

Hope and Imagination in Moral Revolutions

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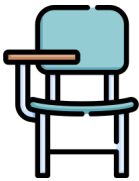
Instructor: Maggie Fife

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Room: 17 Lex room 1003

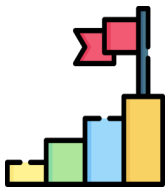
Office Hours: Fridays 12pm-1pm, Vertical campus room 5-260B, or by appointment.



Course Description:

What is the role of hope and imagination in social or political movements? Many pressing issues today, from criminal justice reform to the ongoing climate crisis, are overwhelming in their scope; they require coordinated structural change as well as a shift in moral perspectives. Given the complex nature of structural injustice, how do we understand and work towards social progress? This course will explore a number of topics related to hope, political imagination, moral revolutions, and social activism. Course texts will come from social/political philosophy, metaethics, and social epistemology, and will largely come from the Western philosophical tradition.

This is a capstone course for philosophy majors and minors. It is to be taken after completion of 9 credit hours in philosophy, including two 3000-level philosophy courses. Capstones involve thorough study of a philosophical problem, author, major text, or school of thought and require composition of a seminar paper and an oral presentation.



Learning Goals:

This course should help students:

- Cultivate critical thinking and argumentation skills.
- Enhance reading comprehension skills and gain confidence in their own ability to understand difficult texts.
- Strengthen college-level writing and research skills through informal and formal writing assignments.
- Synthesize and communicate dense texts to the class.
- Facilitate class discussion by asking thought-provoking questions.
- Approach both academic texts and differing views charitably through socratic dialogue, and reflect on the impact an individual's place in society has on their views.



Required texts:

All readings and supplemental materials will be posted on Brightspace.



Requirements/Grading:

Attendance and participation – **20%**

4 reading responses/argument maps – **20% total** (5% each)

1 reading presentation – **20%**

Capstone paper: **40% total**

- Paper proposal/mini literature review: 10%
- Rough draft: 10%
- In class peer review: 5%
- Final draft: 15%



Our Classroom Community and Policies:

A respectful environment is necessary for learning. As members of this classroom community, we must all do our part to build a respectful and inclusive space. I do not tolerate discrimination of any kind. We will discuss some sensitive and divisive topics, and I encourage you to approach differing views with openness and charitability.

Furthermore, I have the following expectations:

- Arrive on time.
- Complete each reading before class, and bring the reading to class.
- Attendance is required and reflected in your grade. You may miss 2 class sessions without penalty. More than two absences may impact your grade subject to my discretion.
- Actively participate in class discussions. Challenge yourself: If you are someone who has trouble speaking up, come with one question or comment prepared. If you are someone who speaks a lot in class, challenge yourself by stepping back and listening to others' comments. Informal writing and class activities will be incorporated into your participation grade.
- Tech policy: no cell phones or headphones are permitted in class. Laptop use is allowed as long as it does not interfere with our discussion. I will reconsider the laptop policy if I find it is distracting.
- Make-up policy and extensions:

- ↳ Extensions on elements of the final paper (excluding the rough draft and peer review) will be considered if requested 48 hours in advance.
- ↳ No late reading responses/argument maps will be accepted. One make-up reading response/argument map will be considered for a different reading.
- ↳ If an emergency comes up and you must miss class on the day of your scheduled presentation, please communicate with me as soon as possible and we will come up with an alternative.
- We commit to integrity in this course by properly crediting the ideas of others. Familiarize yourself with Baruch's [Academic Honesty](#) policy and [plagiarism tutorial](#). I reserve the right to report any suspected instance of cheating or plagiarism to Baruch's disciplinary committee for action.
- Use of artificial intelligence: Learning to use AI is an emerging skill, and you should be aware of its benefits and current limitations. However, there will be little use for generative AI in this class. For your final paper, you will be asked to identify if and when you used AI and cite it properly. Only reasonable use of AI will be accepted. We will discuss this more throughout the semester.



Accessibility:

I try to make my class accessible, but it's possible I've missed something. Please let me know what I can do to help you succeed. In addition to working with me, you may also find useful services at In addition to working with me, you may also seek out various campus services like the [Writing Center](#), [Disability Services](#), [Student Academic Consulting Center](#), [Baruch Technology Loan Program](#), etc.).



Need help?

If you find any aspect of this course challenging, please come talk to me. There are many reasons someone might have a hard time: some people find organizing their thoughts in writing challenging, others might find philosophical readings unusual and hard to follow—they often are! I can help with these and other challenges.



Course Schedule:

Schedule is subject to change with reasonable notice.

Topic	Date	Reading	Due
Introductions	Fri 1/31	None	
Structural Injustice	Fri 2/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young, "Responsibility for Justice" (ch. 2 and ch. 4 excerpts) 	
	Fri 2/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zheng, "What is My Role in Changing the System?" Brownstein, Madva, and Kelly, "Individualism, Structuralism, and Climate Change" 	Argument map 1: Zheng
Social Movements	Fri 2/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moody-Adams Ch. 3 "Social Movements and the Moral Life" 	
Moral Revolutions	Fri 2/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pleasants, "Moral Argument is Not Enough" Anderson, "Social Epistemology of Morality: Learning from the Forgotten History of the Abolition of Slavery" 	Reading response 1: Anderson
Hope	Fri 3/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blöser, "Hope in Political Philosophy" Stockdale, "Hope, Solidarity, Justice" 	Argument map 2: Stockdale
	Fri 3/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moody-Adams Ch. 7 "The Empire of Affect and the Challenge of Collective Hope" Moody-Adams Ch. 8 "Hope and History" 	
	Fri 3/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sullivan, "Setting Aside Hope" Norlock, "Perpetual Struggle" 	
Prison Abolition and Reform	Fri 3/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davis, "Are Prisons Obsolete?" excerpts 	Reading response 2: Davis
	Fri 4/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelby Ch. 5 "Responding to Crime: Incarceration and it's Alternatives" Shelby Ch. 6 "Dreaming Big: Utopian Imagination and Structural Transformation" 	
Imagination	Fri 4/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stevenson, "Twelve Conceptions of Imagination" Johnson, "Moral Imagination" 	Paper proposal/lit review

SPRING BREAK	Fri 4/18	No class	
Imagination	Fri 4/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review in class • Rebelo, et al. " 	Rough draft and in-class peer review
	Fri 5/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schwartz, "Political Imagination and its Limits" • Moody-Adams Ch. 6 "Justice and the Narrative Imagination" 	
Imagination + hope	Fri 5/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lear, "Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation" excerpts 	
FINALS WEEK	5/16-5/22	No class	Final paper due 5/16*

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