

Lecturer: Dr. Alessandra Marra

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MCMP/ LMU Munich

Summer Semester 2023

Formal Ethics

Seminar Description and Objectives

Formal Ethics, a rapidly growing field of research within formal philosophy, applies tools from logic, decision and game theory, and natural language semantics to the analysis of concepts in moral theory. In the seminar, we will discuss a representative selection of topics within Formal Ethics. These include: conditional obligations, moral dilemmas, moral reasoning under uncertainty, reasons, conventions and social norms.

At the end of the seminar, students will have a working knowledge of the main characteristics of deontic logic, of the theory of reasons as defaults and of its logic, and of game theoretical models of social norms. Students will be able to critically evaluate their application to the analysis of notions like ought, reasons, and norms.

Seminar Structure and Evaluation

We will meet for three academic hours a week. Each meeting, typically, will start with a lecture introducing the background and formal apparatus of a given topic or theory, and then move to a joint discussion on a selection of texts and on exercises. Some meetings will consist in a longer introductory lecture and a comparatively shorter round-table discussion (we call these "Type 1 meetings"), while other meetings will feature a shorter lecture and focus more on the round-table discussion (we call these "Type 2 meetings"). In either case, students are expected to have read the required readings before coming to the seminar and to participate actively in the discussion.

The final grade is determined by the weighted average of the grades of: an in-class test (30%) + short essay (70%).

General Information

- Time: 9:15–11:45 (exception: the first meeting on April 27th will start at 10:15)
- Location: in-person, room 021, Ludwigstr. 31.
- Lecturer: Alessandra Marra (Alessandra.Marra@lrz.uni-muenchen.de)
 - You can address me as "Dr. Marra" or as "Alessandra".
 - Please let me know if you have a preferred pronoun.
- Office hours: By appointment

Schedule

Please note that the schedule might be subject to change.

Part 1: Deontic Logic and Conditional Obligations

27.04 Introduction

04.05 [Type 1 meeting] *Deontic Logic and Challenges Surrounding Conditional Obligations*

Required Reading: Roderick M. Chisholm: *Contrary-to-Duty Imperatives and Deontic Logic*, 1963

Optional readings: Risto Hilpinen and Paul McNamara: *Deontic Logic: A Historical Survey and Introduction*. In Dov Gabbay et al. editors, *Handbook of Deontic Logic and Normative Systems*. College Publications, 2013. Only pages 36-43, 45-47, 54-55, 83-91.

11.05 [Type 1 Meeting] *Introduction to Angelika Kratzer's Semantics*

No required readings. Optional reading: Paul Portner: *Modality*, 2009, Ch.3.1

25.05 [Type 2 Meeting] *Angelika Kratzer's Semantics: Deontic Modals and Conditionals*

Required Reading: Excerpts from: Angelika Kratzer: *Modals and Conditionals*, 2012.

01.06 [Type 2 Meeting] *The Miners' Puzzle*

Required Reading: Niko Kolodny and John MacFarlane: *Ifs and Oughts*, 2010.

Part 2: Reasons and Moral Conflicts

15.06 [Type 1 Meeting] *John Horty's Theory: Reasons as Defaults*

Required Reading: excerpts from John Horty: *Reasons as Defaults*, 2012.

22.06 [Type 2 Meeting] *Reasons and Moral Conflicts*

Required Reading: Shyam Nair: *Consequences of Reasoning with Conflicting Obligations*, 2014.

Part 3: Social Norms

29.06 [Type 1 Meeting] *Introduction to Norms, Conventions and Game Theory*

Required Reading: Cristina Bicchieri: *The Grammar of Society*, 2006, Ch.1.

06.07 [Type 2 Meeting] *Cristina Bicchieri's Theory of Social Norms: The Grammar of Society*

Required Reading: Cristina Bicchieri: *The Grammar of Society*, 2006, Ch.5.

To be rescheduled: [Type 2 Meeting] *Social Norm: A Case Study*

Required Reading: TBD depending on students' interests (options include: case study on veiling, case study on corruption, case study on FGM).

13.07 *Recap Session*

20.07 *In-class test*