

**King's College London**  
**Dickson Poon School of Law**  
**Moral Philosophy Module (6FFLFK512)**  
**General Information and Syllabus, 2021**

Meetings:	One two-hour seminar per week
Module Leader:	Dr Jonathan Gingerich
Email:	<a href="mailto:jonathan.gingerich@kcl.ac.uk">jonathan.gingerich@kcl.ac.uk</a>
Office hours:	Office hours will be held on Teams for the 2020-21 academic year. Sign up for office hours at: <a href="http://jonathangingerich.youcanbook.me">http://jonathangingerich.youcanbook.me</a>
Website:	<a href="https://keats.kcl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=78299">https://keats.kcl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=78299</a>

### **Module Description**

This is an independent, optional module for some students and a Part B option on Jurisprudence for others, designed to complement the compulsory portion of Jurisprudence by exploring questions about morality which arise even where the law is silent. (The independent module is open to students who have not taken Part A of Jurisprudence, and no prior familiarity with Jurisprudence is assumed in this module)

What is the best way to live? How should we live together with other people? What obligations do we have to one another? What does it mean when we say that we have a moral duty to do something or avoid doing something? How can we be free when we are subject to the wishes and desires of other people? What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility? This module will introduce these central questions in ethics by reading some of the most important (and provocative!) texts from the history of philosophy, including readings from Plato, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Simone de Beauvoir.

We will use the resources garnered from our study of the history of ethics to investigate a range of moral questions that arise in contemporary society and contemporary ethical theory, reading essays by P.F. Strawson, Paulo Friere, Angela Davis, Amia Srinivasan, and Christine Korsgaard among others. Questions we consider in the second part of the module will include: What is oppression and how can we best resist it? What are the ethics of love and sex? What is the self? And what obligations do we have to people who will live in the near or distant future?

As we address all of these questions, we will search for the best answers to them, but we will also think about whether these are sensible questions at all, and we will consider how we might become more comfortable with the possibility that some or all of these questions do not have any definitive answers. By taking this module, students will learn to: carefully read and explain difficult philosophical texts; clearly articulate and defend philosophical views about ethics, both orally and in writing; write clear and persuasive argumentative essays; refine and defend their beliefs about what makes a life go well, and (if all goes well!) take pleasure in the challenges of rigorous reading and thinking about philosophy.

## Texts

All texts will be available on the course website or through the library. The library's reading list for this module is [here](#). We will read all or most of several books:

Plato, *Republic*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), ISBN 1603840133.

Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), ISBN 1107401062.

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism in Utilitarianism and On Liberty*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Mary Warnock (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), ISBN 0631233520.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Maudemarie Clarke and Alan J. Swensen (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), ISBN 0872202844.

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Open Road Media, 2018), ISBN 1504054229.

You are welcome to buy hard copies of these texts, but they will also be available either electronically or in the library. If you wish to purchase hard copies of any of these texts, I recommend that you purchase the edition indicated here, so that we have the same page numbers and the same translation.

The 'essential readings' for each week are listed below in the order that I recommend reading them. I also ask that you also complete the 'recommended reading' for each week, if possible. Our weekly discussions will focus on the essential readings but will often at least touch on the recommended reading.

In addition to the essential readings and recommended advanced readings, 'additional advanced readings' are listed for each week, organized by topic. These items are not required, but you are likely to find these lists to be a useful starting point if you are considering writing your assessed essay on a topic. In order to help provide a sense of how moral theory can matter for the world we live in, as well as being shaped by it, I have included several readings relating the weekly topic to the present global climate crisis among the additional advanced readings for each week.

## Online Discussion Board

**Each week, I ask that you post a one-paragraph response to the week's reading on the weekly discussion board on the module's KEATS page by the end of the day on the day before our seminar meeting.** Your one paragraph response need not address all of the assigned readings for the week—it might raise a question or interpretation of a single sentence or paragraph. It might also make a comparison between different assigned texts for a week, notice connections between readings for one week and material studied in an earlier week, or suggest a connection between topics we are studying in class and contemporary events or problems. While there are many formats that reading response posts might take, I ask that you post something substantive and thoughtful about the readings each week, as these posts will help us to have an enriching and engaging discussion in our seminar meetings.

