

1. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this course is to familiarise students with some of the main philosophical issues in ethics. The objectives are that, by the end of the course, students will have: (a) read and understood some of the main texts from the relevant reading lists and from elsewhere; (b) attended the seminars in this and the next semester, and participated in discussion; (c) acquired and developed the analytic skills which are necessary for the formation of their own considered views, for the evaluation of questions, and for putting forward good answers.

2. The plan for this semester

The plan for this mini-term is as set out in the attached outline. You will see that, after an introductory discussion in the first week, we will be considering the ethical work of Hume, Aristotle and Kant. So far as concerns the second mini-term, beginning after Reading Week (week beginning Nov 5), we can develop during this mini-term a plan for what we might cover, according to people=s preferences and according to what progress we make. As a guide, last year the overall vote was to consider the following topics: truth and objectivity; ethical motivation and duty; virtue ethics – Hume and Aristotle; moral conflicts; and ethical relativism. In thinking about what you would like to cover, you might like to use the topics on the Background Reading List as a guide.

3. The plan for next semester

Next semester will be convened by David Galloway (KCL). The course topics this year will cover the following areas: Hobbes and egoism; Mill and utilitarianism; subjectivism and relativism; truth in ethics; moral motivation. (Note that if there turns out to be any overlap with topics covered this semester, this is no bad thing.)

4. Reading

In addition to the reading set out in the plan for this mini-term, you should refer to the Background Reading List. Please read carefully the notes at the beginning of this.

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