In his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant claims to locate and establish the supreme principle of morality. In order to do this, he must prove rival theories of the content and grounds of morality to be mistaken. In this course, we examine some rival accounts, particularly those offered by British moralists of the 17th and 18th centuries. (Of course, these philosophers often disagree with one another.) We then consult some of Kant’s ethical writings with an eye towards determining the effectiveness of his criticisms of these competitors.

**Readings:**

**Books:**


[KPP is available at both the University Book Center and the Maryland Book Exchange. BMOR is available only at the Maryland Book Exchange.]

**E-Reserves:**

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Emile* (selection)


**Requirements:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take-home exam</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>All readings through Feb. 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>March 29th</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>All readings to Mar. 17, but mainly Hutcheson, Butler, and Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>10-12 pages</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>On any philosopher before Kant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>draft due Apr. 7,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>final version Apr. 26</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>May 16 (8:00-10:00 AM)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Mostly on Kant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Take-home Exam

– The take-home examination will be handed out less than one week before it is due.
– It will consist in short answer and essay questions.
– Your answers to examination questions must be typed and double-spaced.
– Late examinations will be accepted, but they will be penalized 1 full grade per school day. For example, if your examination is due on Thursday and you turn it in on Friday, the highest grade you could receive on it would be a B+. Only a university-approved excuse will free you from this penalty.

Midterm and Final Exams

– If you have a university-approved excuse for missing either of these exams, you may take a make-up. However, you must alert me (by email or phone) that you will be absent prior to the exam, unless very unusual circumstances prevent you from doing so.
– These exams will be composed of essay questions.
– You will be permitted to use your books, but no notes.

Paper

– You must determine the topic of your paper in consultation with me.
– The draft of your paper (due April 7) must be polished in terms of presentation, for example, spelling and grammar. The draft should not be a last-minute, sloppy effort.
– You must turn in the copy of your draft on which I have written comments along with the final version of your paper.
– Late papers will be accepted, but they will be penalized 1 full grade per school day. For example, if your paper is due on Thursday and you turn it in on Friday, the highest grade you could receive on it would be a B+. Only a university-approved excuse will free you from this penalty. (The penalty applies to drafts as well as to final versions. So if you turn in your draft 1 school day late and your final version 1 school day late, the best grade you can get on your paper assignment as a whole is a C+ [assuming you don’t have a university-approved excuses.])

Grading:

– Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class: A+: 98-100; A: 94-97; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63.

– There will be no opportunities for extra credit.
– Failure to complete an assignment will result in your receiving no credit (a zero) for it.
Academic integrity:

– The University of Maryland Honor Pledge reads: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination." The Pledge statement should be handwritten and signed on the front of your exams and papers. Students who fail to write and sign the Pledge will be asked to confer with the instructor.

– I take incidents of academic dishonesty very seriously. I will forward to the office of judicial programs any possible cases of it that come to my attention.

– The Student Honor Council identifies four types of academic dishonesty: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes dishonesty of these four types. Please consult the Student Honor Council Website at <www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>. If you would like any further clarification, e.g., on what constitutes plagiarism, please speak with the instructor.

Students with disabilities:

– Students with disabilities should inform the instructor of their needs as soon as possible and no later than Feb. 10 so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

Religious Observances:

– You will not be penalized for any absence that results from religious observance.

– However, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor by Feb. 10 of any intended absences for religious observance.

Schedule:

(Depending on the flow of the course, I might change some reading assignments. Any changes will be announced in class.)

Jan 27: Introduction

Week of Feb. 1: Hobbes: Selections from Leviathan in BMOR, pp. 18-60

Week of Feb. 8: Cumberland: Selections from De Legibus Naturae in BMOR, pp. 79-102; Cudworth: Selections from A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality in BMOR, pp. 105-119.

Week of Feb. 15: Shaftesbury: Selections from An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit in BMOR, pp. 169-188


Take-home exam due Feb. 26

Week of March 8: Butler: Selections from *Fifteen Sermons* in BMOR, pp. 325-377.


**Spring Break**

March 29: **Mid-term examination**

March 31: Rousseau: “Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar” (from *Emile*) on E-Reserve

Week of April 5: Kant: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface and Section I in KPP

**Paper Draft due April 7**

Week of April 12: Kant: *Groundwork* Section II in KPP

Week of April 19: Kant: *Critique of Practical Reason* (marginal) pages 57-67

**Final Version of Paper due April 21**

Week of April 26: Kant: *Metaphysics of Morals*, readings to be announced.

Week of May 3: *Metaphysics of Morals*, readings to be announced.

Week of May 10: *Metaphysics of Morals*, readings to be announced.

**Final Exam: May 16 8:00-10:00 AM**