## Seminar Meetings

This is a small seminar that will meet once a week, for two hours. Our meetings will be heavy on discussion, and it is important that you come to our meetings prepared to

converse about the week's assigned readings. My role will largely be to guide, encourage, and participate in our discussion.

Included in this syllabus are several questions to on each week's readings to help guide your reading and ignite our discussions. Our seminar discussions will not, however, be confined to these questions, so come ready to discuss all the assigned books and articles.

## **Lectures**

While this module is not primarily delivered as a lecture, each week, I will post approximately one hour of recorded video lectures on the course website. These recorded lectures are an optional supplement that provides added context for the reading assignment each week.

## **Examinations**

Whether it is taken as an independent half-module or as Part B of Jurisprudence, this module will be examined exclusively by an assessed essay, to be written during March and April on a topic that I set. Further details will be provided at the beginning of the semester.

## **Diversity and Inclusion**

All students are welcome in my classroom. The King's policy on dignity states: 'King's College London is committed to protecting the dignity of its students in their learning and participation in university life, and in their interactions with others. This includes providing a university environment that is free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct and hate crime. It should be noted that discrimination, bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct and hate crime do not only take place face to face. They may also occur in written communications, by email, or by phone, or online.'

All students have a right to expect good conduct from others, including both staff and other students. Information about reporting and resolving incidents of misconduct is available on the King's Dignity website, <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/hr/diversity/dignity-at-kings/student-guidance/faqs>. The King's diversity and inclusion team can be contacted at [diversity@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:diversity@kcl.ac.uk). If you need help in responding to misconduct or contacting other resources at King's, I am happy to help.

## **Accessibility**

Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact Disability Support (<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/disability>) at [disability@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:disability@kcl.ac.uk) or (0)20 7848 1234. Disability support is located on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor of Bush House, South East Wing. Disability Support offers one to one learning support and group sessions, in addition to arranging for learning accommodations. If you have a King's Inclusion Plan that pertains to this module, I should already have access to it and will provide accommodations as appropriate, but please feel free to bring your King's Inclusion Plan to my attention if you wish to do so.

## Schedule of Readings

### Semester Overview

Week 1 (18 January):	Why be just?
Week 2 (25 January):	Morality and a good will
Week 3 (1 February):	Morality and maximising happiness
Week 4 (8 February):	Sceptical perspectives on morality and moral discourse
Week 5 (15 February):	Existentialist ethics and self-creation
Reading Week (22 February):	No meeting
Week 6 (1 March):	Freedom
Week 7 (8 March):	Oppression
Week 8 (15 March):	Sex
Week 9 (22 March):	Self
Week 10 (29 March):	Future

### Background readings: The climate crisis

For the duration of this module, the climate crisis will provide a lens through which to understand and evaluate many of the ethical theories that we discuss. In the additional advanced readings for each week, one or more readings that connect the week's themes to the climate crisis will be listed. If you would like to familiarize yourself with the current science of climate change, you may wish to review the following background readings at the beginning of the term:

- Peter Brannan, 'This Is How Your World Could End,' *The Observer*, 9 September 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/sep/09/this-is-how-your-world-could-end-climate-change-global-warming>.
- Damian Carrington, 'Climate Emergency: World "May Have Crossed Tipping Points,"' *The Guardian*, 27 November 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/nov/27/climate-emergency-world-may-have-crossed-tipping-points>.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 'Summary for Policymakers' in *Global Warming of 1.5°C* (Geneva: World Meteorological Organisation, 2018) <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/spm>.
- Bill McKibben, 'Global Warming's Terrifying New Math,' *Rolling Stone*, 19 July 2012, <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-188550>.
- Adam Morton, 'Countries Must Triple Climate Emission Cut Targets to Limit Global Heating to 2C,' *The Guardian*, 23 September 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/sep/23/countries-must-triple-climate-emissions-targets-to-limit-global-heating-to-2c>.
- William J. Ripple, Christopher Wolf, Thomas M. Newsome, Phoebe Barnard & William R. Moomaw, 'World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency,' forthcoming in *BioScience*, 2019, available at: <https://scientistswarning.forestry.oregonstate.edu/sites/sw/files/climate%20emergency%20Ripple%20et%20al%20%209-6-19.pdf>.
- Greta Thunberg, 'I Have a Dream that the Powerful Take the Climate Crisis Seriously. The Time for Their Fairytales is Over,' *Independent*, 20 September 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/greta-thunberg-congress-speech-climate-change-crisis-dream-a9112151.html>.

## Week 1: Why be just?

### Questions for reading

- What is justice? Is a person who is just happier than a person who is unjust?
- Why does Thrasymachus doubt that we have reason to act justly? How does Socrates respond to Thrasymachus's concerns?
- Why, according to Socrates, is a just person always happy?
- If you had the Ring of Gyges, how would you use it?
- If *everyone* had a Ring of Gyges, what would happen?
- According to Aristotle, what is happiness?

### Essential reading

Plato, *Republic*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004) book I and book II.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014) book I [pp. 3-22]

### Recommended advanced reading

Philippa Foot, 'Rationality and Virtue,' in *Moral Dilemmas: and Other Topics in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002) 159-74.

- According to Foot, what is the relationship between desire and virtue?

Plato, *Euthyphro* in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

- Why does Socrates want to know what piety itself is, rather than being satisfied to find out whether what Euthyphro is doing is an instance of piety?

### Additional advanced reading

#### A. Ancient ethics

Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998) books I and III (ch. 1-13).

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014) books II-IV.

Plato, *Republic*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004) books IV and VI-VII.

#### B. Contemporary virtue ethics

Julia Annas 'Virtue Ethics,' in *Oxford Handbook of Ethics*, ed. David Copp (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006) 515-35.

Piers Benn, 'Virtue' in *Ethics* (London: UCL Press, 1998) chapter 7.

Rosalind Hursthouse & Glen Pettigrove, 'Virtue Ethics,' *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/ethics-virtue>.

#### C. Virtue ethics and climate change

Rosalind Hursthouse, 'Environmental Virtue Ethics,' in *Working Virtue: Virtue Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems*, ed. Rebecca L. Walker & Philip J. Ivanhoe (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007) 55-72.

## Week 2: Morality and a good will

### Questions for reading

- Is there a value in acting consistently? Why or why not?
- Why does Kant think that an action only has moral worth if it is done from duty? Is he right?
- What is the difference for Kant between hypothetical and categorical imperatives?
- What does Kant mean when he says that humanity is an end in itself?

### Essential reading

Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) [pp. 1-66].

### Recommended advanced reading

Barbara Herman, 'On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty,' *Philosophical Review* 90(1981): 359-82.

- Why, according to Herman, does being concerned about the morality of an action give it moral worth?

### Additional advanced reading

#### A. Kant's predecessors

Jean Barbeyrac, *The Judgment of an Anonymous Writer on the Original of This Abridgment in The Whole Duty of Man According to the Law of Nature* by Samuel Pufendorf, trans. Andrew Tooke (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2003) 267-305.

Samuel Pufendorf, *The Whole Duty of Man According to the Law of Nature*, trans. Andrew Tooke (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2003) book 1, ch 1-2.

#### B. Contemporary Kantianism

Barbara Herman, 'Integrity and Impartiality,' in *The Practice of Moral Judgement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993) 23-44.

Christine M. Korsgaard, Introduction to Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), vii-xxx.

Onora O'Neill, 'Between Consenting Adults,' *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 14(1985): 252-77.

John Rawls, 'Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics,' *Philosophical Review* 60(1951): 177-97.

T.M. Scanlon, 'Contractualism and Utilitarianism,' in *Utilitarianism and Beyond*, ed. Amartya Sen & Bernard Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982) 103-28.

#### C. Deontological perspectives on the climate crisis

Christian Baatz, 'Climate Change and Individual Duties to Reduce GHG Emissions,' *Ethics, Policy, and Environment* 17(2014): 1-19.

## Week 3: Morality and maximising happiness

### Questions for reading

- What is utility? Should we seek to maximise it whenever we act?
- According to Bentham, how should we determine the utility of a policy or action?
- Is Bentham's principle of utility a good criterion for determining right and wrong?
- How does Mill distinguish between the higher and lower pleasures? Why does this distinction matter for the principle of utility?
- What are the main objections to utilitarianism that Mill considers in Chapter II of *Utilitarianism* and how does he reply to them? Are his answers satisfactory?
- What, if anything, does Nozick's 'experience machine' show about utilitarianism?

