

Philosophy of Disability

Philosophy 333
Spring 2018
Carnegie 201
MW 2-3:15

Professor: Jesse Schupack
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Office: Carnegie 203C
Hours: TWR 3:30-4:30
And by appointment

Course Description

This course examines philosophical questions related to the nature of physical and cognitive disability and the challenge disability presents to many conventional views in philosophy. Topics include assessing different medical, social, and philosophical models of disability; epistemological questions regarding assessing the testimony of people with disabilities; ethical questions concerning causing and preventing disability and the relation between disability and moral standing; and metaphysical questions about the relation of cognitive disability to concepts of agency.

Breakdown of Grade

Breakdown of Grade		Scale			
Participation	10%	A	93+	C+	77-80
Presentations (x3)	30%	A-	90-93	C	73-77
Papers (x3)	60%	B+	87-90	C-	70-73
		B	83-87	D	60-70
		B-	80-83	F	<60

Required Texts

Elizabeth Barnes, *The Minority Body*
Eva Feder Kittay and Licia Carlson, eds., *Cognitive Disability and its Challenge to Moral Philosophy*

Papers

Writing assignments must be submitted to me by email as Word documents. You will be writing a medium-length paper (1500-2000 words) on three of the five units. It is your choice which units you write on, and you may write on them out of order. You must have turned in one by the beginning of Spring Break, a second by April 15th, and a third by the end of the last day of the semester (May 3rd).

Presentations

Beginning in week 3, on each day of class there will be a student presenter who kicks things off by giving a brief presentation (to be submitted to me by email by noon the day of class). The presentation should select an argument from the reading, restate the argument and explain why it is important to the author's project, and then offer an objection. Suggested length: 300-500 words. Note: Though you will be turning in a written version of your presentation your actual presentation should be a *presentation* of your ideas, and not just a read-through of what you have written.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Philosophical Background

Week 1	Wed, Jan 17	Introduction
Week 2	Mon, Jan 22 Wed, Jan 24	Aristotle, <i>Physics</i> II.1-8 Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i> II.1-8, <i>Nic. Ethics</i> I.1-7
Week 3	Mon, Jan 29 Wed, Jan 31	Nakul Krishna, "Is Goodness Natural?" Philippa Foot, <i>Natural Goodness</i> , Ch. 3 Alasdair MacIntyre, <i>Dependent Rational Animals</i> , Ch. 11

Unit 2: Mere Difference Views

Week 4	Mon, Feb 5 Wed, Feb 7	David Hume, <i>Treatise of Human Nature</i> , excerpts Ron Amundson, "Against Normal Function" Elizabeth Barnes, <i>The Minority Body</i> , Introduction and Ch. 1, pp. 1-24
Week 5	Mon, Feb 12 Wed, Feb 14	Barnes, <i>Minority Body</i> , Ch. 1 (finish) Barnes, <i>Minority Body</i> , Ch. 2
Week 6	Mon, Feb 19	Barnes, <i>Minority Body</i> , Ch. 3

Unit 3: Epistemological Puzzles

	Wed, Feb 21	Miranda Fricker, <i>Epistemic Injustice</i> , Introduction and Ch. 1
Week 7	Mon, Feb 26 Wed, Feb 28	Barnes, <i>Minority Body</i> , Ch. 4 Sara Goering, "'You say you're happy, but...': Contested quality of life judgments in bioethics and disability studies" L.A. Paul, "What You Can't Expect When You're Expecting"
Week 8	Mon, Mar 5 Wed, Mar 7	Harriet McBryde Johnson, "Unspeakable Conversations" Film: <i>Sound and Fury</i>
Week 9	Mon, Mar 12 Wed, Mar 14	Elizabeth Harman, "'I'll be glad I did it' reasoning and the significance of future desires" Elizabeth Barnes, <i>The Minority Body</i> , Ch. 6 Jim Sinclair, "Don't Mourn for Us"

Spring Break

Unit 4: Bad Difference Views and Ethical Puzzles

Week 10	Mon, Mar 26 Wed, Mar 28	Peter Singer, "Speciesism and Moral Status" Shelly Kagan, "What's Wrong With Speciesism?" and Singer, "Why Speciesism is Wrong: A Response to Kagan"
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Week 11	Mon, Apr 2	Jeff McMahan, "Cognitive Disability, Misfortune, and Justice" and "The morality of screening for disability"
	Wed, Apr 4	Derek Parfit, "The Non-Identity Problem"
Week 12	Mon, Apr 9	Barnes, <i>Minority Body</i> , Ch. 5
	Wed, Apr 11	Jennifer Bartlett, "Disability and the right to Choose" Jenn Gann, "Fighting for My Son With Cystic Fibrosis" Chris Gabbard, "A Life Beyond Reason"

Unit 5: The Problem of Cognitive Disability

Week 13	Mon, Apr 16	Carlson and Kittay, <i>Cognitive Disability and Its Challenge to Moral Philosophy</i> , Intro.
	Wed, Apr 18	Oliver Wendell Holmes, Decision in <i>Buck v. Bell</i> Martha Nussbaum, "The Capabilities of People with Cognitive Disabilities"
Week 14	Mon, Apr 23	David Shoemaker, "Responsibility, Agency, and Cognitive Disability"
	Wed, Apr 25	O. Carter Snead, "Cognitive Neuroscience and the Future of Punishment"
Week 15	Mon, Apr 30	Anna Stubblefield, "The Entanglement of Race and Cognitive Disability"
	Wed, May 2	Eva Kittay, "The Moral Significance of Being Human"