

Phil 390/490, Philosophy Honours Seminar
Term 2 2024-25
T 2pm-4.30pm

Instructor

Matthew S. Bedke

matt.bedke@ubc.ca
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Office: Buchanan Block E, room 361

Office Hrs: in person Thursdays, 12.30-1.30pm; Zoom by appointment.

Required Learning Materials

Papers posted on Canvas, some available through LOCR.

Course Description and Aims

This is an honours seminar in philosophy. Topics vary for this course and this one will be on Ethical Intuitionism. We will be focusing on the use of intuitions in ethics primarily as part of the epistemology of ethics. After looking at its historical roots, we turn to theories of ethical intuitions and how they justify, what alternative epistemologies/methods might look like, some empirical issues, and finally how the view fits in with social epistemology.

The aims in this course are 1) to familiarize you with this content, 2) to hone your thinking, conversational, and writing skills, and 3) to write term papers suitable for applications to graduate programs.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will

- have a broad appreciation of the questions and concerns surrounding ethical intuitionism, including what ethical intuitions are, how they might justify ethical beliefs, and what objections they encounter.
- be able to explain philosophical texts and positions accurately, to identify and apply philosophical research methods consistently, to articulate and defend precise philosophical positions, and to anticipate and rebut objections to those positions.
- acquire the content, synthesize it, summarize it, analyze it, criticize it, and communicate it.
- produce a term paper.

Learning Expectations

Students are expected to do the readings in advance, attend class, stay focused and undistracted during the lecture portions of the class, and to actively participate in classroom discussions. Students are also required to submit all assignments on time.

Piazza

We will be using Piazza for class discussion. Rather than emailing questions to the teaching staff, I encourage you to post your questions on Piazza. If you have any problems or feedback for the developers, email team@piazza.com.

Find our class signup link at:
https://piazza.com/ubc.ca/winterterm22025/phil_v390a490aa_0022024w2

Assessments of Learning

Your final mark will be determined by

- 1) 10% weekly written responses (posted on Piazza)
 - 2) 10% participation
 - 3) 15% looking forward presentation
 - 4) 10% looking back presentation
 - 5) 15% term paper draft material and feedback
 - 6) 40% term paper
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- 1) Weekly written responses. Each week, all students should prepare a brief (250-500 word) written response to the readings. These will be submitted on the class Piazza site by midnight each Sunday night. This work must be your own. You can discuss the material with other students, but please do not use AI to help you. There is not a fixed assignment question for these responses; appropriate topics include:
 - Summarizing the main point of a reading
 - Clarifying a particular interesting argument in the reading
 - Raising an objection to a reading
 - Drawing connections between the ideas in the reading to broader themes
 - 2) Participation. Students are expected to contribute positively and regularly to seminar discussion. Attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will result in a 0 participation score for the day.
 - 3) Looking forward presentation. Students should pair up (if needed, three can group) and pick a day with two readings assigned. The group should present the readings for the day with an oral presentation that is about 20 minutes long (10 mins per person), and then field questions from the class that will launch us into a general discussion. Handouts are fine, and use of AI to prepare is also fine. But each person should be prepared to talk about both of the readings in depth.
 - 4) Looking back presentation. Students should pair up (if needed, three can group) and pick a day that follows a session with two readings assigned. These groups should be 1) different from the looking forward groups, 2) such that group members do not do a looking back presentation and a looking forward presentation on the same day, and 3) such that group members speak about different papers for the looking forward and looking back presentations. The group should reflect on the papers and the discussion from our previous session with an oral presentation that is about 5-10 minutes long. No AI help for this one. A short discussion can ensue, but we will transition to the looking forward presentation no less than 30 minutes into the session.
 - 5) Term paper draft material and feedback. Students are required to prepare roughly 1000 words of rough draft material for the term paper by midnight Friday April 4th. This will be submitted on Canvas where I will grade it and one of your peers will be assigned to read it and give you constructive criticism. That criticism is due midnight Friday April 11th, and it will also be assessed. No AI help for this except to proof read.
 - 6) Term paper. Students will produce a term paper engaging a major theme of the course. Students are encouraged to discuss topics with me in advance, or gather feedback on Piazza. I expect

papers to be between 4000 and 7000 words, and there is an 8000 word upper limit. This is a philosophy research paper. It should advance an original argument. No research outside of the readings is required, but for most topics it is encouraged. No AI help for this except to proof read. The deadline for the paper is midnight Sunday April 20th.

I will not accept late work except with a valid excuse from Arts Advising. Any request to re-grade work must be submitted in writing, detailing reasons for awarding a higher grade and indicating the new grade being requested.

Relationship between percentages and letter grades:

90-100% A+	85-89% A	80-84% A-
76-79% B+	72-75% B	68-71% B-
64-67% C+	60-63% C	55-59% C-
50-54% D	0-49% F	

A Range: Exceptional Performance. Mastery of the subject matter; strong evidence of original thinking; good organization in written work; impressive capacity to analyze; insightful critical evaluations.

B Range: Competent Performance. Evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues.

C Range: Adequate Performance. Understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work; not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour.

D Range: Problematic Performance. Some incomplete understanding of the subject matter; limited evidence of critical and analytical skills; lack of original thinking.

F Range: Inadequate Performance. Little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter; little or no evidence of critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.