### Essential reading

Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, in *Utilitarianism and On Liberty*, ed. Mary Warnock (Malden: Blackwell, 2003) chapter 1 [pp. 17-22].  
John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism in Utilitarianism and On Liberty*, ed. Mary Warnock (Malden: Blackwell, 2003) [pp. 181-235].  
Robert Nozick, 'The Experience Machine,' in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974). 42-45.

### Recommended advanced reading

Derek Parfit, 'What Makes Someone's Life Go Best,' in *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986), 493-502.

- For Parfit, what is the relationship between my desires and my life going well?

### Additional advanced reading

#### A. Utilitarian theory

R.M. Hare, *Moral Thinking: Its Levels, Method, and Point* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981) chapter 2, §§ 1-4; chapter 3, §§ 1-3; chapter 8, §§ 1-6; chapter 11, §§ 6-8.  
Elijah Millgram, 'Mill's Proof of the Principle of Utility,' *Ethics* 110(2000): 282-310.  
Stephen Nathanson, 'Act and Rule Utilitarianism,' *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2014), <https://www.iep.utm.edu/util-a-r/>.

#### B. Critiques of utilitarianism

John Taurek, 'Should the Numbers Count?,' *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 6(1977): 293-316.  
Bernard Williams, 'Consequentialism and Integrity,' in *Consequentialism and Its Critics*, ed. Samuel Scheffler (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988) 20-50.

#### C. Consequentialism and climate change

Dale Jamieson, 'When Utilitarians Should be Virtue Theorists,' *Utilitas* 19(2007): 160-83.  
Peter Singer, 'One Atmosphere,' in *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*, ed. Stephen M. Gardiner, Simon Caney, Dale Jamieson & Henry Shue (Oxford: UP, 2010) 181-99.

## Week 4: Sceptical perspectives on morality and moral discourse

### Questions for reading

- Where do moral values come from? And what purpose do they serve?
- What is the 'slave revolt' in morals and what does Nietzsche think it has to do with *ressentiment*?
- Why does Anscombe think that 'it is not profitable for us at present to do moral philosophy'? Is she right?
- What is the 'repressive hypothesis' and why, according to Foucault, do modern westerners believe the repressive hypothesis? What, if anything, does this tell us about morality or moral talk?

### Essential Reading

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic*, trans. Maudemarie Clark & Alan J. Swensen (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), preface and first treatise [pp. 1-33].

G.E.M. Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy,' *Philosophy* 33(1958): 1-19.

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978) part I [pp. 3-13].

### Recommended advance reading

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, third treatise §§ 12, 23-26, 28 [pp. 84-85, 106-15, 117-18].

- What is Nietzsche's 'perspectivism,' and does it present a serious challenge to the moral theories of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and/or Mill?

### Additional advanced reading

#### A. *Historical and psychological critiques*

Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and Its Discontents* (New York: W.V. Norton, 2010) §§ 3-6.

Brian Leiter, 'Why Marxism Still Does Not Need Normative Critique,' *Analyse & Kritik* 37(2015): 23-50.

Karl Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Programme,' in *Later Political Writings*, ed. Terrell Carver (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996) 208-26.

#### B. *Responses to the critiques*

Philippa Foot, 'Nietzsche's Immoralism,' in *Moral Dilemmas: and Other Topics in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002) 144-58.

Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986) chapter 8.

Bernard Williams, *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972) 'The amoralist,' 'Subjectivism,' and 'Interlude' [pp. 3-25].

#### C. *The climate crisis and genealogical critique*

Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Humanities in the Anthropocene: The Crisis of an Enduring Kantian Fable,' *New Literary History* 47(2016): 377-97.

## Week 5: Existentialist ethics and self-creation

### Questions for reading

- What does it mean that 'existence precedes essence'? Do you agree that it does?
- What is the 'ambiguity' that people face according to Beauvoir?
- Why, according to Beauvoir, is it 'one and the same decision' to will oneself moral and to will oneself free?

### Essential reading

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1948), §§ 1-2 [pp. 1-73].

### Recommended advanced reading

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1948), § 3 [pp. 74-159].

