

Kant's Ethical and Political Philosophy

8 week undergraduate course

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The aim of this course is to introduce you to some of the core topics in Kant's ethics and political philosophy. If you have questions or comments concerning this reading list, please send them to me.

Tutorial Structure

We will have eight 1-hour tutorials, one tutorial per week. For each tutorial, you will be expected to produce an essay on the topic question(s) for that week.

The details for the tutorials and essays are as follows:

Tutorial Time and Location: TBD

Word Limit: 1500-2000 words. Please double-space.

Deadline: Each essay is due 24 hours before the tutorial is scheduled.

Email: luke.davies@philosophy.ox.ac.uk. Please send your papers in .doc format.

These tutorials will cover the following topics:

Week 1. The good will

Week 2. Universalisability and the categorical imperative

Week 3. Acting from duty

Week 4. Moral motivation

Week 5. Ethics and right

Week 6. The innate right to freedom

Week 7. The state of nature

Week 8. Revolution

Tips for Good Philosophy Essays

The best advice I have seen on how to write good philosophy essays is Jim Pryor's (<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>). I highly recommend studying this guide, as well as returning to it frequently to refresh your memory.

Reading List and Essay Questions

This reading list begins with some general introductory readings, including some excellent online resources. For each week, I have included a question, required reading, recommended reading, and also additional reading. The required reading is marked with a double-star (**) and recommended readings are marked with a single star (*). It is good practice to read the required reading a few times before each tutorial, and to do as much recommended reading as time permits. **You are not expected to read everything on the reading list.**

Remember that doing good philosophy is hard, and takes time. Time management will thus be very important.

Introductory Materials

The following are some helpful introductory texts:

- **This** interview with Adrian Moore.
- Stanford Encyclopaedia Entries: '**Kant**', '**Kant's moral philosophy**', and '**Kant's social and political philosophy**'.
- O'Neill. 1991. 'Kantian Ethics', in *A Companion to Ethics*.
- Hill. 2006. 'Kantian Normative Ethics' in *Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*.
- Korsgaard. 1996. *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*, chapter 1.
- Scruton. 2001. *Kant: a very short introduction*.
- Timmermann. 2007. *Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: a commentary*.

Topics and Reading

Readings marked with a double star (**) are mandatory. Readings marked with a single star (*) are recommended. Readings that are indented (if any) are for further research. References to Kant will always include the standard pagination of the Prussian Academy (which you will find in the margins of most editions of Kant's works), but will also include either section titles or section numbers when appropriate.

1. The good will

Question: Is a good will the only thing which can be conceived to be good without qualification?

- *Groundwork*, Preface and part 1. G 4:387-4:405**.
- Ameriks. 2003. 'Kant and the Good Will' in his *Interpreting Kant's Critiques***
- Korsgaard. 1996. 'Kant's analysis of obligation: the argument of *Groundwork* I' in her *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*.*
- Wood. 2008. 'Moral Worth' in his *Kantian Ethics*.*
 - Norman. 1998. 'Kant: Respect for Persons' in his *The Moral Philosophers: an introduction to ethics*.
 - Timmermann. 2007. *Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: a commentary*, relevant sections (pp. 1-50).

2. Universalisability and the categorical imperative

Question: Is Kant right to believe that morality requires that we are able to universalise our maxims?

- *Groundwork*, part 2. G 4:406-4:445**.
- Korsgaard. 1996. 'Kant's Formula of Universal Law' and 'Kant's Formula of Humanity' in her *Creating the Kingdom of Ends***
- Wood. 2008. 'The Moral Law' in his *Kantian Ethics*.*
- O'Neill. 2013. 'Applying the Categorical Imperative' in her *Acting on Principle*.*
 - Allison. 2011. 'The Universal Law (FUL) and the Law of Nature (FLN)' in his *Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: a commentary*.
 - Timmermann. 2007. *Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: a commentary*, relevant sections (pp. 50-120).

3. Acting from duty

Question: Do actions performed from duty miss something morally important?

