

## Neo-Aristotelian Metaethics

SLU: PHIL 6300□ / UMSL: PHIL 5537

□Fall 2017 Tuesday 5:30-8:00pm (or 6:00-8:40pm)  
in SLU Adorjan 343 and UMSL Clark 205

### INSTRUCTORS:

Eric Wiland, Associate Professor (UMSL), [wiland@umsl.edu](mailto:wiland@umsl.edu) (314) 516-5495

Kathryn Lindeman, Assistant Professor (SLU), [kathryn.lindeman@slu.edu](mailto:kathryn.lindeman@slu.edu) (412) 606-6351

### OFFICE HOURS: □

Lindeman: 214 Adorjan Hall, Wednesdays 2-4pm, and by appointment.

Wiland: 561 Lucas Hall, Mondays, 9-11:30am, and by appointment.

### TEXTS: □

Most readings available on Dropbox.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/0dvihg1okdfpth8/AAAeCV2D10vjH2inMF75WGiPa?dl=0>

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

#### □Weekly responses

□Each week you will write a paragraph-to-page response to the assigned reading emailed to both instructors by midnight Monday, which will be used as the basis for class discussion. Your response should directly address one of the assigned texts, and identify a specific sentence or passage that prompted your response. Your response can be either about an extended question you have, a counterexample, a worry, an expression of confusion, or anything else that might be useful to both you and the rest of the class to discuss. Excellently prepared responses explain the significance of the response (e.g., what turns on it being answered) and an educated guess as to what the answer might be. To pass the class, you must turn in on time at least eight responses during the semester.

Regular attendance and participation is, although ungraded, expected of all students.

#### Graded writing assignments

There are two options for completing the seminar:

OPTION 1: Seminar-length paper (5000+ words). □Minimum 3000 word draft due November 14th, final draft due December 5th.

OPTION 2: Colloquium length paper & Presentation:

1. Presentation-length paper (max 3000 words, exclusive of footnotes and citations)
2. abstract (max 150 words)
3. synopsis (between 500 - 750 words)
4. talk handout (max one page, front and back)□
5. 20 min in-class colloquium-style APA talk□
6. typed commentary on another student's colloquium paper□
7. 10 min in-class presentation of colloquium style APA comments on another student's paper.

In order to complete the seminar with the Conference Paper Option, students must meet the following time schedule:

10/31: Meet with either Eric or Kathryn to work on an abstract.

11/7: Submit draft synopsis□ to Kathryn & Eric

11/14 or 11/21: Distribute a copy of the paper to commentator and Eric & Kathryn (papers must be later presented without substantial revision of arguments or points)□

11/28 or 12/5: Distribute a copy of the comments to presenter and Eric & Kathryn (comments must be presented unchanged)□

11/28 or 12/5 (day of presentation): Turn in copy of the presented paper and handout to Eric & Kathryn□

12/5 or 12/12 (week after presentation): Turn in paper, revised in light of commentary, abstract, and synopsis to Eric & Kathryn

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:□**

**Week 1 (8/22): Aristotle's Ethics: a whirlwind summary**

**Week 2 (8/29): Primer on 20th Century mainstream metaethics:**

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/metaethics/>

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/naturalism-moral/>

**Weeks 3 and 4 (9/5, 9/12): Early moral naturalism**

9/5: G. E. M. Anscombe, "Moral Modern Philosophy" and "On Brute Facts"  
Peter Geach, "Good and Evil"

9/12: Philippa Foot, "Virtues and Vices"  
Philippa Foot, "Utilitarianism and the Virtues"

**Week 5 (9/19): Martha Nussbaum**

Martha Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach"

Martha Nussbaum, "Aristotle on human nature and the foundations of ethics."

**Weeks 6-9 (9/26, 10/3, 10/10, 10/17): Contemporary moral naturalism**

9/26: John McDowell, "Two Sorts of Naturalism,"  
John McDowell, "Eudaimonism and realism in Aristotle's ethics"

10/3: Michael Thompson, "The Representation of Life" (Part I of *Life and Action*).  
Michael Thompson, "Apprehending Human Form" (2004).

10/10: Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (excerpts) Chapters 1, 8-11.

10/17: Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness* Chapters 1-6.

**Criticisms, by type**

**Week 10 (10/24) - SLU on Fall Break: UMSL meets to cover metaethical worries: under-accounting for normativity/authoritativeness/etc**

David Copp and David Sobel, "Morality and Virtue: An Assessment of Recent Work in Virtue Ethics."

John Hacker-Wright, "Ethical Naturalism and the Constitution of Agency."

Micah Lott, "Why be a good Human Being? Natural Goodness, Reason, and the Authority of Human Nature."

**Week 11 (10/31): First-order ethical worries: wrong/incomplete moral norms**

Louise Anthony, "Natures and Norms."

Christopher Gowans, "Virtue and Nature."

Scott Woodcock, "Philippa Foot's Virtue Ethics Has an Achilles' Heel."

**Weeks 12-13 (11/07, 11/14): Biology (how natural?)**

Joseph Millum, "Natural Goodness and Natural Evil."

Chrisoula Andreou, "Review of Natural Goodness."

John Hacker-Wright, "What is Natural About Foot's Ethical Naturalism?"

Scott Woodcock, "Neo-Aristotelian Naturalism and the Indeterminacy Objection."

Jay Odenbaugh, "Nothing in Ethics Makes Sense Except in the Light of Evolution? Natural Goodness and Evolutionary Biology"

Micah Lott, "Have Elephant Seals Refuted Aristotle? Nature, Function, and Moral Goodness."

**Weeks 14 (11/21): UMSL on Thanksgiving: SLU discusses Week 10 material.**

**Weeks 15-16 (11/28; 12/5): Student Talks (final two weeks)**

\*\*\*This schedule is tentative; assigned readings are open to revision.\*\*\*