

Teaching portfolio for Colin Marshall

contents

Included in this teaching portfolio are the following:

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teaching
philosophy

My core teaching principle is that I can teach material effectively only if I am wrestling with it myself and encouraging my students to do the same. My goal is to give my students a particular mixture of humility and empowerment: humility in appreciating that there are important puzzles they haven't yet figured out, and empowerment in feeling that they are intellectually equipped to challenge *anyone's* claim to philosophical certainty. Even intellectual giants like Aristotle and Kant are worthy wrestling partners – their claims and arguments can and *should* be tackled. I've found I can only convey this lesson by example, and I've been thrilled to watch my students appreciate and embody it themselves.

This principle has led me to favor smaller, more frequent assignments in courses instead of relying merely on final exams and papers. While I do think that an exam or paper is the best way to conclude a course, I believe it is important to have assignments that keep the students directly and personally engaged with the material throughout the course. In the past,

I've accomplished this either by requiring that students email me questions about the reading before each class, or by assigning regular short-answer problem sets that ask them to evaluate the arguments we've covered.

Finally, I have found that including some element of choice for the students increases their feeling of investment in the course. Sometimes this has been a matter of what material we cover at the end of the course. Other times I've let each student decide whether he or she prefers to take a final exam or to write a substantial final paper.

future
teaching
interests

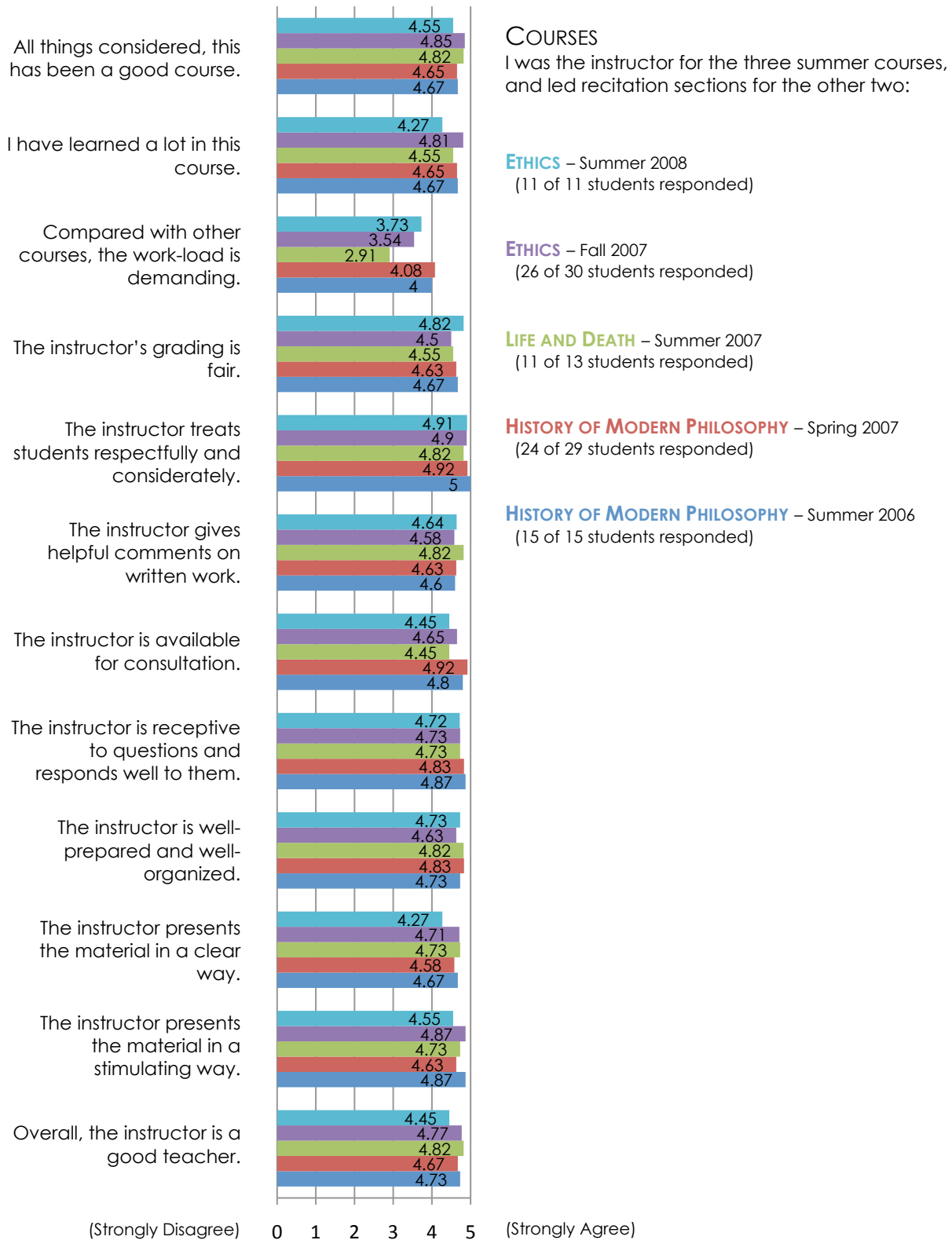
I am prepared to teach graduate-level courses about Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Spinoza's *Ethics* and certain topics in metaethics. I am also prepared to teach undergraduate courses in Kant, early modern philosophy, ethics and ancient philosophy.

