

<b>Course</b>	<b>PHIL60051</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Ethics</b>
<b>Tutor</b>	<b>Dr Michael Rush</b>

### **Curriculum Content:**

The course will begin with a discussion of three central approaches to ethics: deontology, consequentialism and virtue ethics. We will then introduce the discussion of gratitude by looking at its place in historical philosophical literature, reading some of Seneca's book-length study of gift and return, *De Beneficiis*, and touching in passing on the place of gratitude in the work of Hobbes, Kant and Aquinas.

The rest of the course will be devoted to a discussion of recent work on gratitude, in relation to concepts of duty, reciprocity, and justice. We will end with a look at a recent attempt to broaden our definition of gratitude to include being grateful that something is the case, even when there is no agent that brought about the benefit. Throughout the course we will consider whether gratitude is best understood as a virtue or as a species of debt.

### **Preliminary Reading:**

You can get a good overview in advance of several general areas of moral theory from various collections and textbooks, including for example

LaFollette, H., ed. 2000. *The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell. Part II: Normative Ethics.

Shafer-Landau, Russ. 2013. *Ethical Theory, An Anthology*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. Especially the first few extracts in each of Chapters 8, 9 and 11.

Singer, P. ed. 2000. *A Companion to Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell. Part IV, especially chapters 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

On gratitude in particular it's worth reading

Berger, Fred R. 1975. Gratitude. *Ethics* 85: 298-309.

Carr, David. 2013. Varieties of Gratitude. *Journal of Value Inquiry* 47: 17-28.

### **Course Aims:**

- To familiarise students with some central philosophical concepts in ethics
- To explore the contemporary philosophical discussion of gratitude

### **Intended Learning Outcomes:**

On completion of this unit successful participants will have:

- (a) read and understood some of the main texts from the relevant reading lists and from elsewhere;
- (b) attended the seminars, and participated in discussion;
- (c) acquired and developed the analytic skills which are necessary for the formation of their own considered views, for the evaluation of questions, and for putting forward good answers.

**Key Transferable Skills:**

On successful completion of this course unit, participants should have developed:

- Problem solving skills.
- Analytic and critical skills.
- The ability to argue from evidence.
- The ability to communicate ideas effectively.
- The ability to set appropriate goals and to work independently and/or cooperatively.

**Teaching and Learning Methods:**

Teaching will be seminar based, with a two-hour seminar each week over seven weeks. A student will introduce each week's topic by giving a presentation on it. There will also be an initial one-hour meeting in which the convenor will present an overview of the course and its topics, and a final meeting of one hour.

**Assessment**

Essay 5000 words 100%