- *Groundwork*, part 2. G 4:406-4:445**.
- Herman. 1981. 'On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty' in *Philosophical Review***
- Stocker. 1976. 'The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories' in *The Journal of Philosophy***

- Wood. 2008. 'Moral Worth' in his *Kantian Ethics*.*
- Wolf. 1982. 'Moral Saints' in *The Journal of Philosophy*.
- Allison. 2011. 'Maxims and moral worth redux' in his *Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: a commentary*.

4. Moral motivation

Question: Can reason alone motivate us?

- *Groundwork*, parts 1 & 2.**
- Hume. *Treatise of Human Nature*, bk. 2, pt. 3, sect. 3; bk. 3, pt. 1; *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, app. I**
- Walker. 1988. 'The Rational Imperative: Kant versus Hume' in *Proceedings of the British Society*.**
- Nagel. 1970. *The Possibility of Altruism*, pp. 27–36.*
 - Korsgaard. 1986. 'Skepticism about Practical Reason', in *Journal of Philosophy*.
 - Wiggins. 1991. 'Categorical Requirements: Kant and Hume on the Idea of Duty', in *Monist*.

5. Ethics and Right

Question: What is the relation between Kant's ethics and his political philosophy?

- 'Introduction to the Metaphysics of Morals' MM 6:211-221**
- Willaschek. 2002. 'Which Imperatives for Right? The non-prescriptive character of juridical laws in Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*' in *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: Interpretive Essays*.**
- Ripstein. 2009. *Force and Freedom: Kant's Legal and Political Philosophy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, ch. 1.*
 - Wood. 2002. 'The final form of Kant's political philosophy', in *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: Interpretive Essays*.
 - Guyer. 2002. 'Kant's Deductions of Principles of Right' in *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: Interpretive Essays*.

6. The innate right to freedom

Question: What does the innate right to freedom entitle us to?

- ‘Introduction to the Doctrine of Right’ 6:229-6:242**
- Ripstein. 2009. *Force and Freedom: Kant’s Legal and Political Philosophy*, ch. 2.**
- Byrd and Hruschka. 2010. *Kant’s Doctrine of Right: A Commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch 3.*
- Pallikkathayil. 2017. ‘Persons and Bodies’, in *Freedom and Force: Essays on Kant’s Legal Theory*, Oxford and Portland: Hart.*
 - Hodgson. 2010. ‘The Right to Freedom: A defense’ in *Ethics*
 - Benson. 1987. ‘External Freedom According to Kant’ in *Columbia Law Review*
 - Sangiovanni. 2012. ‘Can the Innate Right to Freedom Alone Ground a System of Public and Private Rights?’ in *European Journal of Philosophy*

7. The state of nature

Question: Is Kant right to think that the state is necessary?

- MM §8, §9, §§41-44**
- A. Stiliz, *Liberal Loyalty*, chs. 1-2.**
- Ripstein. 2009. *Force and Freedom: Kant’s Legal and Political Philosophy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, ch. 6*
 - Pallikkathayil. 2010. ‘Deriving Morality from Politics: Rethinking the Formula of Humanity’, in *Ethics*.
 - Sinclair. 2018. ‘The power of public positions: official roles in Kantian legitimacy’ in *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy*.
 - Byrd and Hruschka. 2010. *Kant’s Doctrine of Right: A Commentary*, ch. 2.

8. Revolution

Question: Is Kant right to say that there can never be a right to revolution?

- MM ‘General Remark A’ 6:318-323, ‘Theory and Practice’ part II.**
- Byrd and Hruschka. 2010. *Kant’s Doctrine of Right: A Commentary*, ch. 8.**
- Ripstein. 2009. *Force and Freedom: Kant’s Legal and Political Philosophy*, ch. 11.*

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- Flikschuh. 2008. 'Reason, Right, and Revolution: Kant and Locke' in *Philosophy & Public Affairs*.*
 - Korsgaard. 2008. 'Taking the Law into Our Own Hands: Kant on the Right to Revolution', in her *The Constitution of Agency*.
 - Maliks. 2013. 'Kant, the state, and revolution' in *Kantian Review*.