

PHILOSOPHY 569/466: 20TH-CENTURY ETHICS
(Fall 2003)

Professor: Kristin Shrader-Frechette
O'Neill Professor, Philosophy

Class Time: Tues, Thurs
12:30-1:45 p.m.

Classroom: 220 Malloy

Website: www.nd.edu/~kshrader

Office: 211 Malloy

Office hours: Tue, W, afternoons, or
any other days and times (by
appointment); sign-up sheet on door

Course goals: to offer a survey of 20-century metaethical and normative ethical theories
to recognize typical logical and conceptual problems likely to arise in alternative ethical theories
to recognize subtle ways inferences, models, and methodological values can bias ethics
to teach people to avoid suspect inferences, default rules, and subjectivity in ethics
to use classical ethical techniques of analysis and recognize ethical fallacies
to investigate alternative ethical rules for dealing with behavior under uncertainty

Course Requirements: readings for every class; attendance and problem analysis in every class; 2 short, analytic presentations/1-page critique or debate papers; one 8-page paper; attendance at 2 on-campus lectures (comments required), outside class time; no tests.

Basis for Course Grade: 50 percent: final 8-page paper and 1-page argument outline for it
25 percent: 2 one-page presentations/analytic papers
25 percent: in-class analysis

Professor presupposes clear, precise, journal-ready prose and perfect grammar/spelling; use software to guarantee both.

Course Format: The first half of class will be professor's lecture on the topic of the day. Second half of the class will be seminar presentations by students on the topic of the day.

Course Texts: Steven Cahn and Joram Haber, 20th Century Ethical Theory
Richard Hare, Moral Thinking
Onora O'Neill, Towards Justice and Virtue
John Rawls, Justice as Fairness: A Restatement

THE "BIG PICTURE" IN 20TH-CENTURY ETHICS

(1) INTUITIONISM → (MOORE) (ROSS) (PRICHARD)	(2) POSITIVISM → AND NON- COGNITIVISM (AYER) (STEVENSON) (HARE)	(3) REVIVAL OF → NORMATIVE THEORY: KANTIAN (RAWLS) (KORSGAARD) (SCANLON) (NAGEL) UTILITARIAN (PARFIT) (KAGAN) (SCHEFFLER) VIRTUE THEORY (MACINTYRE) (O'NEILL) (NUSSBAUM)	(4) POST- → POSITIVIST ANTI-REALISM (HARMAN) (MCDOWELL)	(5) POST- → POSITIVIST MORAL REALISM (BOYD) (MILLER) (NAGEL) (BRINK) (SINNOTT- ARMSTRONG)	(6) ATTACKS ON MORAL REALISM (RORTY) (BLACKBURN) (MACKIE)
	CONTINENTAL ETHICS OF AMBIGUITY (BEAUVOIR OF AUTHENTICITY (SARTRE)				

Note: arrows represent historical progression in 20th-century, and neither entailment nor causal relations.

Format for Papers

1. One-page analytic papers for debate or critique: use format for (1) Lewis paper (See KS-F model) or format for (2) BioScience paper (see KS-F model). For (1) and (2) state your own thesis, clearly, precisely, completely, with arguments, in one sentence, at beginning of paper. If you use format (1), give (i) quotation, (ii) argument outlining some flaw, (iii) argument that the flaw is damaging to the author's position. Repeat this (i), (ii), (iii) process 5 times, and use only 1 piece of paper. If you use format (2), give (i) quotation, (ii) your argument based on the flaw in the quotation, (iii) the best possible objection someone could make to (ii); (iv) the best possible response you can make to (iii). Repeat this (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) process 4 times and use only 1 piece of paper. Bring copies for all members of class plus 2 copies for professor.
2. One-page argument outline for 8-page paper: Use format for paper (2) above, on front side of paper; on back side of same paper, give 5-10 good references in some standard format. Use parenthetical citations, and bring copies for all members of class plus 2 copies for professor.
3. 8-page paper: Develop and expand previous paper, by reiterations of (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) process, giving extra objections, and so on. Quality of argument is the only basis for the grade. Give 2 copies to professor.

