

**PHIL542**  
**EXPLAINING MORAL NORMS syllabus draft**  
**W 11:30-2, NN204**

Professor: Mark Murphy  
Office: 235 New North  
Office Hours: M 11:15-12:30, W 10:15-11,  
and by appointment

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***Course description***

The course is called ‘Explaining Moral Norms’ because that is the title I wanted when Wayne asked for our course requests. I can now be more specific. Anyway, I think I am being more specific. What I want to think about this semester is the explanation of moral *laws*. Here we have three tasks. The first is to get clearer on what it is for something to be a moral law. (How far can we shed light on the concept of a moral law by looking at the state of the discussion of the concept of a law of nature? How far can we shed light on the concept of a moral law by looking at the state of the discussion of the concept of a civil law?) The second is to get clearer on what sorts of explanation are available with respect to moral norms. And the third is to consider some different substantive accounts of moral law.

***Course format***

The course format will be genuine seminar style. We’ll have to do a special session outside of our scheduled time because Mark Schroeder, one of the authors we’re reading, will be coming for a colloquium talk and has agreed to meet with our seminar.

***Course requirements***

I’ll assign a few days for folks to lead discussions; everyone will present a draft of his or her final paper in class; everyone will comment on the draft of another seminar member; and everyone will write a standard 20-30 page final course paper.

***Texts***

I have a final electronic manuscript copy of Schroeder’s *Slaves of the Passions*. The other readings will come from a big stack that will be on the white shelf in NN209 with my name on it.

***Consulting***

I’m around on Mondays, Wednesdays, and usually Fridays. I’m almost never around on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I also check e-mail frequently.

## READING SCHEDULE

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading for class</b>
9/5	The questions	Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy"; Diamond, "The Dog Who Gave Himself the Moral Law"
9/12	Moral law and laws of nature	Lewis, <i>Counterfactuals</i> excerpt; Dretske, "Laws of Nature"; Loewer, "Humean Supervenience"; Beebe, "The Non-Governing Conception of the Laws of Nature"; Lance and Little, "Where the Laws Are"
9/19	Moral law and laws of nature	(Continued from 9/12)
9/26	Moral law and civil law	Raz, "Authority, Law, and Morality"
10/3	Moral law: the sober truth	I aim to have something as a basis for discussion by now, Lord willing
10/10	Desire	Schroeder, <i>Slaves of the Passions</i> , chs. 1-4
10/17	Desire	Schroeder, continued, chs. 5-8, 11
10/24	Natures	Foot, <i>Natural Goodness</i> , chs. 1-5; Thompson, "The Representation of Life" and "Apprehending Human Form"
10/31	Natures	Thompson, "A Puzzle about Justice: What is It to Wrong Someone?"
11/7	God	Adams, <i>Finite and Infinite Goods</i> , chs. 1-2
11/9	SCHROEDER VISIT	
11/14	God	Adams, <i>Finite and Infinite Goods</i> , chs. 10-11, 15
11/21	Open / Presentations	
11/28	Presentations	
12/5	Presentations	