Philosophy 267: Normative Categories (revised 2/22/20)
Harvard University, Spring 2020

Instructor:

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Office location: Emerson 208
Office hours: Mondays, 1:30–3:30 p.m., or by appointment

Course Description:

Recent work on the structure, nature, and basis of various normative categories, such as the evaluative (good, bad, better, and so on) and the deontic (required, permitted, forbidden, and so on). Special attention will be paid to the hypothesis that the fitting (merited, warranted, apt, and so on) is a distinct normative category beyond these familiar two. Applications in ethics and epistemology will be considered.

Time and Place: Fridays, 12:00–2:30 p.m., in Emerson 310

Course URL: https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/67776

This website will contain all readings, handouts, and announcements for the course. You must login using either your HarvardKey or an XID (an external ID for people without a HarvardKey) to see all of the site's content. To obtain an XID, please visit <https://xid.harvard.edu/xid-apps/> and then contact the instructor so that your XID can be added to the website guest list.

Course Admission Policy:

This is a graduate-level course; undergraduates and students in a graduate program other than philosophy will only be allowed to take the course for credit if they have the proper background. Auditors are welcome, but only if they have an official affiliation with Harvard University or another academic institution in the area.

Readings:

Each week's readings will be available for downloading on the course website.

Requirements:

The breakdown of grades will be as follows:

30% *Seminar attendance and participation*.

Evaluation will be based on attendance, preparation, and contributions to discussion. For those of you who don't feel comfortable talking during class, discussing material from the course during office hours may count toward your contributions to discussion.

70% *Term paper*.

A 15–20 page (double-spaced) term paper will be due at a date and time to be specified during Final Examination Period (May 7–16). Students are highly encouraged to meet with the course instructor during the course of the semester to discuss their final paper topic.

Distribution Requirements:

Harvard philosophy PhD students who take this course for credit may count it as a course in Practical Philosophy if they write a final paper on a topic primarily in ethics or the philosophy of emotion and may count it as a course in Contemporary Theoretical Philosophy if they write a final paper on a topic primarily in epistemology.

Electronic Devices:

The use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, etc. during lectures and section meetings is strictly prohibited (except in cases of medical necessity, in which case follow the guidelines given below for students with disabilities).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present us with a Faculty Letter from the Accessibility Education Office (AEO) by the end of the second complete week of term, namely Fri., Feb. 7. Failure to do so may result in our inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential.

Academic Integrity Policy – Collaboration Permitted in Written Work:

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc.), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

Meeting and Reading Schedule [some of this may change]:

NOTE: Readings listed in brackets are optional.

Fri., Jan. 31: Introduction
[Selim Berker, "Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions," §§1–2]
[Allan Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, pp. 36–48]
Christine Tappolet, "Evaluative vs. Deontic Concepts"
Michael Smith, "Meta-ethics," §§3–5

Fri., Feb. 7: The Deontic Categories, and Their Logical Form
Paul McNamara, "Deontic Logic" (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*) (focus on §1 and §4.7, including the Supplements; skim §2 and skip §3 if you don't have much background in modal logic)
Mark Schroeder, "*Ought*, Agents, and Action"

Fri., Feb. 14: Do the Deontic Categories Come in Degrees? And What Does It Take for Something to Come in Degrees?
Rayme Engel, "On Degrees"
Andrew Moon, "Beliefs Do Not Come in Degrees"
[René van Woudenberg & Rik Peels, "The Metaphysics of Degrees"]
Thomas Hurka, "More Seriously Wrong, More Importantly Right," pp. 41–44
[W. D. Ross, *The Right and the Good*, ch. 2]

Fri., Feb. 21: Degrees of Wrongness, and the Evaluative Categories
Thomas Hurka, "More Seriously Wrong, More Importantly Right," pp. 44–58
Mark Schroeder, "Value Theory" (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*)
Ruth Chang, "Hard Choices," pp. 1–10

Fri., Feb. 28: Parity, and the Comparative Priority of the Evaluative Categories
Ruth Chang, "Hard Choices," pp. 11–21
Johan Gustafsson, "Neither 'Good' in Terms of 'Better' nor 'Better' in Terms of 'Good'"

Fri., Mar. 6: The Fittingness Categories
Richard Brandt, "Moral Valuation"
Göran Kjellmer, "Legible but Not Readable: On the Semantics of English Adjectives in -ble"
Christopher Howard, "Fittingness"

Fri., Mar. 13: The Wrong Kind of Reason Problem
Justin D'Arms & Daniel Jacobson, "The Moralistic Fallacy: On the 'Appropriateness of Emotions"
Justin D'Arms & Daniel Jacobson, "Sentiment and Value," §§1–2
Wlodek Rabinowicz & Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen, "The Strike of the Demon: On Fitting Pro-attitudes and Value"
Jan Gertken & Benjamin Kiesewetter, "The Right and the Wrong Kind of Reasons"
[note: the Hieronymi and Schroeder readings are no longer assigned]

Fri., Mar. 20: NO CLASS (Spring Break)

Fri., Mar. 27: Fittingness as Normatively Fundamental
Conor McHugh & Jonathan Way, "Fittingness First"
Conor McHugh & Jonathan Way, "What Is Good Reasoning?" (skip or skim §§2–3)
John Brunero, "Fittingness and Good Reasoning"

[Christopher Howard, "The Fundamentality of Fit"]

Fri., Apr. 3: The Fittingness of Emotions
Amia Srinivasan, "The Aptness of Anger"
Barry Maguire, "There Are No Reasons for Affective Attitudes"

Fri., Apr. 10: The Deontic Assessment of Beliefs
William Alston, "The Deontological Conception of Epistemic Justification"
Philippe Chuard & Nicholas Southwood, "Epistemic Norms without Voluntary Control"

[alternate possibility (class will vote):]

[Fri., Apr. 10: The Fittingness of Blame]
[David Shoemaker, "Response-Dependent Responsibility; or, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Blame"]

Fri., Apr. 17: NO CLASS (instructor out of town)

Fri., Apr. 24: Epistemic Justification as Epistemic Permission: For
Mark T. Nelson, "We Have No Positive Epistemic Duties"
Thomas Kroedel, "The Lottery Paradox, Epistemic Justification, and Permissibility"
Benjamin Kiesewetter, "Can the Lottery Paradox Be Solved by Identifying Epistemic Justification with Epistemic Permissibility?"

Fri., May 1: Epistemic Justification as Epistemic Permission: Against (MAKE-UP SESSION)
Bob Beddor, "Justification as Faultlessness"
Paul Silva Jr., "The Composite Nature of Epistemic Justification"