

PHILOSOPHY 4B03/6B03: Theory of Value
Term 1 (Fall) 2017-18
Class meets: Mondays, 11.30-2, JHE 329

Instructor: Dr. Elisabeth Gedge
E-mail: gedge@mcmaster.ca
Office: UH 303
Office hours: Mondays, 2.30-3.30

Course description:

In this course we will explore Margaret Urban Walker's 'expressive-collaborative' approach to naturalized ethics, with particular attention to her treatment of moral repair. In *Moral Understandings*, Walker construes morality as a set of practices of responsibility, whose participants are accountable to one another. Nonetheless, inequalities among participants in moral relationships jeopardize standing, authority, voice and wellbeing. Practices of moral repair, such as reparative justice, aim to rectify such damage, and to create, restore and stabilize moral relationships. We will critically assess Walker's approach by bringing it into dialogue with the recommendations made in *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will have learned to discern the relevance of social/historical positioning to the understanding of ethics, to identify strategies of critique, and to critically assess efforts to rectify historical injustices.

Required Reading - sections of:

Margaret Urban Walker: *Moral Understandings: A Feminist Study in Ethics* (2nd edition), Oxford UP, 2007.
Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations after Wrongdoing. Cambridge UP, 2006.
What is Reparative Justice? The Aquinas Lectures. Marquette UP, 2010.
Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future. Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 2015.

http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf

Method of Assessment

| | |
|--|-------|
| Weekly reading summaries (approx. 1 page): 10/12 weeks | - 10% |
| Seminar presentations | - 30% |
| Paper outline (due November 6) | - 10% |
| Major paper (due December 11) | - 50% |

The purpose of the weekly reading **summaries** is to ensure that students come to the seminar ready to discuss the material in an informed and critical manner. The summary should include a question for discussion by the group. Reading summaries will be handed in immediately after class or submitted electronically before class. If you hand in your summary on time you automatically receive 1%.

At the first class we will collectively assign dates and topics for the **seminar presentations**. Each presentation will be based on the reading for the week, and should engage the class in a critical discussion of the ideas presented. The grade will be determined by the accuracy of the textual interpretation, and the depth and interest of the critique presented. The emphasis in the presentation should be on critical discussion rather than exposition, since it is assumed all students will have read the material for the week. It is likely that students will want to use the presentation as a basis for the major paper.

An **outline** of the proposed major paper is due by November 6. Each student will send me her/his outline in advance of an appointment to discuss it. The outline should describe the critical aim of the paper and sketch the argument to be taken. If secondary materials are to be used these should be identified.

The **major paper** should be 8-12 pages for 4B students, 12-15 pages for 6B students. Students may submit drafts of their essay for review prior to November 27. Papers may be submitted in person or by email.

Policy on Missed Work, Extensions, and Late Penalties

Course assignments must be met on the due dates, unless permission for an extension has been granted by the instructor. Extensions may be granted for legitimate reasons (eg. medical or personal exigencies). Late assignments will be penalized by 5% a day (included weekends). Students are expected to attend and participate in each class.

Topics and Readings

September 11: Introductions, seminar assignments, *Moral Understandings*
Chapter 1 (*The Subject of Moral Philosophy*)
Chapter 2 (*The Subject of Moral Philosophy; Where Do Moral Theories ...*)

September 18: *Moral Understandings* Chapter 3 (*Authority and Transparency*)

September 25: *Moral Understandings* Chapter 4 (*Charting Responsibilities*)

October 2: *Moral Understandings*
Chapter 5 (*Picking Up Pieces: Lives, Stories and Integrity*)
Chapter 6 (*Career Selves*)

October 9: THANKSGIVING No class

October 16: *Moral Understandings*
Chapter 7 (*Made a Slave, Born a Woman*)
Chapter 8 (*Unnecessary Identities*)

- October 23:** *Moral Understandings*
Chapter 9 (*The Politics of Transparency*)
Chapter 10 (*Peripheral Visions, Critical Practice*)
- October 30:** *Moral Repair* Chapter 1 (*What Is Moral Repair?*)
- November 6:** *Honouring the Truth: The Legacy* (pp.135-183)
- November 13:** *Moral Repair* Chapter 3 (*Damages to Trust*)
- November 20:** *Moral Repair* Chapter 6 (*Making Amends*)
- November 27:** *What Is Reparative Justice?* (It's a short book)
- December 4:** *Honouring the Truth: The Challenge of Reconciliation* (pp.183-319)

Please Note the Following Policies and Statements:

Academic Dishonesty

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Email correspondence policy

It is the policy of the Faculty of Humanities that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from each student's own McMaster University email account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. Instructors will delete emails that do not originate from a McMaster email account.

Modification of course outlines

The University reserves the right to change dates and/or deadlines etc. for any or all courses in the case of an emergency situation or labour disruption or civil unrest/disobedience, etc. If a modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. Any significant changes should be made in consultation with the Department Chair.

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work. Please note these regulations have changed beginning Fall 2015. You can find information at mcmaster.ca/msaf/. If you have any questions about the MSAF, please contact your Associate Dean's office.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religion and spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the Course Calendar or by their respective Faculty. In most cases, the student should contact his or her professor or academic advisor as soon as possible to arrange accommodations for classes, assignments, tests and examinations that might be affected by a religious holiday or spiritual observance.