I have special interest in teaching classes on topics that are explicitly discussed both in the contemporary literature and in the classic works in the history of philosophy. One such topic is the metaethical question of what values are – something discussed both at length in the past century and by Plato and Kant long before. Another topic of this sort is the question of what sort of thing a self is, and what we can know about the metaphysics of the self through pure reflection.

summary of courses instructed (NYU)	Responsible for entire course, including: creating syllabus, lecturing and leading discussion, grading and commenting on assignments, and office hours (see attached syllabi).	
	HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY <i>Topics.</i> Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant.	Summer 2006
	LIFE AND DEATH <i>Topics.</i> Metaphysics of death, fearing death, euthanasia, abortion, value of animal life.	Summer 2007
	ETHICS <i>Topics.</i> Metaethics, normative ethics, free will and responsibility, science and ethics.	Summer 2008
summary of teaching assistantships with recitations (NYU)	Did some lecturing, led discussion sections, graded and commented on papers and exams, and held office hours.	
	HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY (<i>for Professor Don Garrett</i>) <i>Topics.</i> Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant.	Spring 2007
	ETHICS (<i>for Professor David Velleman</i>) <i>Topics.</i> Mill, Aristotle, Kant, Nietzsche.	Fall 2007
summary of teaching assistantships without recitations (NYU)	Graded and commented on papers and exams, and held office hours.	
	HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY (<i>for Professor Wayne Waxman</i>) <i>Topics.</i> Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant.	Fall 2005
	HISTORY OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY (<i>for Professors Matt Evans and Phillip Mitsis</i>) <i>Topics.</i> Plato, Aristotle, Hellenistic Philosophy.	Fall 2006

Summary of teaching evaluations

Below are the averages of the scores students gave me:



COURSES

I was the instructor for the three summer courses, and led recitation sections for the other two:

ETHICS – Summer 2008
(11 of 11 students responded)

ETHICS – Fall 2007
(26 of 30 students responded)

LIFE AND DEATH – Summer 2007
(11 of 13 students responded)

HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY – Spring 2007
(24 of 29 students responded)

HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY – Summer 2006
(15 of 15 students responded)

Written comments from evaluations

Below I quote all of every comment from students on evaluation forms:

History of Modern Philosophy – Summer 2006

The course was awesome! Seriously... you definitely know your stuff and you were able to effectively convey it... I learned *a lot*. Your grading is hard *but* I feel as if it's *fair*! I mean, I think it's cool that you take the time to know each student individually and set your standards for them. Also... thank you so much for being so available all the time (office hours and appointments, emails). You're really good @ getting back to your students and it seems that you're genuinely concerned for our welfare. Thanks for the awesome semester.

It takes a lot to get a bunch of college-aged kids to show up to class on gorgeous summer afternoons – the fact that nearly everyone *always* showed up for Colin's class should speak for itself. The daily questions were good because we couldn't squeak by without reading the material. The weekly assignments were also great for checking comprehension periodically. Colin's going to be an awesome professor. Seriously.

Colin was a really good teacher, and made the most of a potentially horrible situation for any teacher – rushing through the great works of modern phil. over one course and 6 weeks. He's an incredibly fair grader, is always quick to respond to emailed questions, and is more than happy to meet outside of class. The one thing I will say sometimes impeded learning (occasionally) was his tendency to go off on tangents, and then not want to go into that topic when questions are asked. But, I really enjoyed the class, and in all other situations he was more than willing to answer questions.