FORMAT FOR CRITIQUE PAPER 1

Last Name, First Name

Dr. Kristin Shrader-Frechette

Date

1. "Ionizing radiation....may or may not be bad in small doses—no one knows" (Lewis, ch. 15, p. 218).
Lewis' claim is incomplete because he admits, on p. 222, that the National Research Council (National Academy of Sciences) says that the probability of radiation-induced cancer is a function of the amount of radiation received.

Lewis' incompleteness is damaging to his argument because the incompleteness suggests that Lewis may be biased in underestimating the dangers associated with radiation.

- ALTERNATE 1: "Ionizing radiation....may or may not be bad in small doses—no one knows" (Lewis, ch. 15, p. 218).

Lewis' claim could lead to the consequence that people were careless about unnecessary radiation risk because he says "no one knows" if small doses are dangerous.

This consequence is damaging to Lewis' argument because people ought not ignore even potential risks if they are easily avoidable, e.g., by wearing lead apron for x-rays.

2. "Medical x-rays are examples of voluntary exposure to radiation" (Lewis, ch. 15, p. 219).
Lewis assumes that when people receive medical x-rays, their exposure to radiation is voluntary.

This assumption is doubtful because doctors, insurers, or employers often require people to receive x-rays and because patients often do not understand the risks involved and hence cannot consent to them.

3. "Nuclear waste must be disposed of carefully" (Lewis, ch. 15, p. 220).
Lewis' claim above is inconsistent because he also claims (on pp. 245-246) that "high-level waste....risk....turns out to be ridiculously low....High-level nuclear waste disposal is a non-risk."

Lewis' inconsistency is damaging to his argument because one need not be "careful," as he says, about a risk that is "ridiculously low" or a "non-risk" and because his emotive and inconsistent language suggests Lewis' bias.

4. "The vast majority of all these radiation sources deliver[s] extremely small doses, with minimal (if any) health effects, even though fear of even trivial doses of radiation is common" (Lewis, ch. 15, p. 220).
Lewis assumes that it is not reasonable to fear trivial doses of radiation.

This assumption is doubtful because Lewis admits ionizing radiation "may be bad in small doses—no one knows" (Lewis, ch. 15, p. 218), and it sometimes is reasonable to fear small/unneeded doses of things with cumulative effects.

5. "The maximum permitted exposure for workers in nuclear facilities is 5,000 mr per year, and for the general public 500. We don't know if this much radiation does any harm at all" (Lewis, ch. 15, p. 220).
Lewis' claim is incoherent because (1) the referent of "this much radiation" could be 5,000 or 500 mr and (2) he says (p. 222) "the most authoritative estimates" of radiation risk show that the risk is a function of dose.

Lewis' incoherence is damaging to his argument both because (1) his language makes his argument unclear and (2) he appears to be biased in underestimating radiation risks.

Note: Please use no fonts smaller than 12 point, no sentences longer than three lines, and no quotes twice.

Thesis: The US should not allow more lenient workplace-pollution (than public) standards, because often workers (1) are not fully informed about higher risks; (2) impose the risks on innocent people, such as future generations; (3) receive no compensating wage differential (CWD) for risky jobs; (4) have faulty preferences for riskier work; and (5) ought not be able to trade their health for money.

Argument 1: The US should not allow more lenient workplace standards, (1) because workers often are not fully informed about higher risks, and industry often covers up the risks (GAO 1999).

Objection 1: Argument 1 is questionable because unions and government regulators can inform workers of the risks, as Congress recently did, in the case of nuclear workers (Congress 1999).

Response 1: Objection 1 is questionable because US union membership is only 14-16 percent (Miller 1999, pp. 57-59), and government often fails in its regulatory capacity (GAO 1999).

A2: The US should not allow more lenient workplace standards, (2) because often worker mutagenic risk is imposed on innocent people, such as future generations (Shrader-Frechette 2002, ch. 5).

O2: A2 is questionable because someone needs to do the risky work, or else the economy would suffer (Dorman 1996, pp. 26-28).

R2: O2 is questionable because human rights take precedence to economics, and because European nations also do risky work, but with very stringent workplace standards (Newton 1996, pp. 135-149).

