



Metaethics | PIU33112

Year	Junior Sophister
ECTS Credits	10
Contact Hours	22 hours (22, one-hour lectures)
Pre-requisite	None
Semester	2
Module Leader & Lecturer	Dr Farbod Akhlaghi
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Module Outline:

The chances are that you have some views about the nature of morality. Perhaps you think morality is all a matter of your own personal opinion; that objective moral truths depend upon the existence and commands of a deity; or even that there are no moral truths. These and other views about the nature of morality are investigated in meta-ethics. In this course, we will undertake a journey together through some major meta-ethical debates. After asking whether morality really does depend upon a deity, and whether some form of relativism about morality is plausible, we will encounter some other contemporary meta-ethical debates: how we got here and what some of the main views on the table are. Then, we will dive into three sets of issues, aiming to deepen our understanding of these debates. First, we will explore some families of views that reject how meta-ethical debates have been set up. Second, we will ask searching questions that challenge meta-ethical battle lines: whether it is immoral to be a moral realist, whether we should take seriously thinking that all moral claims are false, and whether ethical theorising requires certain meta-ethical assumptions. Third, we will investigate the nature of moral inquiry, moral explanation, and moral understanding, and what they might teach us about morality more generally.

Assessment:

Coursework: two essays (one midterm, one end-of-term essay) – 50%

Examination: one examination (end of module) – 50%

Recommended Reading List:

An extensive and detailed reading list will be made available at the start of the module. The following resources offer helpful preparatory reading.



For a good introductory overview of meta-ethics, see:

- Chrisman, Matthew. (2023). *What is this thing called Metaethics?* Abingdon: Routledge.

For a more advanced introduction to meta-ethics, see:

- Miller, Alexander. (2013). *Contemporary Metaethics: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Polity.

For a helpful edited volume with articles surveying contemporary meta-ethical debates, see:

- McPherson, Tristram. & Plunkett, David. (2017, Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Metaethics*. Abingdon: Routledge.