Analogies were effective. Material presented in good sequence. Pace was agreeable. Knowledge of material is good. Sometimes I was confused about what exact subject of sub-subject we were talking about. A brief outline for each class sometimes helps but this method is a little dramatic.

Overall Colin is a good teacher. He grades hard but fair.

Overall the class was good. Sometimes the assignments got to be too much, especially at the end when we were working on study questions for the final and had a weekly assignment and daily questions. I would suggest not having daily questions due on any day when another assignment is due. Colin was always willing to answer questions, though and seemed to really know what he was talking about.

Colin did an excellent job at presenting and explaining the material. The only chance I would have made would be a change in material. I'd get rid of Leibniz and do more Kant. The daily questions kept me up on my reading and the weekly assignments cemented my learning. Colin always made time to talk after class and was an overall excellent teacher.

The weekly questions were helpful in making us really think through the philosophers' arguments and clarify my own understanding of the ideas we discussed. Analogies were good in explaining concepts. Not so hot on the daily questions, but didn't mind them too much. Humor helped make the class *not* monotonous. Would be better to go over important key terms and make sure everyone has a good grasp on these before beginning the lectures/discussion.

Colin fetishizes cats to a somewhat troubling degree. Other than that, he's a terrifically patient, lucid instructor, and is quite diligent about making certain that all the material is understood. As a philosopher, I would rank him higher than Bentham but lower than Moore. His capacity for allegory and metaphor is unprecedented and, I think, unparalleled.

This was a great class. Daily questions really helped enforce reading and not save it all for studying for exams. Grading was fair and weekly assignments were interesting. Class lectures/discussion was very helpful in clearing up confusing material.

Colin has made this course highly enjoyable. It is clear that he is truly passionate about the subject, and his enthusiasm helps to make the class very stimulating. He is genuinely interested in teaching and helping his students comprehend the material.

The way Colin presented the material was extremely helpful. He presented the material in a very laid back manner and used humor to compel our interest! Excellent instructor!

I can't say that I enjoyed the material for this course – I realized that this type of philosophy, while interesting, is a little too wacky for me. But, Colin translated what seemed to be nonsense into a coherent and somewhat understandable language. Very good and enthusiastic and passionate teacher. He's a genuinely swell lad!

Colin Marshall has been, without a doubt, one of the best instructors I've had at NYU thus far. He is engaging and extremely knowledgeable on the subject. This course ended up being challengeable and deeply interesting. Colin seemed to really care about the subject matter and know exactly how to clarify the material and make it extremely interesting. I have nothing but the highest remarks to give. Overall, excellent! Interesting, challenging, motivating... I have definitely learned a lot.

Sure to be a worthy addition to any philosophy department.

History of Modern Philosophy – Spring 2007

These comments concern the recitation sections I led for the course.

Colin was an amazing instructor and probably elucidated many of the philosophers we studied. He is excellent at explaining concepts and answering questions. Overall, I would say that he is one of the best damn teachers I've had at NYU.

Colin is one of the better TAs I've had so far, in any department. He seems to really enjoy what he's doing and his being so helpful really made the entire class easier. He's make a great professor one day!

Colin was an excellent teacher. He really helped to make things understandable, and helped to clear up any misconceptions I had.

Colin is very friendly and always explains the material well.

Colin was good – not enough time spent on each philosopher – which I know probably wasn't your decision...

Colin was one of the best TAs I've had – engaged and dedicated, very helpful and always fair.

The recitation could have been a little more structured. I sometimes felt that though I didn't have specific questions to ask, I left recitation feeling that there were general concepts that hadn't been addressed – that we spent the whole time talking about just a couple specifics. But overall Colin was a very effective TA.

Colin was a very clear and concise recitation instructor. He delved into the specific elements of the lecture that we needed more explaining of. He always had creative and visual examples to help further our understanding of the text.

Life and Death – Summer 2007

The course was my first experience of a philosophy class and I was pleasantly surprised. The reading was not too long, but it was demanding in that I had to really think about the material. I learned a lot from our discussions, and Colin was a great teacher. He has a great sense of humor and taught the material as well as anyone could have. I am really glad I took this course with Colin. And just for the record, I think cats rule.

Great course The problem sets really helped in grasping the material.

Fun course, good discussions. Too many cats.

