

Contractualism

Course Number/Semester

Location: TBD

Office Hours: TBD

Instructor: Ekin Zeytinoglu

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Course Description

This course will be a graduate-level introduction to T.M. Scanlon's contractualism. Scanlon presents and develops his moral theory in part by discussing various substantive moral issues: aggregation, the nature of promising, the relevance of intention to permissibility, the importance of choice, the content of blame, and others. In addition to reading Scanlon, we will also read other authors who either serve as interlocutors to Scanlon or discuss and develop—sympathetically and critically—Scanlon's own proposals. An overarching question in the background will be whether Scanlon's separation of "permissibility" and "meaning" in *Moral Dimensions* is compatible with his contractualism as outlined in *What We Owe to Each Other*.

Course Requirements

Reading responses: 20%

Short paper (5-7 pp): 20% (due: TBD)

Seminar paper (15-20 pp): 60% (draft due TBD; due TBD)

Responses

Enrolled students are required to submit, for weeks 2-12, two questions or comments about some part of the reading assigned for that week. Your submission should clearly present the argument or issue that interests you. Submission are due TBD and should not exceed a page. I expect each participant to have a look at all of the submissions before we meet.

Papers

The short paper should pose and briefly address a (small) problem. You should write this paper for an audience unfamiliar with the course. Each student enrolled for a letter grade is also required to write a seminar paper. I encourage submitting a draft although it is not required. If you send me a draft by TBD, I will return it back to you by TBD. If you are taking the course for pass/fail, you need not submit a final paper.

The last two weeks are reserved for presentations. This will be an opportunity for each student taking the course for a letter grade to workshop their final paper. Presentations are required but not graded.

Schedule

- Week I — Different contractualisms
 - Rawls, “Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory”
 - Gauthier, *Morals by Agreement* (selections)
- Week II— Intro to Scanlon’s contractualism
 - Scanlon, “Contractualism and Utilitarianism”
 - Scanlon, *WWOEO*, Introduction
- Week III — The setup
 - Scanlon, *WWOEO*, ch.1 (read quickly)
 - Scanlon, *WWOEO*, ch.2 (pay specific attention to section 6, pp. 103-7)
 - Optional, Ebels-Duggan, “Buckpassing and Value of Persons” (draft)
 - Scanlon, *WWOEO*, ch.3
- Week IV — Wrongness and Motivation
 - Scanlon, *WWOEO*, ch.4
 - Hieronymi, “Of Metaethics and Motivation”
- Week V — Details and Structure of Contractualism
 - Scanlon, *WWOEO*, ch.5
 - Kumar, “Contractualism on Saving the Many”
 - Optional: Otsuka, “Scanlon and the claims of the many versus the one”
 - Optional: Kumar, “Contractualism on the Shoal of Aggregation”
- Week VI — An application: Promising
 - Scanlon, *WWOEO*, ch. 7
 - Shiffrin, “Promising, Intimate Relationships, and Conventionalism”
 - Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, sec. 52
- Week VII — Intention and Permissibility
 - Scanlon, *MD*, ch.1
 - Scanlon, *MD*, pp. 37-52
 - Thomson, *The Realm of Rights*, pp. 229-237
 - Optional: Thomson, “Self-defense”
- Week VIII — Another Application: Meaning and Permissibility
 - Scanlon, *MD*, pp. 52-88

- Smith, “Guilty Thoughts”
- Week IX — Means and Ends
 - Scanlon, *MD*, ch.3
 - Optional: Korsgaard, TBD
- Week X — Yet another application: Responsibility and Blame, Part I
 - Scanlon, *WWOEO*, ch.6
 - Hieronymi, “The Force and Fairness of Blame”
- Week XI — Responsibility and Blame, Part II
 - Scanlon, *MD*, ch.4
- Week XII — Catch up and TBD
 - Depending on interest we can read the *WWOEO* chapter on Relativism, more recent literature on any of the topics we covered, or my related papers in progress
- Week XIII
 - Presentations
- Week XIV
 - Presentations