

PHIL 332
TR 1:20-2:35
Hoover 208

Hoover 244
Ext. 2657

Virtue Philosophy: How Can We Live a Good Life?

A careful examination of the virtue tradition helps us understand our moral pilgrimage.

Description

This course explores questions crucial to the virtue tradition: What is a good life? What are virtues? How do virtues contribute to a good life? What is the role of natural law and divine commands in understanding virtues? How does the study of moral philosophy contribute to living well? These questions, and others like them, indicate the subject matter of this course. We will examine the history of the virtue tradition as represented by philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hume, and Kant as well as the tradition's revival by contemporary philosophers.

As an upper division special topics course, Virtue Philosophy is appropriate for philosophy majors and any upper division student interested in careful thought about ethics.

Texts

Adams, Robert M. *A Theory of Virtue*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue*. 2nd Ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.

Select Bibliography. In addition to the assigned texts, students may find the following works useful.

Adams, Robert. *Finite and Infinite Goods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
---*The Virtue of Faith and Other Essays*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987.
Boyd, Craig A. *A Shared Morality: A Narrative Defense of Natural Law Ethics*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2007.
Evans, C. Stephen. *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988.
Murdoch, Iris. *The Sovereignty of Good*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.
Smith, Philip. *The Virtue of Civility in the Practice of Politics*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2002.
Widdows, Heather. *The Moral Vision of Iris Murdoch*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2005.
Zagzebski, Linda T. *Virtues of the Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996.

Course Procedures

Since the majority of our time together will be spent discussing the assigned texts, it is crucial that student prepare ahead of class time by careful examination of them. In January and February, each student will prepare one or two short response papers (no more than 300 words) to various chapters as a way to stimulate class discussion. In March and April, students will read drafts of their term papers in class; feedback on such drafts can help a student improve her work greatly.

Grading

Students will write a 3000-4000 word term paper, due April 20. An initial draft of this paper (at least 700 words) will be due March 23. Students who do not meet the draft deadline will see their eventual course grade lowered by a +/- factor of 1.

Since the grade on the term paper constitutes the student's course grade, students may be tempted to neglect class participation. This temptation should be resisted, as collaborative testing of ideas in class will improve one's writing.