This has been probably my favourite philosophy class! Continued assessment really made me engage with the material and kept me interested. Thoroughly enjoyed class – literally a laugh a minute!

This was a great course. The discussions were fun and interesting and I feel I got much deeper into the material than I did in my previous philosophy course. I'll definitely be interesting in taking another course taught by Colin in the future.

Enjoyed the food.

Colin is a good teacher and hates ICP! He gave us blueberry tofu cheesecake.

I absolutely loved the way this course was taught, the material was presented in an understandable form. Young kids should not sleep in class. Overall - ☺

Liked the class discussions and the handouts that broke everything down. I just wished it had been easier to read the comments posted on our problem sets.

Ethics – Fall 2007

These comments concern the recitation sections I led for the course.

Colin runs an excellent section, and is always friendly and helpful. I don't know that I always agree with his grading, but he is otherwise a good teacher. He is clear, insightful, and good to talk to.

Overall, I really enjoyed this course. The recitations were helpful in understanding points brought up during lecture. There really isn't anything I have to say.

Colin was great at keeping the class informative without sacrificing fun. He used real-world examples of moral dilemmas to make dense, abstract theses more tangible. The class would've been more difficult to comprehend without him.

I like it when Colin challenges David's theories; it is always good to see another point of view. Also, concrete examples are GOOD and NECESSARY, but sometimes Colin's drag on just a bit too long (literally, just a bit, they are mostly really helpful).

This was my first philosophy class so I didn't really know what to expect. The material was pretty well explained but I think we often got caught up in the language.

Overall excellent course. My only comments would be that a perhaps more systematic approach would be more useful (although due to time constraints it is probably unfeasible to go through all the material). More time on writing solid papers would also be very useful.

As this is a first course for many students of philosophy, I would imagine if Colin spent a bit more time on teaching the technicalities of writing a good philo paper, it would be helpful. BUT, Colin is an excellent philosopher and teacher, I would highly recommend him to anyone.

Your examples are awesome! (Kant: like trying to prove dragons exist by referring to dinosaurs, etc.) I had a lot of fun in your recitation, I definitely have learned a lot – sorry this doesn't really explain how much I really enjoyed your recitations, but I really did!

I. I would have liked to see a bit more interaction among the students. Sometimes, the sections were a bit too lectury. II. But, overall, sections were informative and enjoyable experiences that greatly enhanced my understanding of the course material. III. When will be Colin's first appearance on Comedy Central?

Colin is very good at making things clear and simple. Considering the complexity of the reading assignments it was helpful to have him as my TA. However, his grading might be a bit too tough on students. Overall, I enjoyed (very much) having Colin as my TA, whose use of fun modern examples inspired a very high attendance rate of my recitation group. I also appreciate his being unafraid to challenge the professor (David Velleman).

I have really enjoyed course. Lecture and section really clarify texts. Having some trouble as philosophy is not my major (English) and I approach assignments as Eng major. Overall – disappointed w/ grades but I am learning a lot and enjoyed the course.

Colin allowed for an easy atmosphere to discuss questions and topics. He always had good examples to support his thoughts. At times, answers to questions were meant to lead him to tie ideas to grander principles, which were hard to make clear... in this Colin tried and usually succeeds.

Colin – You've been a great teacher. As this is my first philosophy course, I had no idea what to expect or if I would even understand what was going on. You are great at explaining not only the 'big picture' but also addressing specific problems we might have w/ concepts. For the most part, recitation was very helpful in getting the jist of what the philosophers were saying... and when I went back and read the book, it turned out you knew what you were talking about. Suggestions – The quote sheets Prof V. handed out were really strange to me. I don't know why I had a problem with them, but I had trouble following how they tied into his larger arguments. Two things – he could post the quotes he will use prior to class so we could hilight as we read (which is kind of silly b/c we could just go back anyway) or... go over them in section?

Colin has helped my way of approaching philosophy grow tremendously. He constantly challenges us to think in new ways, even opposed to the professor, and has helped shed light on some very difficult texts this year. He will one day be an amazing professor.

Colin has been the best TA that I have had @ NYU as of yet – a great way to start out taking philosophy! His examples (such as having to do w/ cookies, funny stories, etc.) actually really help with comprehension. Also, the (somewhat ranting) emails about forgotten information and disagreements with the professor always lent another useful view that helped me form my own opinions.