- For Beauvoir, how should we respond to situations in which it seems that, no matter what we do, we will do something wrong?

Iris Murdoch, 'The Idea of Perfection,' in *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge, 1970) 1-45 [skim pp. 1-16; read from p. 16, 'For purposes of the rest of this discussion...'].

- Why does Murdoch think that existentialism fails to really face the problem of morality? Do you agree with her?

### Additional advanced reading

#### A. *Existential phenomenology*

Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 2007).

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin, 2001), chapter 1 [pp. 27-84].

#### B. *Perspectives from Anglo-American philosophy*

Stanley Cavell, 'Existentialism and Analytic Philosophy,' *Daedalus* 93(1964): 946-74.

Thomas Nagel, 'The Absurd,' *Journal of Philosophy* 68(1971): 716-27.

#### C. *The climate crisis, hopelessness, and existentialism*

Tomasz Falkowski, 'Abandon All Hope: Moving Toward an Existentialist Environmentalism,' *Resilience.org*, 5 July 2019, <https://bit.ly/2kYrt9Y>.

## Reading Week: No meeting

Optional Formative Essay: A topic for an optional formative essay of up to 1000 words will be made available on KEATS in the first half of the term. Details will be announced in class and on KEATS.

## Week 6: Freedom

### Questions for reading

- What does it mean to be morally responsible? Must we be free to be morally responsible? Why or why not?
- Why does Galen Strawson think that we could never be 'truly morally responsible' for what we do? Do you agree?
- What are the 'reactive attitudes' for P.F. Strawson? How do they differ from 'objective' attitudes, and what is the relationship between freedom and resentment?
- What are the contradictory convictions about freedom and responsibility that Nagel thinks we are stuck with? Why does he think we cannot give up either of them?

### Essential reading

P.F. Strawson, 'Freedom and Resentment,' in *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008) 1-28.

Galen Strawson, 'The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility,' *Philosophical Studies* 75(1994): 5-24.

Thomas Nagel, 'Moral Luck', in *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979) 24-38.

### Recommended advanced reading

Raymond Geuss, 'Freedom as an Ideal,' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 69(1995): 87-100.

- For Geuss, what does it mean to regard freedom 'as an ideal'? In Geuss's view, what is the relationship between freedom and morality?

### Additional advanced reading

#### A. *Libertarian incompatibilism*

Roderick Chisholm, 'Human Freedom and the Self,' in *Free Will*, ed. Gary Watson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982) 24-35.

Laura W. Ekstrom, 'Toward a Plausible Event-Causal Indeterminist Account of Free Will,' *Synthese* 196(2019): 127-44.

#### B. *Compatibilism*

Robert Merrihew Adams, 'Involuntary Sins,' *Philosophical Review* 94(1985): 3-31.

Harry G. Frankfurt, 'Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility,' *Journal of Philosophy* 66(1969): 829-39 and 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person,' *Journal of Philosophy* 68(1971): 5-20.

Susan Wolf, 'Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility,' in *Responsibility, Character, and the Emotions*, ed. Ferdinand Schoeman (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) 46-62.

#### C. *Environmental constraints on our conception of freedom*

Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History,' *Critical Inquiry* 35(2009) 197-222.

## Week 7: Oppression

### Questions for reading

- What is oppression? Where does it come from? What should we do when we are confronted with oppression, whether as oppressed or oppressor?
- According to James, what is the relationship between race, sex, and class oppression? Can we resist one form of oppression without resisting the others, too?

### Essential reading

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2000) chapter 1 [pp. 43-69].  
Selma James, 'Sex, Race, and Class' in *Sex, Race, and Class—The Perspective of Winning: A Selection of Writings, 1952-2011* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012) 92-101.  
Angela Y. Davis, *Lectures on Liberation* (New York: Committee to Free Angela Davis, 1971) [pp. 1-24].

### Recommended advanced reading

Audre Lorde, 'Age, Race, Sex, and Class: Women Redefining Difference,' in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1984) 114-23.

- Why, according to Lorde, can 'the master's tools' not be used to dismantle 'the master's house'?

Ann E. Cudd, 'Oppression by Choice,' *Social Theory and Practice* 25(June 1994) 22-44.

- According to Cudd, why might it be rational to act in a way that contributes to one's own oppression?

