

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY 601 Lec 02 Topic 02
Advanced Topics in Philosophy: Morality, Rationality, and Agency
Fall 2009

(Offered jointly with PHIL 599 Lec 01)

Location: EDT 723 **Time:** Fridays, 11:00am-1:30pm
Instructor: David G. Dick
Office: SS 1224
Email: dgdick@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours: M and W 11:00am-12:00pm and by appointment

Overview:

This course will focus on the relationship between morality and rational agency. One strategy for grounding moral normativity is to claim that it is just nothing more than what is required by reason. Rational agency, on this view, is the source and vindication of morality. We will examine some of the roots of, strengths of, and complaints with this strategy as well as Christine Korsgaard's recent employment of it in her latest book, *Self-Constitution*.

Required Texts:

Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity

Korsgaard, Christine M., Oxford UP, 2009. ISBN 13: 978-0199552801

The Importance of What We Care About

Frankfurt, Harry G., Cambridge UP, 1988. ISBN 13: 978-0-521-33611-6

Additional materials will be posted to the Blackboard site for this class.

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

Evaluation:

Weekly Questions:	10%	
Presentation	10%	
Short Paper	30%	Due: Friday, October 23 rd
Long Paper	50%	Due: Friday, December 11 th

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–	0.7 – D–	

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

$$(\text{Weekly Questions}).10 + (\text{Presentation}).10 + (\text{Short Paper}).30 + (\text{Long Paper}).50 = \text{Final Grade}$$

Presentations:

Graduate students enrolled in this class will be expected to give a 10-15 minute presentation, where they present an issue from the reading and then lead the discussion that follows.

The sooner the better on this, so get in touch with me as soon as you can to pick a topic and schedule a date for your presentation.

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 Thursday evening before class, at 5 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 11 sessions beyond the initial one, but I'll only be asking for 10 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.

The short paper should be about 10-12 pages (i.e. conference-submission length).

The long paper should be about 20-25 pages (i.e. writing-sample length).

I'll be perfectly delighted if your long paper is an expansion and refinement of the topic you started investigating in your short paper.