I liked this course a lot, I learned a lot and will definitely take another course in the philosophy department. Colin is a great TA, all of the anecdotes were really helpful and made class interesting. I like recitation more than the lecture even! Colin was very clear in explaining the material and was helpful with questions. I learned a lot in this class and I also became very interested in the course materials.

Collin did a great job clearing things up. He was very responsive and patiently answered all our questions. He clarified without patronizing, and his recitations were excellent supplements to the lectures. Overall, I am very pleased I picked him to be my TA. Keep up the great work!

There should be snacks... or less cookie references. Ok, just kidding. The cookie references were fine. The explanations were clear. Questions were usually answered well. Sometimes it seemed like the answer started before a student was done asking his/her question. Recitations should be longer and more interactive – sometimes it felt too much like a lecture. Usually it was very good though.

Colin Marshall is one of the best TAs I have ever had at NYU. He is more than competent in the course texts and he is not afraid to point out where he sees problems with what is being taught in lecture. He was always available to answer my questions and would after stay after class to make things clear. I was thoroughly impressed with his dedication to teaching.

Colin is the best TA that I have had in any of my courses at NYU. He is extremely helpful, easy to understand and is always available. He makes the recitations fun and interesting and has a real passion for philosophy. He is careful to make sure that I understand the things I'm unsure about, and always given me great advice on my drafts. He is truly awesome. It makes me very sad that I will never have a philosophy TA as good as him.

Colin is a very insightful instructor who has the gift of simultaneously bringing stimulation and analysis to the teachings of his lessons. After consulting with him on papers/subject matter, I found our meetings very helpful in the writing of my papers. He isn't a professor who merely nods or shakes his head when you bring an idea to the table. I appreciate and have learned a lot from the feedback he has provided me with over the course of the semester.

I think Colin is an excellent TA and I really enjoy his teaching style. For example, he gives real life examples that everyone can relate to, to explain abstract concepts. He is also very accessible and is great at explaining things. Overall he's a good guy/teacher. I like his cat mug and his glasses. He knows what he is talking about and most importantly he is *enthusiastic* about the subject and does not contradict himself which is very important. Bravo Colin!

I have had Colin as an instructor both in this class and one during summer session '07. In both instances he has provided clear and detailed information pertaining to the given topic, while simultaneously bringing in engaging, sometimes humorous, examples that both clarify the material and make the class greatly enjoyable.

You have a very unique teaching style and I think it work very well with these small classes. Your analogys are very good and easy to remember so they are pretty helpful. I think it would be good to utilize the board more. A lot of points would be made much more clear if written down but these are few and far between since most of the analogies are very helpful. The categorical imperative tells us it's wrong to kick puppies.

Colin, this has been a great course. I especially appreciate how you bring elements of your personal life into the classroom. It has helped me get to know you and made me want to come to class more. I also like that you used relatively consistent analogies (cats and cookies) throughout the course. It helped bridge gaps. I especially liked how you voiced disagreements with Velleman. It was useful to get two opposing views. My only complaint, and this is minor, is that I didn't feel you had a strong enough grasp on a few of the readings. However, I understand that you are a scholar of Kant, and most of these readings are incredibly controversial and difficult. You kept my attention and really helped me get into the course. Thanks!

Ethics – Summer 2008

This has been one of my favorite philosophy classes at NYU. Colin is a wonderful teacher, and the material/essays we discussed in class were very interesting. I especially liked his lectures on Kant.

Connected the readings together very well being able to formulate other philosophers' expected responses to articles or arguments.

Colin is an enthusiastic teacher who makes the course work fun. I enjoyed the many examples and illustrations illuminating the main points from the texts. But he often speaks a bit too quickly.

Overall the course was interesting an fun. During these 6 weeks, I was intense with lots of reading. I learned a lot. Being a senior in high school, I felt this was a very demanding class, but this was my first college class.

Colin really knows how to teach and lead the classroom discussion. He is very clear, even though I have only taken one other philosophy course. The most important thing he did to help us learn was explain concepts in a way we could understand and still have room to put in our own views, and he did so with occasional bits of humor that lived up the class. He has talent and passion for teaching, and it is apparent.

I think that Colin is a great teacher and really presents the information in a stimulating way. Perhaps there was too much reading to cover some readings in more depth, but this is not an unusual consequence of taking a summer course. Interesting material, approachable teacher. I had a great time in this class and learned a great deal.

