

Philosophy 2: Individual Morality and Social Justice

Quinn Gibson

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1 Instructor (Me)

My name is Quinn Gibson. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the philosophy department. I earned undergraduate degrees in philosophy and linguistics in Canada. My research is in the branch of moral philosophy called Moral Psychology. My dissertation is about social psychology and moral responsibility, in particular, self-deception, and addiction.

- **Office Hours:** Thursday 12:30–2. 301 Moses hall.
- **email:** qhgibson at berkeley dot edu

If you lose these things (yet somehow manage to remember these instructions...) you can find them on the philosophy department's website¹ → People → Graduate Students → Quinn Gibson

2 GSI

Your GSI is Michael Diaz

- **Office Hours:** TBD
- **email:** diamic08 at berkeley dot edu

3 Course Outline

This course is an introduction to moral and political philosophy. The course is divided into three sections.

Meta-ethics: What precisely are we doing when we make an ethical claim? Do claims about what is good or bad, right or wrong, purport to express *truths*

¹<http://philosophy.berkeley.edu/>

about the way the world is? If so, are these truths independent of anyone's beliefs about them? What, if anything is the significance of moral disagreement? Is genuine moral disagreement *possible*? Does the status of morality's claims on us depend in any way on our individual psychological natures? If so, how?

Normative Theories: In virtue of what are right acts right and wrong acts wrong? Is it because of the act's consequences? Is it because of the state of mind or state of character of the person acting? Do we have a duty to maximize the impartial good? If so, how strong is this duty? Are there any absolute moral duties?

Applications: What, if anything, are our obligations to those who are far worse off than we are? Does it matter how close we are to them, either geographically or personally? What are the many facets of the idea of *equality*? Are certain kinds of inequalities bad in themselves? Time permitting, we may also get to the following: Is it morally permissible to eat meat? Is abortion morally permissible?

4 Texts

- Shafer-Landau, Russ (2004) 'Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?'. Oxford University Press. (Required)

All other readings will be made available on bSpace

5 Course Requirements

One three-page paper	30%	[Due date June 5th]
One four-to-five page paper	35%	[Due date June 24th]
Final Exam	25%	[July 3rd]
Attendance and Participation	10%	

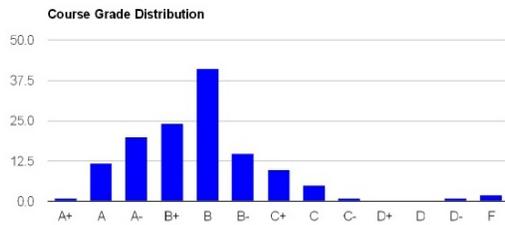
6 Turning in Assignments and Late Policy

The format of your written work (whether hard-copy or digital, for example), and the late policy will be determined by your GSI.

7 Grade Distribution

Here's the grade distribution from a past version of this course:²

²This information is publicly available at <https://schedulebuilder.berkeley.edu>



The mean grade was a high B and the mode was a B. This is slightly higher than the philosophy department's typical average of a low B.

8 Academic Honesty

Plagiarism³ is bad. Don't do it. For one thing, it won't help you. Plagiarized papers, even taken as they are, typically aren't very good. For another, we will probably catch you — people really aren't very good at hiding the fact that they have no idea what they're talking about. And then we will both have to file a lot of paperwork, you will probably be given an F in the course, and you'll have a file opened at the office of student conduct. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism don't hesitate to ask me.

9 Students Requiring Academic Accommodation

If you are registered with the Disabled Students' Program (DSP), please submit your accommodation letter to me as soon as possible. We will of course do our best to accommodate you.

10 Tentative Course Outline

Meta-Ethics

(Week 1)

- Introductions; Philosophy; Moral Philosophy
- Plato *Republic* Bks. I–II
- Shafer-Landau *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?* Chapters 1–11

(Week 2)

- Shafer-Landau *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?* Chapters 12–conclusion

³See how easy it is to cite something? The code of student conduct defines what plagiarism is and is available online: <http://students.berkeley.edu/uga/conduct.pdf>

- Mackie *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* Selections
- Williams ‘Internal and External Reasons’

Normative Theories

(Week 3)

- Plato *Euthyphro*
- Mill ‘Utilitarianism’
- Smart ‘An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics’
- Nozick ‘The Experience Machine’
- Williams ‘A Critique of Utilitarianism’
- Kant *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* Selections
- Rawls *Justice as Fairness* Section I

(Week 4)

- Aristotle *NE* Book I, selections from Book II
- Hursthouse ‘Normative Virtue Ethics’
- Plato *Protagoras*
- Aristotle *NE* Book VII, selections [Interlude on weakness of will]
- Wolf ‘Moral Saints’

Applications

(Week 5)

- Williams ‘The Idea of Equality’
- Frankfurt ‘Equality as a Moral Ideal’
- Parfit ‘Equality and Priority’
- Foot ‘The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect’
- Thomson ‘The Trolley Problem’

(Week 6)

- Marquis ‘Why Abortion is Immoral’
- Singer ‘Famine, Affluence, and Morality’
- Review
- Exam