Introduction to Ethical Theory

Date 20 May 2020  Time 16:00 – 19:30

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Dr Alex Carter  Course code 1920NDX316

Director of Academic Centres Dr Corinne Boz

For further information on this course, please contact The Arts and Sciences Team on artscience@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 761322

Tutor biography

Dr Alex Carter is Academic Director for Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies at the Institute of Continuing Education. He is a Bye-Fellow at Fitzwilliam College. Alex was awarded his PhD in Philosophy by the University of Essex in 2015; his thesis explores some of the surprising aspects of Wittgenstein’s views concerning freedom and fatalism. Before this, Alex studied Philosophy at the University of Wales, Swansea and the University of Bristol.

Alex’s approach to teaching is to encourage students to feel the “pain of the problem” - to make plain the very real ways in which philosophical problems affect our lives. Accordingly, Alex is most keen to offer his support to philosophical projects that, not only inform contemporary debates, but actively affect change. Alex’s ongoing research interests include Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, the theology of Simone Weil and the philosophy of humour. He is currently researching the relationship between humour and creative practice via the concept of ‘serious play’.
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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Meta-ethics: cognitivism versus non-cognitivism</td>
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<tr>
<td>17:30</td>
<td>Sandwich tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>Normative ethics: deontology versus consequentialism</td>
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<td>19:30</td>
<td>Finish</td>
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Course syllabus

Aims:

1. To introduce students to key meta-ethical and normative ethical theories;
2. To deepen students’ understanding of their own ethical viewpoints;
3. To evaluate and critically assess different explanations of what makes an action or an individual moral.

Content:
In this short, introductory session, we will explore several key ethical and metaethical theories. From Deontology to Utilitarianism, we will try to identify what makes a person or an action moral. But we will also consider whether or not the right thing to do is always the correct thing to do.

Presentation of the course:
The course will be delivered through seminars comprised of lectures and short activities.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. Identify key ethical theories and their exponents;
2. Distinguish between meta-ethical and normative ethical theories;
3. More readily align their own ethical views with existing theoretical viewpoints.
# Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher and date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Williams, B.</td>
<td>“Critique of Utilitarianism” esp. Chapter 3 &quot;Negative responsibility: and two examples&quot; in <em>Utilitarianism: For and Against</em> by Smart, J. J. C. and Williams, B.</td>
<td>Cambridge University Press, 1973</td>
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## Additional information

### Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
[http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute)

### Refreshments

A sandwich tea will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

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**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 04 March 2020