Electronic Devices in the Class

I allow the use of computers and electronic devices but only to take notes and access class-related material. Above all, do not use your electronic devices in ways that might disturb other students. If you, as a student, are disturbed by another's use of electronic devices, please let me know. Violation of this policy can lead me to revise it.

University Policies

Academic Concession

[UBC's academic concession policy](#) "articulates the University's commitment to support students in their academic pursuits through the application of academic concessions in the event that students experience unanticipated events or circumstances that interfere with their ability to accomplish academic work." An academic concession may be granted for a student when an unexpected situation or circumstance prevents them from completing graded work or exams.

Students may request an academic concession for the following three reasons:

- Unanticipated changes in personal responsibilities that create a conflict
- Medical circumstances
- Compassionate grounds

If students have a disability or ongoing medical condition that affects their studies for more than one

term, they may request an [academic accommodation](#).

Requests should be made as early as reasonably possible. Normally, the academic advising office will manage student's request.

Academic Integrity

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found under [Discipline for Academic Misconduct](#) in the Academic Calendar.

Resources to Support Student Success

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the UBC Senate website: <https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>

Learning Resources

Some learning resources are available on the Canvas website, such as links to helpful information about writing philosophy papers. I also want to bring your attention to the Philosophy Essay Clinic: <https://philosophy.ubc.ca/undergraduate/philosophy-essay-clinic/>

Copyright

All materials of this course (any handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the Course Instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline. Note: recording of the course is not permitted.

Reading Schedule

Please do the assigned readings before class and come prepared to discuss them. **The schedule is subject to change.**

Phil 390/490 reading schedule			
week	date	topic	assignment

1	07- Jan- 25	Intro	
2	14- Jan- 25	self-evidence theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bealer, G. (1998). "Intuition and the Autonomy of Philosophy." In M. R. DePaul & W. M. Ramsey (Eds.), <i>Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and its Role in Philosophical Inquiry</i> (pp. 201–240). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. • Robert Audi, "Intuition, Inference and Rational Disagreement in Ethics", <i>Ethical Theory and Moral Practice</i>, 11(5): 475–492.
3	21- Jan- 25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audi, R. (2015). "Intuition and Its Place in Ethics." <i>Journal of the American Philosophical Association</i>, 1(1), 57–77. • Cowan, R., 2017, "Rossian conceptual intuitionism", <i>Ethics</i>, 127: 821–851.
4	28- Jan- 25	seemings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huemer, M. "Compassionate Phenomenal Conservatism." <i>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</i> 74, 30–55 (2007). • Huemer, M. (2008). "Revisionary Intuitionism." <i>Social Philosophy and Policy</i>, 25(1), 368–392.
5	04- Feb- 25	intuition and sentiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedke, M. S. (2008). "Ethical Intuitions: What They Are, What They Are Not, and How They Justify." <i>American Philosophical Quarterly</i>, 45(3), 253–270. • Kauppinen, A. (2013). "A Humean Theory of Moral Intuition." <i>Canadian Journal of Philosophy</i>, 43(3), 360–381.

6	11-Feb-25	intuition and sentiment; intuition's alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedke, M. S. “Ethics Makes Strange Bedfellows: Intuitions and Quasi-Realism.” in <i>Philosophical Methodology: The Armchair or the Laboratory?</i> P. 416 (Routledge, 2013). • Werner, P. J. (2016). “Moral Perception and the Contents of Experience.” <i>Journal of Moral Philosophy</i>, 13(3), 294–317.
7	18-Feb-25	Winter break	
8	25-Feb-25	intuition's alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wodak, D. (2019). “Moral Perception, Inference, and Intuition.” <i>Philosophical Studies</i>, 176(6), 1495–1512. • Hutton, J. (2022). “Moral Experience: Perception or Emotion?” <i>Ethics</i>, 132(3), 570–597.
9	04-Mar-25	empirical issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinnott-Armstrong, W. (2006). “Moral Intuitionism Meets Empirical Psychology.” In T. Horgan & M. Timmons (Eds.), <i>Metaethics After Moore</i>. Oxford University Press UK. • Ballantyne, Nathan & Thurow, Joshua C. (2013). “Moral Intuitionism Defeated?” <i>American Philosophical Quarterly</i> 50 (4):411-422.
10	11-Mar-25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andow, J., 2018, “Are Intuitions About Moral Relevance Susceptible to Framing Effects?”, <i>Review of Philosophy and Psychology</i>, 1: 1–27. • Horvath, J., & Wiegmann, A. (2022). “Intuitive Expertise in Moral Judgments.” <i>Australasian Journal of Philosophy</i>, 100(2), 342–359.

11	18-Mar-25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street, S. (2006) "A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value," <i>Philosophical Studies</i> 127(1): 109–66.
12	25-Mar-25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railton, P. (2014) "The Affective Dog and Its Rational Tale: Intuition and Attunement," <i>Ethics</i> 124(4): 813–59
13	01-Apr-25	intuition and social epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bengson, J., Cuneo, T., & Shafer-Landau, R. (2020). "Trusting Moral Intuitions." <i>Noûs</i>, 54(4), 956–984. Backes, M., Eklund, M., & Michaelson, E. (2022). "Should Moral Intuitionism Go Social?" <i>Noûs</i>, 57(4), 973–985.
14	01-Apr-25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bengson, J., Cuneo, T., & Shafer-Landau, R. (2023). "Socially Conscious Moral Intuitionism." <i>Noûs</i>, 57(4), 986–994.