### Additional advanced reading

#### A. *The structure of oppression*

G.A. Cohen, 'The Structure of Proletarian Unfreedom,' *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 12(1983) 3-33.  
Jeremy Waldron, 'Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom,' *UCLA Law Review* 39(1991): 295-324.

#### B. *Resistance to oppression*

Silvia Federici, *Wages Against Housework* (Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1975).  
Catharine A. MacKinnon, 'Consciousness Raising,' in *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1989) 83-105.

#### C. *Environmental destruction and oppression*

United Nations Human Rights Council, 'Climate Change and Poverty – Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights,' A/HRC/41/39, 25 June 2019.  
Vandana Shiva, 'Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation,' *India International Centre Quarterly* 19(1992): 205-14.

## Week 8: Sex

### Questions for reading

- Do humans have a true nature that makes some sexual acts or desires wrong?
- What is the essential difference between perverse and non-perverse sexual activity for Nagel? Is this distinction useful?
- What does Kant get right about sex and marriage according to Herman?
- For Srinivasan, should sexual desire be subject to ethical and political critique?

### Essential reading

Thomas Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979), chapter 4 [pp. 39-52].

Barbara Herman, 'Could It Be Worth Thinking about Kant on Sex and Marriage?', in *A Mind of One's Own: Feminist Essays on Reason and Objectivity*, ed. Louise Antony & Charlotte Witt (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993) 49-68.

Amia Srinivasan, 'Does Anyone Have the Right to Sex?', *London Review of Books*, 22 March 2018, 5-10.

### Recommended advanced reading

Ellen Willis, 'Lust Horizons: Is the Women's Movement Pro-Sex?', in *No More Nice Girls: Countercultural Essays* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992) 3-14.

- What makes sex ethically and politically sound or unsound on Willis's view?

Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse* (New York: Free Press, 1987) chapter 5 [pp. 79-100].

- How, for Dworkin, is the possession of women by men through sex related to women's (and men's) desires?

### Additional advanced reading

#### A. *Sex, love, and desire*

Jonathan Dollimore, 'Freud's Theory of Sexual Perversion,' in *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991) 169-90.

Rae Langton, 'Love and Solipsism,' in *Love Analyzed*, ed. Roger E. Lamb (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997) 123-52.

Amia Srinivasan, 'Silent Treatment,' *Harper's*, March 2018.

#### B. *Human nature, the procreative function of sex, and the Anthropocene*

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Roger Crisp (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), book 7, chapters 4-5.

Thomas Aquinas, 'Aquinas on Sex,' in *The Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, ed. Paul Halsall (March 1996), <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/aquinas-sex.asp>.

Giulia Cavaliere, 'The Problem with Reproductive Freedom: Procreation beyond Procreators' Interests,' *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 23(2020): 131-40.

Aylin Woodward, 'Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Wonders Whether People Should Have Kids in a Climate-Ravaged World. So Does This Movement of 'BirthStrikers,' *Business Insider*, 23 March 2019, <https://bit.ly/2mulGco>.

## Week 9: Self

### Questions for reading

- What is a self? What is the being that that can have experiences of happiness, and freedom, and oppression?
- Coherence is often treated as an ideal or as a demand: the claim is that we should try to be as coherent as we can, or at least avoid falling below some minimal threshold of coherence. Why? What is so bad about failing to cohere?
- If there are conflicting perspectives on who or what a person is, how can language or conversation accurately and adequately represent or express the self?

### Essential reading

Christine M. Korsgaard, 'Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant,' *Journal of Ethics* 3(1999): 1-29.

Francey Russell, 'I Want to Know More About You: On Knowing and Acknowledging in *Chinatown*,' in *Stanley Cavell on Aesthetic Understanding*, (Cham: Palgrave) 3-35.

Daniela Dover, 'The Conversational Self,' ms.

### Recommended advanced reading

Harry G. Frankfurt, 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person,' *Journal of Philosophy* 68(1971): 5-20.

- What is the relationship between desire, volition, action, and freedom for Frankfurt?
- Vida Yao, 'Boredom and the Divided Mind,' *Res Philosophica* 92(2015): 937-57.
- In Yao's view, is a divided mind pathological? Why or why not?

