

Moral and Political Rationality – Themes from Hume and Kant

Contemporary moral and political philosophy is to a large extent inspired by the legacy of two great philosophers of the Enlightenment: David Hume and Immanuel Kant. They defined many of the problems that still are addressed and discussed in modern moral and political philosophy. Moreover, Hume and Kant are traditionally described as representatives of two distinct outlooks in practical philosophy which continuously are interpreted, defended, and criticized. Among other things, they are considered to have opposite views about the role of reason in practical and moral deliberation and decision making. One of the basic questions they raised is: 'Are we rationally required to act morally?'

In this course, we start with discussing the 'real' Hume and Kant with particular focus on these themes. We then continue discussing so-called 'Neo-Humean' and 'Neo-Kantian' trends in contemporary moral and political philosophy. Relevant topics that will be considered include 'What did Hume and Kant think about practical rationality and the connection between practical rationality, morality and justice among individuals and in society at large?', 'To what extent are Hume's and Kant's views alive in the present day theories that make reference to them?', 'What do Neo-Humean and Neo-Kantian views amount to?' 'How do they address the basic question mentioned above?'

The course is divided in four main parts. First, we read and discuss parts of the classical texts by Hume and Kant as well as relevant commentaries. (This part of the course is taught by Christel Fricke.) Second, we read and discuss some 'Neo-Humean' views (e.g. Bernard Williams, Michael Smith and Julia Markovits) and some of their critics. (This part of the course is taught by Caj Strandberg.) Third, we read and discuss 'Neo-Kantian' views (e.g. Christine Korsgaard, Thomas Scanlon and Stephen Engstrom) and some of their critics. (This part of the course is taught by Carla Bagnoli.) Fourth, we consider Kant's political thinking with relevance for the basic topic mentioned above with particular stress on Arthur Ripstein's recent work. (This part of the course is taught by Reidar Maliks.)

The course is open to master students and to PhD students.

Requirements on participations in the course: Introducing some of the texts to be discussed in one session (providing a summary and at least three relevant questions) and submitting a draft, and then a final version, of a short paper (semesteroppgave).

Required readings

Engstrom, S. (2013) "Constructivism and practical cognitivism," in C. Bagnoli ed., *Constructivism in Ethics*, Cambridge University Press. 133-152.

Finlay, S. and M. Schroeder, "Reasons for Action: Internal vs. External", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s. 1-29.

Hume, David (1738/2000) *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Norton, David F. and Norton, Mary J., eds.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press), book 2, part 3, sect.1-3 and book 3, part 1, sect. 1-2, and part 3, sect. 1-6.

Kant, Immanuel (1788/1997) *Critique of Practical Reason*. (Gregor, Mary, et al., trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), chapter 1, 1.-8. (including remarks).

Kant, Immanuel (1797/1996), Doctrine of Right, from *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 383-411 and 450-461. German Academy pagination: 6:218-221; 6:229-258; 6:306-318.

Korsgaard, Christine (1986), "Skepticism about Practical Reason", *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. LXXXIII, pp. 5– 25. (20 s.)

Korsgaard, C. (2008) *The Constitution of Agency*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. *Extracts*:
Chapter 3: "Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant",
Chapter 7: "Acting for a Reason",
Chapter 10: "Realism and Constructivism in 20th Century Moral Philosophy".

McDowell, John (1995), "Might there be External Reasons?", In J.E.J. Altham and R. Harrison (eds.) *World, Mind, and Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 68–85.

Ripstein, Arthur (2009), *Force and Freedom. Kant's Legal and Political Philosophy*, Harvard: Harvard University Press. Ch. 1-3, 6, 8.

Scanlon, T.M. (2003) "Metaphysics and Morals" Proceedings of APA, pp. 7-22.

Smith, Michael (1997), "Internal Reasons", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. LV, pp. 109– 131.

Williams, Bernard (1981), "Internal and External Reasons", In B. Williams, *Moral Luck*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 101–113.

Background readings

Bagnoli, C. (2015) "Constructivism in Metaethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/constructivism-metaethics/>.

Cohen, Rachel (2008) *Hume's Morality. Feeling and Fabrication*. Oxford: OUP. (Extracts)

Engstrom, S. (2002) "Kant's Distinction Between Theoretical and Practical Knowledge" *The Harvard Review of Philosophy* 10 (1): 49-63.

Fitzpatrick, William (2004), "Reasons, Value, and Particular Agents", *Mind*, Vol. 113, pp. 285–318.

Foot, Philippa (1972), "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives", *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 81, pp. 305–316. [Also in P. Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*,

Oxford: Blackwell (1978).]

Gert, Joshua (2000), "Practical Rationality, Morality, and Purely Justificatory Reasons", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 37, pp. 227–243.

Markovits, Julia (2011), "Why be an Internalist about Reasons?", In R. Shafer-Landau (ed.) *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, Vol. 6, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 255–279.

O'Neill, O. (1992) "Vindicating Reason," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, P. Guyer (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 280–308.

Ripstein, Arthur, "Form and Matter in Kantian Political Philosophy: A Reply", in *European Journal of Philosophy*, 20:3, 487-496.

Valentini, Laura, "Kant, Ripstein and the Circle of Freedom: A Critical Note", in *European Journal of Philosophy*, 20:3, 450-459.

Williams, G. (2014) "Kant's Account of Reason", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/kant-reason/>