

SYLLABUS
(Frank Schaberg Jr. and Oliver Chappell)
MORAL REASONING: THE RIGHT THING TO DO

Goals:

- Probe and discuss classical and contemporary theories of moral behavior in terms of hypothetical cases and present-day applications
- Challenge established beliefs
- Wander from our comfort zones
- Engage all class members.
- Leave class members with a sense of accomplishment through learning new concepts and engaging in lively discussions.
- Have fun and enjoy each other.

Class Format A combination of lectures and class discussions.

Course Materials:

Viewing JUSTICE with Michael Sandel, Harvard online course, <http://justiceharvard.org/justicecourse/> and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00kt7sh>, to explore and discuss some of the great moral dilemmas of our time

Members should review each entire LECTURE, but excerpts are provided where time is an issue.

First Week: Lectures 1 to 17:20 and 24:40 to end, and 3 to 24:00 HLS (Harvard Lecture Series).

- The search for justice and morality.
- Morality as a requirement in the law, or a goal?
- Queen vs. Dudley and Stephens; discussion of the facts and the resultant legal opinion. Is there such a thing as a “necessity defense” to murder? Is it ever justified to take the life of an innocent to save other innocents from dying?
- Discuss United States vs. Holmes, and two or three hypothetical cases where the taking of a life may save many others.
- Briefly discuss utilitarianism as a possible answer to Queen Vs. Dudley and Stephens.
- Is torture ever justified?
- The Ford Pinto case and cell phones

Second Week: Lectures 5 and 7

- Libertarianism and individual rights
- Taxation and redistribution
- Seatbelts and paternalism
- Taxation of Bill Gates and Michael Jordan
- Locke and unalienable rights
- The role of consent in legitimate government'
- Locke and suicide
- Resolving the conflict between individual rights and majority rule

Third Week: Lectures 9 all, 16 start at 25:00, and 17 end at 25:45

- Are there things money should not be able to buy?
- The Civil War draft and substitution payments
- Is assisted or unassisted suicide morally justifiable?
- Is a system based upon meritocracy, a fair system?
- Does a fair system of justice require that everyone be given a fair start?
- The pros and cons of affirmative action
- The Cheryl Hopwood case
- Moral deserts and entitlement
- Compensation for historical injustices?

Fourth Week: Reith Lectures, 1 & 2

- Market Triumphalism. What went wrong?
- Rethinking the role of markets in society
- What money should not be able to buy
- Public safety, prisons, volunteer armies, etc.
- Growing inequality and its consequences
- Shared sacrifice and the responsibility of citizenship
- Should politics be "neutral" on moral and religious issues
- Same sex marriage and surrogate childbirth
- The "good life" and what is worthy of honor and recognition
- Mutual engagement and revitalizing public discourse
- Listening with an open mind and facing the "uncomfortable"

Fifth Week: Reith Lectures 3&4

- The promise and predicament of genetic engineering
- Treatment of disease vs “enhancement”
- Genetic engineering vs. Eugenics, who decides?
- Politics of the Common Good: Market Mimicking Government
- How to value free commodities, air & water e.g.
- Cost benefit analyses as a market tool, Phillip Morris CZE smoking calculus
- What is the primary purpose of government?
- How Markets Mimicking Government should address moral controversy
- Growing reluctance of politicians to address moral issues: do we need a new type of politician
- Social and economic inequality and the erosion of shared sense of civic responsibility “us vs. them”
- How can we regain civil bipartisan government?
- IS IT TOO LATE???

Sixth Week:

- Concluding discussions from Fifth Week, if any
- Unique moral issue to be selected by the coordinators from class suggestions
- Class critique