Very friendly, very fair. Lots of metaphors and diagrams, which helped a lot. Encouraged discussion and debate. Brought in two guest teachers – first was great, second was hard to follow and dealing with much more complex topics, so not as useful. Gave us credit for effort (though perhaps not literally) and was willing to help.

Very funny and great with integration of popular culture examples of ethics. Likes kittens – a lot. Which is good.

I found that maybe a bit too much time was spent on Kant at the start of the course. Even though he is very crucial to ethics, we also had to learn more about other aspects of ethics. Free will readings were really interesting to me even though they might not have fit in very well with the entire course. And certain readings for metaethics were especially interesting too -> the second week of readings like Ayer.

History of Modern Philosophy (Summer 2006)

Syllabus

Instructor: Colin Marshall
Email: crm281@nyu.edu
Office: Silver 503K
Office Hours: Wednesday 3:30-5:30 and by appointment

Course Webpage: <http://homepages.nyu.edu/~crm281/modern6/main.html>
You can also find the course page by going to the NYU Philosophy Department page, finding me on the list of PhD students, following the link there, and going to the 'Teaching' section

Texts

The only required text for this class is:

- *Modern Philosophy*, Ariew and Watkins, eds. (Hackett.).

I've also recommended (mainly for those wanting a better sense of the context of the works we'll be reading):

- *A Companion to Modern Philosophy*, Nadler, ed. (Blackwell).

If, however, you are thinking of pursuing philosophy to any degree, it is worth picking up some more substantial editions of the various major texts instead of the Ariew/Watkins anthology. In which case, I'd recommend the following (all of which you can find used):

- *Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings*, Cottingham, Stoothoff and Murdoch, eds. and trans. (Cambridge University Press).
- *G. W. Leibniz: Philosophical Essays*, Ariew and Garber, eds. and trans., (Hackett).
- Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* from Clarendon.
- Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge and Three Dialogues* from either Oxford Classics or Penguin Classics.
- Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* from Oxford University Press, and *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* from Hackett.

In general, Hackett, Cambridge and Oxford (Clarendon) offer good, widely-used editions (Hackett is almost always the least expensive).

Assignments

Daily Questions: For each class, you must email me two short questions you have concerning the readings for that day. These questions can be either clarificatory questions, or (what often comes to the same thing) objections to the philosophers we're reading. But I expect them to be well thought-out in either case. **The questions must be emailed to me by noon before each class**, in order for you to receive credit. Combined, these will count for 20% of your grade – though I will mark off fairly sharply if you miss more than a few.

Weekly Assignments: At the end of each week, I'll give you a short assignment asking you to reconstruct and evaluate some of the arguments or theories discussed that week. A reconstructed argument should be brief, lucid, broken into assumptions and inferences, and logically valid. Validity will often force you to introduce implicit premises. There are always different ways of reconstructing an argument, so I'll take any number of possible reconstructions. Your evaluations of the philosophers should stem from your reconstructions, and be very specific (e.g. challenging a certain assumption with a specific counterexample). These will each count for 10% of your grade; together, they will count for 50%.

Final: There will be a comprehensive exam at the end of the class. At least one week prior to the exam, I will give you a list of questions. All the questions on the exam, with the exception of those relating to the material we cover during the final week, will be drawn from that list. The format of the exam will be short-answer, much like the weekly assignments. The exam will count for 30% of your grade.

You will pass the class **only if** you take the final, hand in all the weekly assignments, and send in the vast majority of the daily questions. Only in extreme cases will I make an exception to this.

Diagonally-Presented Reading Plan

Week 1: Descartes

Week 2: Leibniz

Week 3: Locke

Week 4: Berkeley

Week 5: Hume

Week 6: ?

There are a few ways the final week could unfold. If we've gotten behind, we'll catch up. If we want to go back to anything in more detail, we can do that. If we feel like some wild rationalist metaphysics, we can read some Spinoza. Or, if we feel like getting a sense of what happened after Leibniz and Hume, and why everything became a million times more complicated after the 18th century, we can read some Kant.