A3: The US should not allow more lenient workplace standards, (3) because often there is no CWD for workers in environmentally risky occupations (Leigh 1995, pp. 3-7, 215).

O3: A3 is questionable because many economists say there is a compensating wage differential, although it varies from occupation to occupation (Viscusi et al. 2000).

R3: O3 is questionable because although there is an average CWD, disaggregating CWD data shows it exists only for unionized, college-educated, or male workers (Shrader-Frechette 2002, Ch. 7).

A4: The US should not allow more lenient workplace standards, (4) because workers often have faulty or irrational preferences for riskier work (Broome 1999, pp. 192-198).

O4: A4 is questionable because workers have the right to determine what jobs they want, and the market promotes efficient job-risk matchups (Viscusi et al. 2000, pp. 768-769).

R4: O4 is questionable because workers often are forced into jobs, not because of real preferences but because of economic hardship and low skill levels (Levenstein and Wooding 1997).

A5: The US should not allow more lenient workplace standards, (5) because workers ought not be able to trade health for money, since only vulnerable people tend to do so (Leigh 1995, pp. 3-7, 215).

O5: A5 is questionable because such trades promote worker freedom (Viscusi et al. 2000, p. 766).

R5: O5 is questionable because even the courts recognize that paternalism and worker protection sometimes ought to take precedence over complete worker autonomy (Sellars 1997, p. 47).

LECTURE/CLASS/ASSIGNMENT OUTLINE

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT FOR THIS DATE
Tues 8-26	The importance of ethics; The history of ethics; The problems of ethics; Skepticism and relativism in ethics; The big picture	
Thurs 8-28	Logical fallacies; Five logical criteria for ethical analysis; <u>Ethical Intuitionism</u>	Read Moore, "The Subject Matter of Ethics," in C&H
Tues 9-2	Is the Naturalistic Fallacy a Fallacy? 3 Interpretations of NF	Read Moore, "The Naturalistic Fallacy," in C&H
Thurs 9-4	Is Prichard right?	Read Prichard, "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" in C&H
Tues 9-9	The Plausibility of Prima-Facie Duties	Read Ross, "What Makes Right Acts Right?" in C&H
Thurs 9-11	Non-Cognitivism in Ethics: Ayer and Critics of Classical Metaethics: Searle	Read Ayer, "A Critique of Ethics" in C&H; Searle, "How to Derive Ought from Is" in C&H Searle is right about Moore: (i) _____ Searle is wrong about Moore: (ii) _____
Tues 9-16	Non-Cognitivism in Ethics: Stevenson and Critics of Classical Metaethics: Gewirth	Read Stevenson, "The Nature of Ethical Disagreement," in C&H and Gewirth, "The Is-Ought Problem Resolved," in C&H Gewirth is right: (iii) _____ Gewirth is wrong: (iv) _____
Thurs 9-18	Non-Cognitivism in Ethics: Hare, Wittgenstein	Read Hare, "A Moral Argument" in C & H Read Wittgenstein, "A Lecture on Ethics" in C & H
Tues 9-23	The Continental Response: Sartre and Beauvoir	Read Beauvoir, "Ethics of Ambiguity," on e-reserve

