

Vices and Crimes in Kant's Moral Philosophy

15:00-18:00 Mondays, Room Alfa

Instructors: Martina Favaretto and Luke Davies

Office hours: by appointment, on Zoom or in person at the School of Philosophy
Oude Boteringestraat 52, Room 117

Course Format

Each meeting will consist of a short lecture by one of the instructors, student presentations, and a full-class discussion. Students should come to class having read all the required readings and be ready to talk about them. It would be good to have at least one or two questions about each reading prepared for the discussion.

Course Description

In this course, we'll ask the following question: What is the relation between political philosophy and ethics? We'll seek to answer that question by looking at forms of wrongdoing in Kant's moral and political philosophy (vices and crimes), his justification of the duties violated by those forms of wrongdoing, and how they relate to each other. More specifically, we're going to talk about the ethical duty not to lie, the duty of beneficence and the duty prohibiting servility. On the political side, we will focus on the state's duty of publicity, the political duty to provide redistributive welfare institutions and the duty that citizens have to obey the law of the state.

Course objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Discuss a variety of topics relating ethics and political philosophy approached from different frameworks and across different areas of philosophy;
- Reconstruct and evaluate arguments;

- Develop an individual research project in its different stages;
- Construct a philosophical argument, present and defend it orally, receive and incorporate peer feedback; and,
- Provide constructive feedback on your peers' arguments, ideas, and presentation skills.

Grades and Evaluation

1. Essay outline and discussion with instructor (formative): Outline due March 16

In advance of submitting the final essay, you are required to meet with one of the instructors to discuss their essay topic. You must come up with your own topic, though we can provide some suggestions if necessary.

The essay outline should include your name, a title, your topic, your research question and/or working hypothesis, your strategy for answering the question and/or for supporting your working hypothesis, an overview of the structure of your essay (i.e., its sections), and a brief initial bibliography (a handful of entries will do). After you submit this, you are expected to schedule an office hour meeting with one of the instructors to receive individual feedback on your essay outline.

Despite being formative, the essay outline is mandatory for this course.

2. Attendance and participation: 10% of course grade

You are expected to attend all the lectures and seminars, except if you are ill, or have another sufficient reason such as a family emergency. Moreover, participation is mandatory.

We are happy to take a broad view of what participation means and understand that some students will not be as comfortable as others speaking in class. While our strong preference is for all students to contribute to the in-class discussion, those for whom this is especially difficult may make an appointment with us to discuss alternate

arrangements. Alternate arrangements might include submitting questions about the readings in advance, short written summaries of the readings, either a written or verbal summary of some of the points made in the discussion, and so forth.

3. Presentation and handout: 30% of course grade

The presentation should formulate and develop one significant problem, criticism, or discussion question related to one or more of the secondary readings. Do *not* present a full summary of the reading(s)! Mention only what is necessary to make your point.

The handout (max. 1 page) should state your main point(s) in full sentences, and depending on the topic you've chosen, it may include textual support, an overview of the structure of your presentation, or whatever else you believe will be useful to your audience. Make sure that the handout is reader friendly, and don't forget to include your name, the date, and the course. At the end of the handout, include 2-3 additional questions for further discussion.

Handouts are due at 10pm the day before your presentation.

Presentations should be no more than 5 minutes.

4. Essay: 60% of course grade: Due March 30

The essay should be around 3500 words (and maximum 4000 words). It should focus on a particular topic or argument or a particular interpretation of one or more authors (Kant, a Kantian, Kant scholar, critic of Kant or Kantianism) discussed in the course. Which author(s) and which angle you take is up to you. You may of course want to include discussion of relevant sources other than the materials included in the course.

The *topic* of your paper should *differ* significantly from the topic of your presentation.

AI policy

At the Faculty of Philosophy, the following guidelines are in effect regarding the use and misuse of Generative Artificial Intelligence or similar software:

- 1) Presenting text generated by GenAI as text written by yourself is a form of fraud.
- 2) Using GenAI as an academic source for scientific writing is not reliable and will not be approved.
- 3) Using GenAI for text editing is allowed only to correct text but not to replace text or have it completely rewritten (because then it is again a form of fraud). The examiner must be able to assess your academic skills and knowledge on the basis of your text. You are also asked to ensure that this use does not interfere with developing your own writing skills. If you use GenAI to edit your text, please mention this at the bottom of your assignment, and keep the prompts you have used and/or keep the original version that has not been edited by GenAI. The instructor may request to see the used prompts or original version. The instructor may conduct an additional oral check when cheating is suspected. If the instructor suspects that you have misused GenAI you will be referred to the board of examiners.
- 4) Lecturers may in cases of reasonable doubt always demand to see the student's original own work or the prompts used, and may conduct an additional oral check to make sure the student meets the learning goal conversation (ability to converse about one's work). These tests only examine this learning goal as pass or fail and do not constitute a more general examination of the work. A fail to satisfy this learning goal results in a fail for the essay.

These rules apply to both formative and summative assessments.

Schedule of Classes and Reading

Week 1: What is the relation between right and ethics?

Welcome to class!

Presentation signup

- Walter Schaller, "Kant's Architectonic of Duties" (16 pages)

Week 2: Lying

- MS 429–432 (3 pages)
- Stefano Bacin, "Lying, Deception, and Dishonesty: Kant and the Contemporary Debate on the Definition of Lying" (27 pages)
- Christine Korsgaard, "The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil" (25 pages)

Week 3: Publicity

- WE "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" 8:35-8:42 (6 pages)
- PP Appendix II 8:381-836 (5 pages)
- Jüri Lipping "Kant and the two principles of publicity" (20 pages)
- Cecile Fabre *Spying Through a Glass Darkly* ch. 5 "Deception" (21 pages)

Week 4: Duty of Beneficence

- MS 6:448–462 (11 pages)
- Marcia Baron and Melissa Seymour Fahmy, "Beneficence and Other Duties of Love in *The Metaphysics of Morals*" (15 pages)
- Ebels-Duggan, "Against Beneficence: A Normative Account of Love" (29 pages)

Week 5: Welfare

- MS 6:326-328, General Remark C (2 pages)

- Lucy Allais, "What properly belongs to me: Kant on giving to beggars" (18 pages)
- Kate Moran, "Neither justice nor charity? Kant on general injustice" (23 pages)

Week 6: Servility/civil disobedience

- MS 6:318-323 General Remark A, 6:434–437 (7 pages)
- Thomas E. Hill Jr, "Servility and Self-Respect" (17 pages)
- Sven Arntzen, "Kant on Duty to Oneself and Resistance to Political Authority" (15 pages)

Week 7:

- Essay outline due Monday 16th March
- Meetings to be scheduled for that week to discuss them

Week 9:

- Essay due March 30.