Life and Death (Summer 2007)

Syllabus

Instructor: Colin Marshall
5 Washington Place, Office 612

Office hours: T. 3:15-4:15, Th. 12:30-1:30 and by appointment

Required Texts

- Fred Feldman, *Confrontations with the Reaper* (CR)
- John Donnelly (Editor), *Language, Metaphysics, and Death* (LMD)
- Hugh LaFollette (Editor), *Ethics in Practice* (3rd Edition) (EP)

Recommended Text

- Peter Singer, *A Companion To Ethics*

Assignments

- Problem Sets (4), each counting for **15%** of your final grade. These will ask you to reconstruct and evaluate the arguments we've encountered, with a focus on clarity of writing and thought. I'll post these online on Thursdays, they will be due Mondays at noon.
- Final Exam, counting for **30%** of your final grade, taken in class on August 2. This will be a comprehensive review of the material we've covered, with most of the questions based on the problem sets. I'll distribute a study guide at least one week in advance, which will list all the questions that might appear on the final.
 - Paper Option. Instead of taking the final, you can write a 7-12 page paper (double-spaced, 12-point font, normal margins, etc.), due noon on August 3. If you choose this option, you *must* submit a proposal for the paper, and have it approved, prior to the start of Week 5 (July 23). I also highly recommend running a rough draft of it by me prior to the start of Week 6 (July 30). The paper should be a focused, critical evaluation of one of the positions or arguments we've covered, not a research paper.
- Participation, counting for **10%** of your final grade. I'll expect everyone to have done the reading and have thought carefully about it.

Note: You will pass the course **only if** you hand in all the problem sets and complete the final or paper.

Week 1 (June 25-28)

Monday: Introduction to course. Optional reading: Feldman, Chapter 1 (CR 11-21)

Tuesday: Feldman, Chapters 2 & 3 (CR 22-55)

Wednesday: Feldman, Chapters 4 & 5 (CR 56-88)

Thursday: Feldman, Chapters 6 & 7 (CR 89-124)

Week 2 (July 2-5)

Monday: Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus" (handout)
Nagel, "Death" (LMD 21-29)

Problem Set # 1 due

Tuesday: Rosenbaum, "How to be dead and not care: a defense of Epicurus" (LMD 117-131)

Wednesday: No class (Independence Day)

*Thursday: Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* §64-69: Different Attitudes to Time*

Week 3 (July 9-12)

Monday: Rorty, "Fearing death" (LMD 102-116)

Problem Set # 2 due

Tuesday: Williams, "The Makropulos case" (LMD 170-187)

Wednesday: Nielsen, "The faces of immortality" (LMD 237-264)

Thursday: Price, "Survival and the idea of 'another world'" (LMD 278-301)

Week 4 (July 16-19)

*Monday: **Crash course in ethical theory.***

*Veatch, *The Basis of Bioethics*, Chapter 1 (handout)*

Problem Set # 3 due

Tuesday: Velleman, "Against the right to die" (EP 81-90)

Wednesday: Hardwig, "Dying at the right time" (EP 91-102)

Thursday: Velleman, "A right of self-termination?"

Ethics, Vol. 109, No. 3. (Apr., 1999), pp. 606-628. (available online through JSTOR).

Note: Only read through page 620.

Week 5 (July 23-26)

Monday: Thompson, "A defense of abortion" (EP 117-125)

Problem Set # 4 due

Tuesday: Marquis, "An argument that abortion is wrong" (EP 137-147)

Wednesday: Pojman, "In defense of the death penalty" (EP 544-553)

Thursday: Reiman, "Against the death penalty" (EP 554-561)

Week 6 (July 30-August 3)

Monday: Singer, "All animals are equal" (EP 171-180)

Tuesday: Fox, "The moral community" (EP 181-191)

Wednesday: Review for Final

*Thursday: **Final Exam** (for those not writing a paper)*

*Friday: **Papers due at noon** (for those not taking the final)*

Ethics (Summer 2008)

SYLLABUS

Colin Marshall, Instructor

Email: crm281@nyu.edu

Course website: <http://homepages.nyu.edu/~crm281/ethics08/ethics.html>

Office hours: Monday 1:30-3:30, and by appointment

Office: 409 in 5 Washington Place (in the Philosophy Department).

TEXTS

Required:

- *Ethical Theory*, edited by Louis Pojman.
- *Moral Discourse and Practice*, edited by Darwall, Gibbard and Railton.
- *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will*, by Robert Kane.

