

PHI 4900, Fall 2022

Social Progress and Moral Revolutions

F 2:30-5:25

Instructor: Maggie Fife (she/her)

Email: margaretannfife@gmail.com (preferred)

mfife@gradcenter.cuny.edu

Room: Vertical Campus 9-160

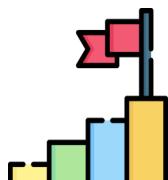
Office Hours: Mondays 2:15-3:15 room 5-272, or by appointment.



Course Description:

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 moral progress, individual and collective responsibility, and social activism. Course texts will come from social/political philosophy, metaethics, and social epistemology, and will largely come from the Western philosophical tradition.

Pre-requirements: 6 credit hours in philosophy at the 300 level.



Learning Goals:

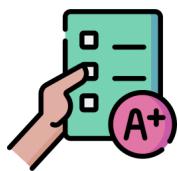
This course should help students:

- 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.



Required texts:

All readings and supplemental videos will be posted on Blackboard.



Requirements/Grading:

5 informal reading responses – 20%
1 reading presentation – 20%
Attendance/participation – 10%
Paper draft and peer review – 20%
Final paper – 30%



Our Classroom Community:

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.
- 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.
- 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.



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 8/26	None	
No class	Fri 9/2	None (no class)	
Structural Injustice and Political Responsibility	Fri 9/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Young, "Responsibility for Justice" (ch. 2 and 4 excerpts), *two presenters*	
Structuralism and the Climate Crisis	Fri 9/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Brownstein, Madva, and Kelly, "Individualism, Structuralism, and Climate Change"Eckersley, "Responsibility for Climate Change as a Structural Injustice"	
Moral Progress	Fri 9/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Jamieson, "Slavery, Carbon, and Moral Progress"Moody-Adams, "Moral Progress and Human Agency"	
Moral Revolutions	Fri 9/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Appiah, "Suppressing Atlantic Slavery"Eriksen, "The Dynamics of Moral Revolutions"	
Moral Epistemology and History	Fri 10/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Anderson "Social Epistemology of Morality: Learning from the Forgotten History of the Abolition of Slavery"Lowe "Study of Moral Revolutions"	
Hope	Fri 10/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stockdale, "Hope, Solidarity, and Justice"Blöser, "Hope in Political Philosophy"	
Against Hope	Fri 10/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sullivan, "Setting Aside Hope: A Pragmatist Approach to Racial Justice"Warren, "Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope" excerpts	
Solidarity	Fri 10/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cherry, "Solidarity Care"Scholz, "Feminist Political Solidarity"	Paper topic (email me)
Prison Abolition and Restorative Justice	Fri 11/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Davis, "Are Prisons Obsolete?" excerptsZehr, "Justice Paradigm Shift? Values and Visions in the Reform Process"	

<i>Peer Review</i>	Fri 11/11	None	Draft and in-class peer review
Utopia and Imagination	Fri 11/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Curtis, "Rehabilitating Utopia: Feminist Science Fiction and Finding the Ideal" ● Lear, "Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation" excerpts 	
No class	Fri 11/25	None (no class)	
Reparations and Repair	Fri 12/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TBD ● TBD 	
Activism and Protest	Fri 12/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TBD 	
Wrap up	Fri 12/16	None	Final paper

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