### Additional advanced reading

#### A. *Self-Constitution*

Harry G. Frankfurt, 'Identification and Wholeheartedness,' in *The Importance of What We Care About* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 159-76.

Charles Taylor, 'Responsibility for Self,' in *The Identities of Persons*, ed. Amélie Oskenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976) 281-99.

David Velleman, 'The Self as Narrator,' in *Self to Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP) 203-23.

#### B. *Sex, Desire, Division, Incoherence and Re-integration*

Jonathan Lear, 'To Become Human Does Not Come That Easily,' in *A Case for Irony* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2011) 3-41.

Francey Russell, 'Unity and Synthesis in the Ego Ideal,' *American Imago* 69(2012): 351-81.

Candace Vogler, 'Sex and Talk,' *Critical Inquiry*, 24(1998): 328-65.

#### C. *Self and the Climate Crisis*

David Corn, 'It's the End of the World as They Know It: The Distinct Burden of Being a Climate Scientist,' *Mother Jones*, 8 July 2019, <https://bit.ly/35u7hym>.

## Week 10: Future

### Questions for reading

- What is the non-identity problem, and how does Parfit think it should inform our ethical thinking about the future?
- Are we justified in showing partiality toward—or devoting more resources or care—to those people who are close to us or who happen to live in the same time as us to the detriment of people who live further in the future?
- Scheffler thinks that the continuation of humanity into the future is necessary for us to value properly. Why? Is Scheffler right?

### Essential reading

Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984) chapter 16 [pp. 351-79].

Samuel Scheffler, *Death and the Afterlife* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013) chapter 1-2 [pp. 15-81].

### Recommended advanced reading

Peter Singer, 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality,' *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 1(1972) 229-43.

- Is Singer right that if we can prevent something bad from happening, 'without sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it'?
- Amia Srinivasan, 'Stop the Robot Apocalypse,' *London Review of Books*, 16 September 2015, 3-6.
- What is Srinivasan's objection to effective altruists' approach to 'x-risks'?

### Additional advanced reading

#### A. *Partiality, friendship, and borders*

Joseph H. Carens, 'Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders,' *Review of Politics* 49(1987): 251-73.

Onora O'Neill, 'Distant Strangers, Moral Standing and Porous Boundaries,' in *Bounds of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004) 186-202.

Samuel Scheffler, 'Morality and Reasonable Partiality,' in *Partiality and Impartiality*, ed. Brian Feltham & John Cottingham (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010) 98-130.

Susan Wolf, 'Morality and Partiality,' *Philosophical Perspectives* 6(1992): 243-59.

#### B. *The future*

Elizabeth Kolbert, 'The Case Against Kids,' *New Yorker*, 2 April 2012.

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1971) § 44.

#### C. *Obligations to animals and the environment*

Clare Palmer, 'Does Nature Matter? The Place of the Nonhuman in the Ethics of Climate Change,' in *The Ethics of Global Climate Change*, ed. Denis G. Arnold (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011) 272-91.

## Readings to Emphasise

We are likely to discuss all the assigned reading in seminar each week, so you should come to our meetings prepared to discuss every text listed as an 'essential reading.' Successfully preparing to write a good assessed essay is also likely to require completing all essential reading for the module. However, I recognize that things come up, and students may find themselves in a situation where they are unable to complete all the assigned reading before our weekly meeting. If you find yourself in this situation, this list is designed to help; the following selections are the most important readings, in my mind, for each week of the seminar. So, if there is some week where you find that you are only able to read one thing, my suggestions are as follows:

Week 1: Plato, *Republic*, Book I and Book II up to 360d (at the top of p. 39)

Week 2: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, sections 1 & 2 (pp. 7-51)

Week 3: John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapters 1-4 (pp. 181-215)

Week 4: Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, preface & first treatise (pp. 1-33)

Week 5: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, section 1 (pp. 7-34)

Week 6: P.F. Strawson, 'Freedom and Resentment' (pp. 1-28)

Week 7: Angela Davis, *Lectures on Liberation* (pp. 1-24)

Week 8: Amia Srinivasan, 'Does Anyone Have the Right to Sex?' (pp. 5-10)

Week 9: Christine Korsgaard, 'Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant' (pp. 1-29)

Week 10: Samuel Scheffler, *Death and the Afterlife*, chapter 1 (pp. 15-49)