PHIL 2790 Moral Philosophy

Instructor: Robert Shaver, 458 University College, 474-9109, bshaver@cc.umanitoba.ca, office hours Tues, Thurs 1-2 and by appointment.

Texts: Henry Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics; John Rawls, A Theory of Justice; Immanuel Kant, Groundwork to the Metaphysic of Morals. All are available at the bookstore. We’ll also read C. L. Stevenson, “The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms,” Mind 46, 1937, 14-31; W. D. Ross, The Right and the Good pp. 16-41; T. M. Scanlon, What We Owe to Each Other pp. 229-41; and a selection from Nietzsche. Ross, Scanlon, and Nietzsche will be on reserve at Dafoe (Ross is also on the web); Stevenson is available through the library catalogue.

Sidgwick readings: Book I chapters I, III; Book II chapter I; Book III chapters XI, XIII, XIV; Book IV chapters I, II.


Kant readings: chapters 1-2.

This course is an introduction to normative ethics - utilitarianism, egoism, contractarianism, and deontology. It is the usual preparation for 3760-3770.

Evaluation: 3 1000-word papers, 20% each; 1 in-class essay test, 20%; 8 reading quizzes, totaling 20%. Participation can help but not hurt mark.

I will (if you wish) comment on 1 rough draft.

Marking scale: A+: 90-100; A: 80-89; B+: 75-79; B: 70-74; C+: 65-69; C 60-64; D: 50-59; F: 0-49 (an F paper gets a 35%).

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offences. Note the statements in section 8 of the General Academic Regulations and Requirements and the Academic Integrity section of the Arts website. The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism in a written assignment, test, or exam is F on the paper and F for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as the purchase of an essay or cheating on a test or exam, the penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to 5 years from registration in courses taught in a particular department in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty. The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarised to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism.