

PHIL 285: Special Topics

Moral Responsibility & Social Context

Tues 1-3:50pm, Winter 2018

Vargas

Recently, a number of philosophers have maintained that stuff outside the head—for example, social, moral, and political arrangements—can matter for blameworthiness and responsible agency. Such approaches are sometimes presented as superior alternatives to comparatively individualistic approaches to responsibility that do not emphasize the role of extra-agential features in moral responsibility. This course looks at the state of play on these matters. We will focus on recent proposals, ongoing challenges to them, and the possibility of instructive parallels outside of the theory of moral responsibility.

CONTACT INFO

mrvargas@ucsd.edu

Office: HSS 808g

OH: T 11am-noon + by appointment (often available after class)

ATTENDANCE

Enrolled seminar participants should attend every session. If enrolled, please alert me in advance of any anticipated absence. If you aren't enrolled, do watcha like.

EVALUATION

25% Response papers

70% Term paper (includes Prospectus)

5% Seminar participation

Response papers: five short weekly reading response papers (600 words max), turned in between weeks 2 and 8. Each paper should be sent as an e-mail attachment to da prof by 8 pm on the day before the seminar in which the relevant issues will be discussed. Your grade will be calculated based on the grades of your five best papers. (This means that you can turn in all seven and drop the lowest three grades, or you can simply turn in five). Your paper should engage with one of the readings for the week, and do one of the following (or something similar): (i) provide a careful reconstruction of a difficult piece of reasoning to be found in a relevant text, (ii) evaluate the validity or soundness of an argument in a relevant text, (iii) articulate and provide support for a philosophical position that competes with those found in the relevant texts, or (iv) offer a new defense of a position found in the reading. At least once in the term, you will be asked to present the substance of your response paper to the class. You won't be graded on it, but you are expected to do it at least once.

Term paper: First, you'll do a prospectus (emailed attachment) delivered to me by *Thursday at 8pm of Week 8*, topic chosen in consultation with el profe. Second, you will submit a 4500-5500 word paper sent by email attachment. *Paper due March 22nd at 8pm.*

PROVISIONAL READING SCHEDULE

All readings are required reading unless explicitly noted.

All readings are available via pdf at <TritonEd.ucsd.edu> and/or via links from this syllabus.

1/9 DECLARATION OF PHILOSOPHICAL PREJUDICES PRESUMPTIONS (WEEK 1)

If you haven't already read a bunch of stuff on Team Triton-style reasons-responsiveness, you should read the stuff listed below. For those with working familiarity with the responsibility-focused work of Brink, Nelkin, or Vargas, the below readings are probably supererogatory:

Brink and Nelkin (2012) "Fairness and the Architecture of Responsibility"

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ucsd/reader.action?docID=3055472&ppg=292>

Vargas (2015) "Précis of *Building Better Beings*"

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11098-015-0476-3>

Vargas (2015) "Desert, Responsibility, and Justification"

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11098-015-0480-7>

1/16 EXHORTATIONS TO ANTI-INDIVIDUALISM ABOUT MORAL RESPONSIBILITY (WEEK 2)

1. Ciuirria, M (2017) "Responsibility Ain't Just in the Head"
2. Levy, N (2018) "Socializing Responsibility"

1/23 THE INEVITABLE INVOCATION OF STRAWSONIAN THEMES (WEEK 3)

- *If you haven't already read it, you should first read Strawson (1962) "Freedom and Resentment." However, our discussion will focus on these two pieces, both of which presume some familiarity with "Freedom and Resentment."*
- 1. McGeer, V (2012) "Co-reactive Attitudes and the Making of the Moral Community"
- 2. McKenna, M (2018) "Power, Social Inequalities, and the Conversational Theory"

1/30 MEDITATIONS ON OPPRESSION AND RESPONSIBILITY (WEEK 4)

1. Mackenzie, C (2018) "Moral Responsibility & the Social Dynamics of Power and Oppression"
 2. Vargas, M (2018) "The Social Constitution of Responsible Agency"
- *Optional but maybe useful context for the above readings: Hutchinson et. al. (2018) "Moral Responsibility in Contexts of Structural Injustice" (pp. 1-21; this is the intro to a collection from which several of our readings are drawn)*

2/6 FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS TO SOCIAL APPROACHES TO MORAL RESPONSIBILITY (WEEK CINCO)

1. McGeer, V (unpublished) "Scaffolding Agency: A Proleptic Account of the Reactive Attitudes"
 2. Holroyd, J (2018) "Two Ways of Socializing Moral Responsibility"
- *Maybe useful background for the Holroyd reading: Haslanger, S (2005) "The Semantics and Politics of Social Kinds"*

2/13 STRUCTURE, CULTURE, AND EXPLANATION (WEEK 6)

1. Nettle, D (2017) "The Cultural and the Agentic" (shortish)
2. Haslanger, S (2016) "What is a (Social) Structural Explanation?"
3. Dupré, J (2017) "The Metaphysics of Metamorphosis" (shortish)

2/20 ADAPTIVE PREFERENCES (ALSO: MARKETS) (WEEK 7)

1. Khader, S (2012) "Must Theories of Adaptive Preferences Deny Women's Agency?"
2. Terlazzo, R (2016) "Conceptualizing Adaptive Preferences Respectfully"
3. Fourcade and Healy (2007) "Moral Views of Market Society"

Note: If you care, maybe someone can remind me to talk about what I want from your papers!

2/27 NUDGES AND BOOSTS (WEEK 8)

1. Hanna, J (2015) "Libertarian Paternalism, Manipulation, and Preference Shaping"
2. Sunstein, C (2015) "Nudges, Agency, and Abstraction"
3. Hertwig and Grüne-Yanoff (2017) "Nudging and Boosting"

Note: prospectus is due this week

3/6 "THE LITERATURE MADE ME DO IT," OR YET ANOTHER ROUND ON SITUATIONISM (WEEK 9)

1. Sartorio, C (2017) "Situations and Reasons Responsiveness"
2. Herdova and Kearns (2017) "Situationism and Moral Responsibility"

Optional background stuff by Team Triton:

- Nelkin (2005) "Freedom, Responsibility, and Situationism"
- Brink (2013) "Situationism, Responsibility, and Fair Opportunity"
- Vargas (2013) "Situationism and Responsibility: Free Will in Fragments"

3/13 IS THIS ALL JUST THE ETERNAL RETURN OF THE SAME? (WEEK THE TENTH)

1. Kymlicka, W (1988) "Liberalism and Communitarianism"
2. Kauppinen, A (2011) "Social Dimension of Autonomy"
3. Haslanger, S (2017) "Ideology and Critique"