of academic dishonesty is a failing grade for the course. Your conduct will also be reported to university authorities for appropriate further action—possibly suspension or expulsion. If you are at all uncertain about what constitutes an act of academic dishonesty, please consult the current university catalog. You should also feel free to consult with me on this matter.

Students are expected to abide by the “[Student Code of Conduct](#)” and to abide by the policies set forth in this syllabus, the university catalog, the schedule of classes, and the [Student Affairs web site](#). Misconduct will be reported to university authorities for appropriate action.

If you ever find yourself in a jam, where you feel like you have to resort to cheating, please come see me instead. I can be quite sympathetic and reasonable.

14. Policy on Incompletes:

Incompletes are given only when a student who is doing otherwise satisfactory work is unable to complete a course because of illness or other conditions beyond the student’s control. These are only given under the most extenuating of circumstances. For more information on university policy on the grade of “I” (incomplete), please see <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi203-09.html>.

15. Withdrawing from the Course:

An instructor may withdraw a student from the course with a mark of “W” or a grade of “E” in cases of disruptive classroom behavior.² A student may withdraw with a grade of “W” from one or more classes beginning with the second week of classes through the tenth week of classes for the Fall and Spring semesters. Please refer to the ASU General Catalog for additional information and the schedule of classes for withdrawal date deadlines

16. Disability Accommodation:

If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, or learning disability that may impact on your ability to carry out assigned course work – either papers or exams – I

² As stated in the [Student Enrollment Services Policies and Procedures Manual](#) (SES), “[a]n instructor may withdraw a student from a course with a mark of ‘W’ or ‘E’ when the student’s behavior disrupts the educational process. Disruptive classroom behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor.” See SES 201-19.

encourage you to contact Disability Student Resources (DRS). Their phone number is (480) 965-1234 (voice) or (480) 965-9000 (TTY). They can also be accessed on the web at <http://www.asu.edu/drs>. DRS will review your concerns and determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate for you. All information and documentation of your disability is confidential and will not be released without your permission.

17. Policy on Late Work:

I am under no obligation to accept late work, and will not, under any circumstances, accept late proto-outlines. And I will not accept work of any kind that is more than a week late, except under the most extenuating circumstances. Late work will be penalized for each day late. Late work must be submitted in class or electronically to douglas.portmore@asu.edu either as an MS Word document (with .doc extension) or as a file in Rich Text Format (with .rtf extension).

18. Getting Help: I'm more than happy to go out of my way to help those who are eager to learn. I am also happy to make appointments with students for whom my office hours are inconvenient. Please don't hesitate to schedule an appointment. To do so, you need only e-mail me or talk to me after class. If you are not doing as well as you would like in the course and need suggestions on how to improve, please come see me immediately. If you don't come see me within a week of receiving a grade on some assignment, I will assume that either you are satisfied with your performance or that you know what you need to do to improve.

19. Getting Help with Writing: For students who need help with writing their papers, I suggest all of the following: (1) reading my "[Tips on Writing a Philosophy Paper](#)," (2) reading Strunk's *The Elements of Style*, (3) coming to see me during office hours for help with a thesis, an outline, or a partial draft, and (4) setting up an appointment with a tutor at the [Writing Center](#).

20. Important Dates:

- 01/18/07: First class.
- 03/08/07: Short Critical Papers due (Track A only).
- 03/15/07: No class – spring break.
- 03/29/07: Short Papers due (Track B only). Electronic submission required.
- 04/01/07: Course Withdrawal Deadline - ASU Interactive.
- 04/05/07: Class cancelled.
- 04/19/07: Proto-Outlines due (optional—Track A only.) Electronic submission required.
- 04/26/07: Last class.
- 05/03/07: Term Papers due by 3:00 PM (both Tracks).

21. Tentative List and Schedule of Readings:

See "Online Readings" on Blackboard for those readings that are not in your Course Reader.

Week 1:

1. Anderson, "Chapter 1: A Pluralist Theory of Value," from *Value in Ethics and Economics*. (Course Reader.)
2. Anderson, "Chapter 2: An Expressive Theory of Rational Action," from *Value in Ethics and Economics*. (Course Reader.)
3. Sturgeon, "Anderson on Reason and Value."
4. Anderson, "Reasons, Attitudes, and Values: Replies to Sturgeon and Piper," pp. 538-546.

Weeks 2-3:

5. Scanlon, "Chapter 1: Reasons," from *What We Owe to Each Other*. (Course Reader.)
6. Scanlon, "Chapter 2: Values," from *What We Owe to Each Other*. (Course Reader.)
7. Hurka, "Value and Friendship: A More Subtle View."
8. Arneson, "The End of Welfare as We Know It? Scanlon versus Welfarist Consequentialism," pp. 1-9.

Week 4:

9. Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen, "The Strike of the Demon."
10. Stratton-Lake, "How to Deal with Evil Demons."
11. Hooker and Stratton-Lake, "Scanlon versus Moore on Goodness."
12. Vayrynen, "Resisting the Buck-Passing Account of Value."

Weeks 5-6:

13. Parfit, "Chapter 1: Reasons," from *Climbing the Mountain*.
14. Parfit, "Chapter 2: Value-Based Theories," from *Climbing the Mountain*.
15. Parfit, "Chapter 3: Desire-Based Theories," from *Climbing the Mountain*.
16. Parfit, "Section 25: Two Kinds of Value," from *Climbing the Mountain*.

Week 7:

17. Sobel, "Pain for Objectivists: The Case of Matters of Mere Taste."
18. Chang, "Can Desires Provide Reasons for Action?"

Week 8:

19. Parfit, "Reasons and Motivation."
20. Hooker and Streumer, "Procedural and Substantive Practical Rationality." (Course Reader.)

Weeks 9-10:

21. J. Gert, "A Functional Role Analysis of Reasons."
22. J. Gert, "Requiring and Justifying: Two Dimensions of Normative Strength."
23. J. Gert, "Two Concepts of Rationality." (Course Reader.)
24. J. Gert, "Practical Rationality, Morality, and Purely Justificatory Reasons." (Course Reader.)

Week 11:

25. Parfit, "Chapter 4: Rationality," from *Climbing the Mountain*.
26. Tenenbaum, "Brute Requirements."
27. Phillips, "Gert, Sidgwick, and Hybrid Theories of Rationality."

Week 12:

28. Dancy, "Enticing Reasons." (Course Reader.)
29. Heuer, "Raz on Reasons and Values." (Course Reader.)
30. Brink, "The Significance of Desire," sections 1-7.

Week 13:

31. Portmore, "The Teleological Conception of Practical Reasons." (Will be posted at a later date.)