

Advanced Topics in Philosophy: Blame, Anger, and Forgiveness

PHIL 490 A02 (CRN: 22348) | PHIL 500 A02 (22351) | LAW 343 A05 (23036)

Spring 2020, CLE B315: TWF, 9:30 – 10:20

Ethics is often guided by the question, “what ought I to do?” We deliberate about the best course of action, such as whether to lie or to tell a hurtful truth, and whether to sacrifice one life to save the many. But there is a further and pressing question: “what ought I (or we) to do *now*?” – and in particular, now that something has gone wrong. We often find ourselves questioning how we should respond when people harm us, or when we witness or experience injustice. This course is about the nature and ethics of responses to moral wrongdoing and injustice with a focus on blame, anger, and forgiveness. We will begin by thinking about moral responsibility, and to what extent people can be held responsible and blamed for their actions and characters. We will then consider the nature and appropriateness of different forms of anger, which might be experienced in addition to (or as part of) our blaming practices. The final section of this course considers the nature and value of forgiveness.

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| Instructor | Dr. Katie Stockdale (katiestockdale@uvic.ca) |
| Office Hours | CLE B312, Tuesday & Wednesday, 1:30 – 2:30 and by appointment. |
| Communication | You are welcome to visit me in office hours to chat about the course or philosophy any time. If you cannot make my office hours, email me to request an appointment. My pronouns are she/her; please feel free to let me know your name/pronoun preferences as well. |
| Website | http://coursespaces.uvic.ca |
| Readings | All required readings are available on the course website. |

Evaluation:

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| Grading Scale¹ | A (Superior) | A+: 90-100; A: 85-89; A-: 80-84 |
| | B (Good) | B+: 77-79; B: 73-76; B-: 70-72 |
| | C (Adequate) | C+: 65-69; C: 60-64 |
| | D (Minimal) | 50-59 |
| | F (Inadequate) | 0-49 |
| Assignments | Discussion Questions (x10) | 40% Throughout the course. |
| | Commentaries (x3) | 30% Throughout the course. |
| | Final Essay | 30% April 6. |
| | <i>Graduate and law students:</i> one commentary will be in the form of a 10-minute presentation to the class. | |
| Lateness & Make-ups | Late final papers without a documented illness or other serious personal circumstances will be deducted 5% per day (including weekend days) for 4 days following the deadline after which they will receive a 0. Since students choose their own commentary/discussion question due dates, no late commentaries or discussion questions will be accepted. | |

¹ For further detail, see <https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2019-05/undergrad/info/regulations/grading.html>.

Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD) as soon as possible. The RCSD staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations <http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Technology

Some of you may require the use of technology in the classroom, so laptops are permitted. However, cell phones should be off. Students who use cell phones in the classroom will be called out and asked to put them away.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individual or group work. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust, and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

The responsibility of the institution

Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

The responsibility of the student

Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student's transcript, or a suspension.

It is your responsibility to understand the University's policy on academic integrity.²

Territory Acknowledgement: The University of Victoria is committed to acknowledging and respecting the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples on whose traditional territory the University stands and whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. For information about support for Indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement.

² For more information, see <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2012/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html>.

Course schedule: (Complete the readings *prior* to coming to class!)

Part 1: Responsibility & Blame

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| Week 1 | Jan. 7 | Welcome to the course! |
| | Jan. 8 | Peter Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment" |
| | Jan. 10 | Reactive Attitudes, Continued |
| Week 2 | Jan. 14 | Robert Adams, "Involuntary Sins" |
| | Jan. 15 | Shannon Sullivan, "The Hearts and Guts of White People: Ethics, Ignorance, and the Physiology of White Racism" |
| | Jan. 17 | Responsibility for Character, Continued |
| Week 3 | Jan. 21 | Claudia Card, "Responsibility and Moral Luck" |
| | Jan. 22 | Cheshire Calhoun, "Responsibility and Reproach" |
| | Jan. 24 | Responsibility and Oppression, Continued |
| Week 4 | Jan. 28 | T.M. Scanlon, "Interpreting Blame" |
| | Jan. 29 | Susan Wolf, "Blame, Italian Style" |
| | Jan. 31 | The Nature of Blame, Continued |

Part 2: Anger

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| Week 5 | Feb. 4 | <i>Last day for submitting commentary 1.</i> Robert C. Solomon, "Anger as a way of Engaging with the World" |
| | Feb. 5 | Marilyn Frye, "A Note on Anger" |
| | Feb. 7 | Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism" |
| Week 6 | Feb. 11 | Amia Srinivasan, "The Aptness of Anger" |
| | Feb. 12 | Glen Pettigrove, "Meekness and Moral Anger" |
| | Feb. 14 | Evaluating Anger, Continued |
| Week 7 | Feb. 17-21 | READING BREAK (!!) |
| Week 8 | Feb. 25 | Marguerite La Caze, "Envy and Resentment" |
| | Feb. 26 | <i>Last day for submitting commentary 2.</i> Alice MacLachlan, "Unreasonable Resentments" |
| | Feb. 28 | Resentment, Continued |
| Week 9 | Mar. 3 | Sue Campbell, "Being Dismissed: The Politics of Emotional Dismissal" |
| | Mar. 4 | Katie Stockdale, "Losing Hope: Injustice and Moral Bitterness" |
| | Mar. 6 | Bitterness, Continued |

Part 3: Forgiveness

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| Week 10 | Mar. 10 | Jeffrie G. Murphy, "Forgiveness and Resentment" |
| | Mar. 11 | Pamela Hieronymi, "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness" |
| | Mar. 13 | The Nature of Forgiveness, Continued |
| Week 11 | Mar. 17 | Judith Boss, "Is Refusing to Forgive a Vice?" |
| | Mar. 18 | <i>Last day for submitting commentary 3.</i> Rachel Flowers, "Refusal to Forgive: Indigenous Women's Love and Rage" |
| | Mar. 20 | Refusing to Forgive, Continued |

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| Week 12 | Mar. 24 | Cheshire Calhoun, "Changing One's Heart" |
| | Mar. 25 | Alice MacLachlan, "Practicing Imperfect Forgiveness" |
| | Mar. 27 | Aspirational and Imperfect Forgiveness, Continued |
| Week 13 | Mar. 31 | Glen Pettigrove, "The Standing to Forgive" |
| | Apr. 1 | Katie Stockdale, "Collective Forgiveness" (work in progress) |
| | Apr. 3 | Expanding Forgiveness, Continued |
| | Apr. 6 | <i>Final paper due.</i> |