Thurs 9-25	Critics of Classical Meta-Ethics: Geach	Read Geach, "Good & Evil" in C & H Geach is right: (v) _____ Geach is wrong: (vi) _____
Tues 9-30	Critics of Classical Meta-Ethics: Foot and the Revival of Thomism	Read Foot, "Moral Beliefs" in C & H Read Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy" in C & H Anscombe is right: (vii) _____ Anscombe is wrong: (viii) _____
Thurs 10-2	Rawls and Normative Theory	Read Rawls, "Justice as Fairness" in C & H; "Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics" in C & H; "Two Concepts of Rules" in C & H. Pro Rawls: (ix) _____ Pro Harsanyi: (x) _____ (Harsanyi is on reserve)
Tues 10-7	Rawls and Normative Theory	Read Rawls, <u>Justice as Fairness: R</u> , chs. 1 & 2 Criticism of Rawls, chs. 1 & 2: (xi) _____
Thurs 10-9	Rawls and Normative Theory	Read Rawls, <u>Justice: R</u> , ch. 3 Criticism of Rawls, ch. 3: (xii) _____
Tues 10-14	Rawls and Normative Theory	Read Rawls, <u>Justice: R</u> , chs. 4-5 Criticism of Rawls, chs. 4-5 (xiii) _____
Thurs 10-16	NO CLASS: DR. S-F MUST LECTURE IN CHINA; FIRST GUTMANN LECTURE IN DECEMBER WILL MAKE UP FOR THIS CLASS	
Tues 10-21 Thurs 10-23	FALL BREAK: NO CLASS: (you could read Hare's <u>Moral Thinking</u> and get ahead)	
Tues 10-28	More Contemporary Kantians: Korsgaard Dworkin and Scanlon	Read Scanlon, "Contractualism and Utilitarianism" in C&H Scanlon is right about utilitarianism: (xiv) _____ Scanlon is wrong about utilitarianism: (xv) _____ Outline of Final Paper Due: *

Thurs 10-30	Contemporary Utilitarians: Singer and Hare	Read Singer, "Famine, Affluence" on electronic reserve
Tues 11-4	Contemporary Virtue Theorists: MacIntyre	Read "The Nature of the Virtues" in C & H Pro MacIntyre: (xvi) _____ Con MacIntyre: (xvii) _____
Thurs 11-6	Contemporary Virtue Theorists: MacIntyre	Read MacIntyre on e-reserve; Read Gutmann on e-reserve
Tues 11-11	Contemporary Mixed Theorists: Hare (anti rights)	Read <u>Moral Thinking</u> by Hare, chs. 1-6 Critique of chs. 1-6: (xviii) _____
Thurs 11-13	Contemporary Mixed Theorists: Parfit and Actual- Consequence Utilitarianism (pro rights)	Read chs. 7-12, Hare Critique of chs. 7-12: (xix) _____
Tues 11-18	Contemporary Mixed Theorists: Parfit and Identity	Read Parfit, "Later Selves and M oral Principles" in C & H Pro Parfit: (xx) _____ Con Parfit: (xxi) _____
Thurs 11-20	Contemporary Mixed Theorists: O'Neill	Read O'Neill, chs. 1-4 Critique of O'Neill, chs. 1-4: (xxii) _____ Defense of O'Neill, chs. 1-4: (xxiii) _____
Tues 11-25 Thurs 11-27	NO CLASS BECAUSE OF THANKSGIVING; SECOND GUTMANN LECTURE WILL COUNT FOR CLASS; READ O'NEILL CHS. 5-7	
Tues 12-2	Contemporary Critics of Classical Supererogation: Urmson, Mellema, May	Defense of O'Neill, chs. 5-7: (xxiv) _____ Critique of O'Neill, chs. 5-7: (xxv) _____ Read Urmson, "Saints and Heroes," in C & H

Thurs 12-4	Williams and Anti Theory	Final paper due.* Read Williams on e-reserve (chs. 9-10) of <u>Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy</u> and Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality" in C & H Pro Williams: (xxvi) _____ Con Williams: (xxvii) _____
Thurs 12-4 Fri 12-5	Amy Gutmann	Hear both of Gutmann's lectures; she is from Princeton
Tues 12-9	The Attack on Moral Realism	Read Railton, "Moral Realism"

Kristin Shrader Frechette has degrees in mathematics and in philosophy. Author of 300 journal articles and 14 books, her work has been translated into 11 languages and has appeared in journals such as Ethics, Journal of Philosophy, Public Affairs Quarterly, Philosophy of Science, and Science. She has addressed the national academies of science in 3 nations and advised various foreign and US governments, the UN, and the WHO on various ethics-related issues. She also has served on many committees and boards of the US National Academy of Sciences. Her research has been funded continuously by NSF and NEH since 1982, and she is Past President of the Risk Assessment and Policy Association and current president of the International Society for Environmental Ethics. Most of her ethics publications are on Rawls, Locke, Aquinas, and contemporary utilitarianism. Her latest book is Environmental Justice: Creating Equality, Reclaiming Democracy (Oxford University Press, 2002).