Recommended:

- *Philosophical Ethics*, by Darwall. (Among its other virtues, this book includes a glossary of most technical terms we'll encounter)

ASSIGNMENTS

- Problem Sets (4), together counting for 60% of your final grade (the first will be worth 10%, the second and third each 15%, and the last 20%). These will ask you to reconstruct and evaluate the arguments we've encountered, with a focus on clarity of writing and thought. I'll post these online each Thursday, they will be due the following Monday at **11am**.
- Final Exam, counting for 25% of your final grade, taken on the last day of class. This will be a comprehensive review of the material we've covered, with most of the questions based on the problem sets. I'll distribute a study guide at least one week in advance, which will list all the questions that might appear on the final.
- Paper Option. Instead of taking the final, you can write a 7-12 page paper (double-spaced, 12-point font, normal margins, etc.), due 5pm on August 7th. If you choose this option, you **must** submit a proposal for the paper, and have it approved, prior to the start of Week 5 (July 28). I also highly recommend running a rough draft of it by me prior to the start of Week 6 (August 4). The paper should be a focused, critical evaluation of one of the positions or arguments we've covered, not a research paper.
- Participation, counting for 15% of your final grade. This will be a function of **both** attendance and participation. One option for getting participation credit will be to do a short presentation in class (talk with me if you're interested in doing this).

Except in special circumstances, no late work will be accepted.

READING SCHEDULE

Introduction

- 6/30 Introduction to the course *Optional*: Darwall introduction (PE 3-13)

Part I: Normative Ethics

Utilitarianism

- 7/1 Mill: Selections from *Utilitarianism*, Chapters I and II (ET 183-193) Bentham: Selections from *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (handout) *Optional*: Darwall on Mill (PE 109-138)
- 7/2 Mill: Selections from *Utilitarianism*, Chapter IV (ET 193-196) Smart: "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism" (ET 205-211)
- 7/3 Williams: "Against Utilitarianism" (ET 219-228) Singer: "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (ET 242-249)

Deontology

- 7/7 Kant: Selections from *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Introduction and Chapter 1 (ET 256-263) *Optional*: Darwall on Kant (PE 139-172) **Problem Set 1 due, 11am**

- 7/8 Kant: Selections from *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Chapter 2 (ET 263-275)
- 7/9 Foot: "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives" (ET 303-308) Nagel: "Moral Luck" (ET 295-301)
- 7/10 Thomson: "Killing, Letting Die, and the Trolley Problem" (ET 309-316)

Part II: Metaethics

Reasons to Worry

- 7/14 Hume: Selections from *Treatise of Human Nature* (ET 458-464) *Optional*: Darwall on the basics of metaethics and naturalism (PE 17-38) **Problem Set 2 due, 11am**
- 7/15 Moore: Selection from *Principia Ethica* (MDP 51-63)
- 7/16 Mackie: Selection from *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (MDP 89-100)
- 7/17 Harman: "Ethics and Observation" (MDP 83-87) Sturgeon: "Moral Explanations" (ET 526-537)

Responses to the Worries

- 7/21 Ayer: "Emotivism" (ET 472-478) Blackburn: "How to be an ethical antirealist" (MDP 167-178) *Optional*: Darwall on noncognitivism (PE 71-79) **Problem Set 3 due, 11am**
- 7/22 Railton: "Moral Realism" (MDP 137-158)
- 7/23 Korsgaard: Selections from *Sources of Normativity* (MDP 389-404)
- 7/24 Nagel: Selection from *The Possibility of Altruism* (MDP 323-339)

Part III: Free will and responsibility

- 7/28 Kane: *A contemporary introduction to free will*, Chapters 1-3 (CIFW 1-31) **Problem Set 4 due, 11am**
- 7/29 Kane: *A contemporary introduction to free will*, Chapters 4-5 (CIFW 32-51)
- 7/30 P. F. Strawson: "Freedom and Resentment." (online) *Optional*: Kane, Chapter 10 (CIFW 107-119)
- 7/31 Galen Strawson: "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility" (ET 654-663) Pojman: "Free Will, Determinism, and Moral Responsibility: A Response to Galen Strawson" (ET 663-670) *Optional*: Kane, Chapter 8 (CIFW 80-92)

Part IV: Science and ethics

Evolution and Ethics

- 8/4 Darwin: Selections from *The Descent of Man* (ET 602-615) Sober: "Prospects for an Evolutionary Ethics" (ET 634-644)

Neuroscience and Ethics

- 8/5 Greene: "The secret joke of Kant's soul" (Promotional version online - the real version is in *Moral Psychology, Vol. 3*, W. Sinnott-Armstrong ed.)

Wrapping up

- 8/6 Review
- 8/7 Final Exam **Papers Due, 5pm**