Seminar in Modern Philosophy

Course PHH4420, Section 2725

Fall 2007

1 Basic Information

Instructor: Dr Stewart Duncan
Email: sduncan@phil.ufl.edu
Phone: 352-392-2084, ext.215
Office: 115C Griffin-Floyd Hall
Office hours: MWF, 3-4pm
Class time: MWF 7 (1:55-2:45pm) in 0116 Matherly Hall

2 General Description

This course will examine the moral philosophy of David Hume (1711-1776) and Adam Smith (1723-1790). It will focus on Hume’s *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751) and Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759).

The themes discussed will include the roles of reason and emotion in ethics; whether we have a moral sense, and what such a thing might be; the view that moral judgments involve thought about an impartial spectator; and some early suggestions of utilitarian theories.

A main aim of this course is that you come to know something about the views and arguments of Hume and Smith. Another is to develop a set of skills that are useful in thinking about the history of modern philosophy, philosophy more generally, and other issues. These include close reading, critical thinking, and the ability to write critically and carefully.
Most classes will be structured around discussions of primary texts, and others around discussions of relevant works of secondary literature. As such, it is essential that you do the assigned reading before class, and bring your books with you to class. The class will not work otherwise.

3 Texts

I have ordered the following editions at the bookstore in the Reitz Union, and will use them in class.


The following would be acceptable substitutes.


Some further reading will be available on library reserve, either online or at the desk in Library West. For details, see the page for the class in Ares, the libraries’ new reserve system (https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/).

4 Assessment

Your overall grade will be determined by your grades on four pieces of assessed work: two papers, a midterm, and a final.

4.1 Paper 1

The first paper, which will be worth 20% of your grade, will be due in class on 9/19. Paper topics will be handed out in class on 9/5. You will have a choice of two topics. You should answer one of the two questions with a paper of no more than 1500 words.
4.2 Midterm exam

The midterm exam, which will be worth 20% of your grade, will be held in class on 10/10. Bring a letter-sized blue book in which to write your answers, and a blue or black pen with which to write them.

4.3 Paper 2

The second paper, which will be worth 25% of your grade, will be due in class on 11/19. Paper topics will be handed out in class on 11/5. You will have a choice of two topics. You should answer one of the two questions with a paper of no more than 1500 words.

4.4 Final exam

The final exam, which will be worth 35% of your grade, will be held on Tuesday 11 December from 10am to 12pm. Bring a letter-sized blue book in which to write your answers, and a blue or black pen with which to write them.

5 Policies related to assessment

5.1 Numerical grades and letter grades

All assignments will be given a numerical grade on a 100-point scale. At the end of the semester, your overall numerical grade will be calculated, based on your grades for and the relative weights of the assignments.

This numerical grade will be rounded to the nearest whole number, and then converted to a letter grade using the following scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical grade ((n))</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 (\leq n \leq 100)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 (\leq n &lt; 90)</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 (\leq n &lt; 85)</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>75 (\leq n &lt; 80)</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 (\leq n &lt; 75)</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 (\leq n &lt; 70)</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 (\leq n &lt; 65)</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 (\leq n &lt; 60)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Make-up exams

The midterm exam may be made up without penalty if you have a good, documented excuse. Those without such an excuse may make up the midterm, but with a 10 point penalty. Make-up final exams will only be permitted in those few situations that justify the awarding of an incomplete grade for the class.

5.3 Late papers

Papers should be handed in in class, and will count as late as soon as the class is over. Any papers handed in late without a good, documented excuse will be penalized 2 points (on a 100-point scale) for every weekday they’re late.

5.4 Final deadline

No papers will be accepted (or make-up midterms allowed) after the final class on 12/5.

5.5 Electronic versions

As well as being handed in in class, papers must also be sent by email to me. These versions will be submitted to turnitin.com, an anti-plagiarism service to which the university subscribes. Papers should be sent as attachments in one of the following formats: Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, RTF, PDF, PostScript, plain text, or HTML. These electronic versions are due by 5pm on the day the papers are due. Whether or not a paper has been submitted on time will be determined by whether the paper version has been submitted on time. However, no grade will be awarded for a paper if the electronic version has not been submitted. The electronic version of your paper must be identical to the paper version. Submitting a different version may be construed as an attempt to cheat.

5.6 Academic honesty

You must abide by the university’s academic honesty policy. A guide to academic honesty is available on the website of Student Judicial Affairs at http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php.

You should expect the minimum penalty for academic dishonesty to be a grade of E for the class (not just the assignment).
All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. Repeat offenders should expect penalties including suspension or expulsion from the university.

You should by this stage have a good idea of what constitutes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. I will also review this when handing out paper assignments. If you have any questions about this, ask me before it’s too late.

6 Further Policies and Information

6.1 Attendance
I expect you to attend all classes, to arrive on time and not to leave early.

6.2 Accommodations for students with disabilities
Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

6.3 Behaviour in class
My aim is to have a classroom atmosphere that is both serious and relaxed. Discussion is encouraged, but talking to your neighbour about what you did last night is not. Things will go well if you (i) come to class prepared and (ii) avoid behaviour that is rude and distracts others (conversing during class; sending text messages; reading novels, the newspaper, books for other classes, and other irrelevant things; doing the crossword; letting your cellphone ring; falling asleep; etc.).

7 Schedule
We will spend roughly the first half of the class on Hume, and the second half on Smith. Most classes will be based on reading and discussion of the primary texts. During the semester, we’ll read our way through both the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* and the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. 
Detailed announcements of reading assignments will be made as we go along. For now, know that you’ll have to read everything, and that it always helps to read things more than once. So get started on some reading: there’s a lot here to think about.

The following are some important dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>Labor Day. No class</td>
<td>Paper 1 topics out</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paper 1 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>Class cancelled</td>
<td>An assignment will replace these classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>Class cancelled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>Homecoming. No class</td>
<td>Paper 2 topics out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>Veterans Day. No class</td>
<td>Paper 2 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>Thanksgiving. No class</td>
<td>Final deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>Review for final</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/23</td>
<td>Reading day. No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/5</td>
<td>Final exam, 10am-12pm.</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
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<td>12/7</td>
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<td>12/11</td>
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