



FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**PHIL 549 Lec 01 – Advanced Topics in Ethics  
Topic 2: “Failure in Moral Philosophy”**

**Fall Term 2011**

**Course Outline**

**Lectures:** Thursdays, 15:30-18:20 in SS 010

**Instructor:** David G. Dick

**Office:** SS 1224

**Phone:** 403-220-6434

**Email:** [dgdick@ucalgary.ca](mailto:dgdick@ucalgary.ca)

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 12:30pm-2:30pm, and by appointment

***Course Description***

This course will investigate the ways failure and the possibility of failure figure into moral philosophy. This will include, but will not be limited to both the idea that the possibility of failure is required for moral responsibility and the claim that the possibility of error is required for the normative force of a moral rule. The majority of the sources for the course will come out of moral philosophy, but it will also consider sources from other subfields of philosophy that deal with similar normative issues, such as the philosophy of language, mind, and epistemology.

***Required Texts***

*Philosophical Investigations*

Wittgenstein, Ludwig, Wiley-Blackwell; 4 edition  
ISBN-13: 978-1405159289

*Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition*

Kripke, Saul A., Harvard University Press  
ISBN-13: 978-0674954014

*Error: On Our Predicament When Things Go Wrong*

Nicholas Rescher, University of Pittsburgh Press  
ISBN-13: 978-0822960119

*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

Kant, Immanuel (Mary Gregor, ed.), Cambridge University Press  
ISBN-13: 978-0521626958

Additional materials will be indicated via the Blackboard site for this class.

Available at: <https://blackboard.ucalgary.ca/webapps/login/>

## ***Evaluation***

Weekly Questions:	20%	
First Paper:	30%	Due: Thursday, November 3rd
Revised Paper:	50%	Due: Wednesday, December 14th

This course has no Registrar administered final exam, only a final paper.

The entire mark will involve being graded on written work. Naturally, standards for essays prepared outside class will be much higher than those for weekly assignments.

The final grade will be based on the credit accumulated from the various assignments, so it is mathematically possible to pass the course without turning in any particular assignment. But this strategy is not recommended.

### Weekly Questions:

Each week, I'd like you to submit a question based on the week's reading. The question you write should convince me that you've read the week's reading, at least well enough to be confused by it. Confusion is a philosophical heuristic, it either helps you identify a place where you don't understand, or where the argument doesn't make sense. Either one of these counts as philosophical progress.

These questions and their explanations need not be any longer than about half a page. (I'll post an example of what I mean to Blackboard.)

Questions are due to me, via email, no later than the Wednesday before class at 1 pm. This is to give me enough time to read them and let them help structure our discussion the next day.

Late questions will be read for philosophical content, but will receive no credit.

There are 10 sessions beyond the initial one, but I'll only be asking for 9 weekly questions from you this semester. It's entirely up to you which day you'd like to pass on.

### Papers:

I will not be distributing paper topics for this class, since to get into it you have to be fairly far along in your philosophical education, and it is time for you to get some practice in identifying what makes for a promising paper topic. (The weekly questions are a good tool for scaring up such ideas.)

Instead, you've got to propose your paper idea to me before you write it and have me sign off on it. I think the most productive way to do this will be in person, but I'd like us to finalize the deal by email, so we both have record of our agreement.

Your first paper should be roughly 2500 words (about 6-7 pages) and its final revision should be roughly 5000 words (about 15 pages).

## **Grading Method**

All evaluated material will be graded on a scale from A+ to F. To weight assignments and calculate the final grade, these letter grades will be converted into the standard 4.0 scale:

4.3 – A+	3.3 – B+	2.3 – C+	1.3 – D+	0.0 – F
4.0 – A	3.0 – B	2.0 – C	1.0 – D	
3.7 – A–	2.7 – B–	1.7 – C–		

The arithmetic that will calculate your final grade will follow this formula:

$$\frac{(W. Questions).20 + (Short Paper).30 + (Long Paper).50}{\text{Final Grade}}$$

## **Policy on Late Assignments**

Weekly questions are to be submitted in class and will not be accepted late.

Late term papers are accepted, with a penalty of one full grade per 24-hour period late. So, an A- paper submitted between 24 and 48 hours after it was due would receive a C-. Once a paper is late, it should be submitted via email (to me at [dgdick@ucalgary.ca](mailto:dgdick@ucalgary.ca)) as soon as it is ready.

### **INTELLECTUAL HONESTY**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. As a result, cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as **an extremely serious academic offence**, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. The University Calendar states that plagiarism exists when:

- *the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test);*
- *parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;*
- *the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source; and/or*
- *a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.*

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

## **FACULTY OF ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING & STUDENT INFORMATION RESOURCES**

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts. Drop in at SS110, phone 403-220-3580 or email at [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.
- For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre at 403-220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.
- Email Contact Addresses for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:  
[arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca)   [arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca)  
[arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca)   [arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca)