PHIL 202: Ethics Core Course
Winter 2004; David O. Brink
Topic: Practical Reason
Syllabus

This is a list of possible topics and readings, which we can, and may need to, adapt to our interests. Required readings are drawn from the required texts and from additional material that will be on reserve in the Philosophy Library (H&SS 8025). Readings are either (a) required or (b) recommended. Within a topic, do the (required) readings in the order in which they are listed. Especially recommended readings are indicated with an asterisk. Full references can be found on the Bibliography. If you have trouble locating recommended readings, let me know, as I may be able to help (e.g. lend a copy).

I. BACKGROUND

1. Normative Adequacy, Intrapersonal/Interpersonal Contexts, and Reason-Value Links
   • (B) Moore, Principia Ethica, sects. 1-23, 58-65; Rosati, “Naturalism, Normativity, and the Open Question Argument”; Darwall, Impartial Reason; *Darwall, Gibbard, and Railton, “Toward Fin de Siecle Ethics”; Korsgaard, The Sources of Normativity; Tiffany, “The Unity of Reason”.

II. INTRAPERSONAL PRACTICAL REASON

2. Instrumentalism, Internalism, and Desiderative Conceptions of Practical Reason
   • (A) Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, II.iii.3, III.i.1; Williams, “Internal and External Reasons”.
   • (B) Cohon, “Are External Reasons Impossible?”; *Korsgaard, “Skepticism about Practical Reason”; and *Tiffany, “Alienation and Internal Reasons for Action”.

3. Desiderative Conceptions of Personal Good
   • (A) Mill, Utilitarianism ch. ii, paras. 1-6; Railton, “Facts and Values”; Wiggins, “A Sensible Subjectivism?”

4. The Authority of Desire and Normative Perfectionism
   • (A) Stampe, “The Authority of Desire” and Brink, “The Significance of Desire”.
   • (B) Anscombe, Intention, p. 56; Humberstone, “Directions of Fit”; Velleman, “The Guise of the Good”; Smith, The Moral Problem, ch. 4; Scanlon, What We Owe to Each Other, ch. 1; *Aristotle, De Anima bk. ii and Nicomachena Ethics, bk. i, ch. 7; *Kant, Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, §§1-2; *Green, Prolegomena to Ethics, bks. II-III; Hurka, Perfectionism; Kitcher, “Essence and Perfection”; *Korsgaard, The Sources of Normativity, chs. 1-4; Darwall, “Because I Want It”.

5. Prudence and Temporal Neutrality: The Structural Issue
   • (A) Parfit, Reasons and Persons, ch. 7 and Brink, “Rational Egoism and the Separateness of Persons”.

Draft of 1-8-04
6. Prudence and Temporal Neutrality: Asymmetrical Attitudes toward the Future and Past
   • (B) *Sidgwick, Methods IV 2 and Concluding Chapter*; *Nagel, The Possibility of Altruism*, esp. chs. 5-12.

   • (A) Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, pp. 73-74; Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, §§60, 110; and Brink, “Prudence and Authenticity”.
   • (B) *Lucretius, De Rerum Natura* iii 830-51, 972-77; Nagel, “Death”; *Mitsis, Epicurus on Death and the Duration of Life*.

8. Prudence and Temporal Neutrality: Psychological Reductionism about Personal Identity
   • (A) Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, part III, esp. chs. 10-12, 14 and Brink, “Rational Egoism and the Separateness of Persons”.

III. INTERPERSONAL PRACTICAL REASON
9. A Puzzle about Moral Motivation
   • (B) *Smith, The Moral Problem* and Brink, “Moral Motivation”.

10. A Puzzle about the Authority of Morality
11. Relativist and Anti-Rationalist Solutions
    • (A) Harman, “Moral Relativism Defended” and Foot, “Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives”

12. Nagel and the Possibility of Altruism
    • (A) Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*.

13. Kantian Impartial Practical Reason
    • (A) Kant, *Groundwork*.
    • (B) Foot, “Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives” and Brink, “Kantian Rationalism: Inescapability, Authority, and Supremacy”.

14. Metaphysical Egoism
    • (A) Brink, “Self-love and Altruism”.
    • (B) Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, part III.

15. Korsgaard on Normativity
    • (A) Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, chs. 1-4.
    • (B) *The Sources of Normativity*, chs. 5-9.