



PHIL 132: ETHICAL THEORY

FALL 2021

W 3:00-5:45
On Zoom
Prof. Karin Brown

This is a core course in philosophy. We will read major ethical theories, such as Virtue Ethics, Kantianism, Utilitarianism, Contractarianism, Meta-ethics, Feminist Ethics and Buddhist Ethics.

We will raise questions such as: Should morality be based on religion or can it be secularly derived? If morality is indeed secularly derived, is it relative or universal? Why should one be moral, particularly if doing the right thing is contrary to one's self interest? How do we come to know what is right or wrong? What motivates people to action: reason, sentiments, one's character or moral emotions? We will also consider an applied moral issue such as the purpose of punishment.

All the readings will be posted on canvas. The reading selections will include: Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Buddhist Ethics, Kant, Mill, G. E. Moore, Virginia Held and Julia Annas.