Values, Welfare and Cooperation

FW-ED3005

Lecturer Info ----

Erica Yu
Benjamin Mullins

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3-5 p.m, Bayle Building, J5

yu@esphil.eur.nl
mullins@esphil.eur.nl

Course Info ----

1 x tutorial followed by 2 x lectures

Fridays

11:00 — 13:45

Theil C1-1 / Polak 1-21

Assessment Info ----

Course Participation: 10%

1 x Essay Plan: 10%

1 x Essay (approx.) 2,500 words: 80%

OVERVIEW

Most people agree that, other things being equal, an individual has a reason to advance her own welfare. But what does this principle consist in, exactly? Does an individual's welfare consist solely in a positive balance of pleasure over pain, or are there other, objectively valuable goods such as truth, knowledge and achievement? What about the welfare of others? Does an individual always have most reason to promote their own welfare such that self-sacrifice is irrational, for example? And what should we say about cases in which, by each promoting her own welfare, this makes things worse for everyone? Should the individual or the collective take priority here? And how do we choose principles which promote an appropriate distribution of welfare across various populations?

Throughout Values, Welfare and Cooperation, we will look at the basic rational and moral principles governing human decision-making and action. We look at the nature of value and welfare, and ask what does a good life consist in, exactly?

Whilst the course takes a theoretical lens to fundamental normative and evaluative issues, it raises practical questions, too. We look at large-scale collective action problems (like climate change) where each individual act seemingly makes no difference for the worse but together lead to collectively bad outcomes; at issues concerning equality and priority, and at various forms of democratic and social choice which might help to mediate some of the foregoing issues.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, a student will be able to:

1. Understand the basic rational, ethical, and evaluative theories.
2. Apply these theories to various cases and critically assess them
3. Critically engage with these theories through structured, philosophical argument

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are Tuesdays, 3 till 5, Bayle Building, J5. Please send an email to the lecturer most relevant to your topic should you wish to make an appointment.







Édouard Manet's 'philosophers', *Beggar with a Duffle coat*, *Ragpicker*, and *Beggar with Oysters*.

STRUCTURE

The course consists of 8 lectures (45 mins each) and 4 tutorials (60 mins each).

The tutorials will take place at the beginning of each week where we discuss that weeks' thought experiment and accompanying reading. (Except for the first week.) Two lectures will then follow that introduce the key content for the next topic. Students can then go away and reflect on the lectures alongside the set readings in preparation for the tutorial at the beginning of the next week. Students are expected to come prepared to the tutorials and ready to contribute to the discussion. All required readings can be found on Canvas.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment consists in participation in the tutorials (10% of final grade), an essay plan (10% of final grade) and a written essay (80% of final grade).

Each week begins with a tutorial. In these tutorials we discuss a thought experiment and its accompanying literature. The thought experiment will follow on from the two preceding lectures. The thought experiment will be given to the students a week in advance. The idea is to reflect on the thought experiment and come to the tutorial prepared to discuss it philosophically. Students will be graded on their participation in this respect.

Students will need to devise an essay question and develop a subsequent essay plan. The deadline for this essay plan is Monday the 18th of March. These plans will then be graded. Students are welcome to meet with Erica or Ben beforehand so that we can advise you on your essay plan, as well as on the writing of your essay more generally.

Lastly, students will be required to write a final essay. The deadline for the essay is Monday the 1st of April. Essays must critically address some debate touched upon in the lectures. Essays must be submitted online via Canvas. If you are uploading a file, please upload a PDF.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please consult the rules and regulations pertaining to academic standards, including notes on plagiarism, on: https://www.eur.nl/en/about-eur/vision/cheating-andplagiarism.

CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Required Readings (Read Ahead of Week 1)

1. Chapter 1, *The Theory of Choice: A Critical Guide*, Sean Heap (et al) (1992)
2. 'An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics', J. J. C. Smart (1973)

Tutorial 1	Overview	Introduction to Values, Welfare and Co-operation
Lecture 1	Rationality	Rational Choice Theory and it Critics
Lecture 2	Morality	Consequentialism and its Critics

WEEK 2

Required Readings (Read Ahead of Week 2)

3. 'The Puzzle of the Self-Torturer', Warren S. Quinn (1989)
4. 'Do I Make a Difference?', Shelly Kagan (2011)

Tutorial 2	Discussion	Self-Torturer/Harmless Torturers Puzzles
Lecture 3	Value	Axiology: Intrinsic/Instrumental and Other Values
Lecture 4	Welfare	Hedonism, Preferentialism, Perfectionism

WEEK 3

Required Readings (Read Ahead of Week 3)

5. 'Hedonism', Alex Gregory (2016)
6. 'Desire-Fulfilment Theory', Chris Heathwood (2016)
7. 'Perfectionism', Gwen Bradford (2016)

Tutorial 3	Discussion	The Experience Machine
Lecture 5	Distribution	Equality, Priority, Sufficiency, Limitarianism
Lecture 6	Aggregation	How Do We Best Aggregate Well-being?

WEEK 4

Required Readings (Read Ahead of Week 4)

8. 'Equality or Priority?', Derek Parfit (1991)
9. 'Population Axiology', Hilary Greaves (2017)

Tutorial 4	Discussion	Repugnant Conclusion and Population Axiology
Lecture 7	Social Choice	Markets and Voting
Lecture 8	Democracy	How Do We Deliberate and Choose as a Society?

Additional Readings

10. Chapter 1 & A4, *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*, Amartya Sen (1984)
11. 'Individual Choice in Voting and the Market', James Buchanan (1954)

READINGS

Bibliography of Readings

Bradford Gwen. 2016. 'Perfectionism', in Guy Fletcher (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-being*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Buchanan James M. 1954. 'Individual Choice in Voting and the Market', *Journal of Political Economy* 62: 334–343.

Greaves Hilary. 2017. 'Population Axiology', *Philosophy Compass* 12 (11): e12442.

Gregory Alex. 2016. 'Hedonism', in Guy Fletcher (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-being*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Heathwood Chris. 2016. 'Desire-Fulfilment Theory', in Guy Fletcher (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-being*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Heap Shaun, Bruce Lyons, Martin Hollis, Robert Sugden, Albert Weale. 1992. *The Theory of Choice: A Critical Guide*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kagan Shelly. 2011. 'Do I Make a Difference?' *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (39): 105–141.

Parfit Derek. 1991. 'Equality or Priority?', The Lindley Lecture, University of Kansas.

Sen Amartya. 1984 [1970]. *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science B. V.

Smart J. J. C. 1973. 'An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics' in *Utilitarianism For & Against*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Warren Quinn. 1989. 'The Puzzle of the Self-Torturer', *Philosophical Studies* (59): 79–90.

Further Readings

Adler Matthew. 2019. *Measuring Social Welfare. An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Anderson Elizabeth. 1995. *Value I Ethics and Economics*. Boston MA: Harvard University Press.

Bentham Jeremy. 1780. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Available at <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/bentham1780.pdf> [Especially relevant are the first four chapters].

Broome John. 1999. *Ethics out of Economics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kagan Shelly. 1998. *Normative Ethics*. New York: Routledge

Parfit Derek. 1984. *Reasons and Persons*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Helpful Aids

Kagan Shelly, 'How to Write a Philosophy Paper':
<https://oyc.yale.edu/sites/default/files/philosophy_paper.pdf>

Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy:
<https://plato.stanford.edu/>