

Durham Philosophy MA
Ethics Module
Mondays 11am-2pm, weeks 2-10
ER155

Hi everyone,

This is the module outline for the Ethics module on the MA. I hope we will be meeting in person. But let's wait and see. If it has to be done on zoom, so be it. We'll know about that closer to the time. Looking forward to meeting you all one way or another in January.

You'll be expected to have done the reading prior to the seminar. Depending on how people feel about it, I may institute a policy of getting someone (or groups) to present on a paper each week.

Our first meeting will be on Monday 18th January - that's week 2 of the new term.

Chris Cowie
Module Leader for Ethics.

- ***Weeks 2-5: Papers by Some Durham Moral Philosophers***

For the first four meetings we will be reading, thinking and talking about Moral Philosophy papers by members of staff here at Durham. I am inviting the relevant staff members to present their papers each week. Hopefully they will be able to join us but they may have prior teaching commitments.

- Week 2. Race Privilege

Core Paper:

- Jeremy Dunham (and Holly-Lawford Smith). Offsetting Race Privilege. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 11(2). 2017.

Jeremy's co-authored paper is about race privilege. You could read Lawford Smith's earlier piece - Offsetting Class Privilege - available here as complement:

- <http://www.jpe.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/JPE0024-LawfordSmith-1.pdf>

- Week 3. Environmental Ethics.

Core Paper:

- Simon James. Ecosystem Services and the Value of Places. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 1). 2016.

For this week we will be thinking about Simon's paper about the value of rivers, mountains, forests and other 'natural entities'. Simon is going to pop in to discuss with us. Simon will be joining us. He advises – as do I - that you look at the following very short 'primer' piece first:

- Douglas MacCauley. Selling out Nature. *Nature* 443(7). 2016.

- Week 4. Exploitation

Core Paper:

- David Faraci. Wage Exploitation and the Non-Worseness Claim. *Business Ethics Quarterly* 29(2). 2019.

A paper about the morality of exploitation. David will hopefully join us for some of this session (but he teaches 12-1 and 2-330 on Mondays!). He recommends that you look at the following piece as background before reading his:

- Matt Zwolinski. Sweatshops, Choice and Exploitation. *Business Ethics Quarterly* 17(4). 2007.

- Week 5.

Core Paper:

- Christopher Cowie. Title tbc.

I will present a new draft paper. I'm working on a few different topics at the minute: moral error theory, the ethics of war, the value of diversity, and human extinction. I'm happy to present on whichever is of most interest to you. We will make a decision together closer to the time.

- ***Weeks 6-8: Papers on a Theme - The Ethics of Population, Procreation and Extinction***

For the next three meetings we will be focusing on a theme in contemporary Moral Philosophy. We'll be thinking about the ethics of population, procreation and extinction.

- *Week 6. Human Extinction as Moral Philosophy*

Three papers to look at for this week, all about human extinction and the relationship between the life of an individual and of the species. The first of them (Bostrom's) is a very quick read. If you don't have time to get through all three, focus on Bostrom and then Lenman.

- Nick Bostrom. Existential Risk as Global Priority. *Global Policy* 4. 2013.
- James Lenman. On Becoming Extinct. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 83. 2002.
- Christine Korsgaard. Species-Being and the Badness of Extinction and Death. *Zeitschrift fur Ethik and Moralphilosophie*. 2018.

- *Week 7. Longtermism.*

Two papers this week about planning for the very long term future. The authors are based at Oxford's *Global Priorities Institute*. Read them in this order:

- Will MacAskill and Hilary Greaves. The Case for Strong Long-Termism. *GPI Working Paper*.
- Tyler John and Will MacAskill. Longtermist Institutional Reform. *GPI Working Paper*.

- *Week 8. Axiology, Population and Procreation*

Seom recent work on the axiological questions that preoccupied Parfit; both his and those of an interesting commentator. You may need to go over these ones slowly (several times).

- Derek Parfit. Future Persons, the Non-Identity Problem and Person-Affecting Principles. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 45(2). 2017.
- Johann Frick. Context-Dependent Betterness and the Mere Addition Paradox. [Link here](#) (paste it into the browser if it doesn't work):

https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/jfrick/files/context-dependent_betterness_and_the_map.pdf

- ***Weeks 9-10: Student Choice***

For the final two meetings we will think about some topics of your choosing. I'm open to your suggestions.