Philosophy 680 & 459 Seminar in Ethics, Spring Term, 2016
Professors: Derek Parfit and Larry Temkin
Wednesdays, 1:10-4:10 p.m., Philosophy Department Seminar Rm.
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Temkin’s Contact Info:
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   Office Hours: W. 4:20-5:30 and by appt. (subject to change)
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Important Notes:

This syllabus basically only covers the first half of the course, which will be led by Professor Temkin. The content and readings for the second half of the course, which will be led by Professor Parfit, will be announced during the first half of the course. The topics Parfit will address may include, among others: incommensurability, lexical superiority, how to avoid the Repugnant Conclusion, meta-ethics, conflicts between Act Consequentialism and Common Sense Morality, and deontological prohibitions. Students may be expected to buy one or more volumes of On What Matters. Other readings will be made available on the class website. Details of this will be announced in class.

Also, the information on this syllabus is subject to change. Variations in meeting days, times, assignments, etc. will be announced during the seminar. It is your responsibility to pay attention to announced changes, or to learn of any announced changes on days where you miss part or all of a seminar. More generally, it is your responsibility to make sure that you fully understand the expectations and requirements of this seminar.

Required Readings for the First Half of the Seminar:

   -- Inequality (I) (Larry Temkin, Oxford University Press, 1993)
   -- Material Available on the Class Website (CW)

You must have a copy of each of the required readings. Be sure to note well in advance which readings are due when, and leave sufficient time to get a copy of them and to read them carefully. Many of the readings in this seminar are long and difficult. We strongly urge that you do not leave your reading till the night before class, and that, where possible, you try to read selections (at least) twice.

Required Work:

Everyone attending this seminar—including those who are only auditing the seminar or sitting in on it—is expected to attend regularly and prepare for the seminar by doing the assigned readings in advance of the seminar when the material will be covered. It is also required that each person attending the seminar mentally prepare answers to a set of study questions for each of the readings. The study questions are listed below. In addition, each student taking the seminar for
credit must turn in written answers to the study questions for six of the seminar days—three from the Temkin portion of the seminar, and three from the Parfit portion of the seminar.

Students taking the course for credit must write two 9-11 page papers. One paper must be on the Temkin material, and one paper must be on the Parfit material. You must discuss your paper topic with us before writing your paper. In particular, students will be expected to submit a short outline, or proposal, of each paper in advance of writing it. In addition, all students writing papers must submit a first draft of each paper, which we will comment on. You will be expected to make any necessary revisions, in light of our comments, before handing in the final version of each paper.

Your grade will depend mainly on your performance on the papers. However, regular attendance is mandatory for those taking the class for credit. In addition, all students taking the class for credit are required to prepare diligently for class, and are expected to constructively participate during discussions. Such factors will be taken into account when arriving at your final grade. Moreover, you may be asked to lead class discussion, either individually or as part of a group. The details of this, and our grading policies, will be explained during class and, as noted above, it is your responsibility to make sure you fully understand them. If you have any questions about any of this, ASK US!!!

We fully expect this to be a TERRIFIC seminar. Have fun and learn lots. LT and DP

Schedule (like everything else, subject to change):

REQUIRED READING:

Session One. W. January 20. Introduction. Also, presentation and discussion of “Equality as Comparative Fairness” (CW1).

Session Two. W. January 27. “Equality, Priority, and the Levelling Down Objection” (CW2) and “Egalitarianism Defended” (CW3).

Session Three. W. February 3. I, Preface and Chs. 1 & 2 (pp. vii-ix, 3-52).

Session Four. W. February 10. I, Chs. 5 & 6, (pp. 118-190).

Session Five. W. February 17. I, Chs. 7 & 8, (pp. 191-244).

Session Six. W. February 24. “Inequalities in Health” (CW4) and “Fairness and Priority Setting in Healthcare” (CW5) and Intro and Implications of “Equality and the Human Condition” (CW6) and Part II Section E. of “Egalitarianism: A Complex, Individualistic, and Comparative Notion” (CW7)

Session Seven. W. March 2. “A Few Concerns about Bioethics” (CW8) and “The Many Faces of Equal Opportunity (CW9).

Wed. March 9—NO CLASS, but work on first paper and start reading for first session after the break.
Wed. March 16—Rutgers Break. Relax, Get Away, Enjoy Yourself, but FINISH Paper and continue preparing for first session after the break.

Session Eight.  W. March 23.  TBA
Session Nine.  W. March 30.  TBA
Session Ten.  W. April 6.  TBA
Session Eleven.  W. April 13.  TBA
Session Twelve.  W. April 20.  TBA
Session Thirteen.  W. April 27.  TBA
Session Fourteen.  W. May 4.  TBA

Study Questions

ALL CLASS MEMBERS: Please mentally prepare answers to the following questions prior to each seminar.

THOSE TAKING THE CLASS FOR CREDIT: Please write up your answers to each of the following questions in ~2 typewritten pages, for six total classes, three on the Temkin material before the break, and three on the Parfit material after the break. Note, each homework should focus on just ONE of the chapters or papers assigned for a given session. Pick the chapter or article that you find most interesting or important, or the one about which you have the most to say.

1. What is the central claim the author is making? (If there are many, focus on the one that you think is most interesting or important.)
2. What is (are) the main argument(s) the author presents in support of his or her position?
3. What are the main objections or worries you have about the author's claims or arguments?
4. What topic, argument, or passage do you feel it would be most beneficial to explore further in class? (This might be something you find especially interesting and important, or something you think important but find particularly confusing.)

If you have a disability that requires special consideration, please be sure to discuss this matter with me during the first few weeks of class.

Also, Rutgers University now requires that we append the following information to EVERY syllabus. I apologize for how unwieldy it makes this syllabus, but I agree that in those cases where it is needed, such information can be VERY important, indeed, in extreme cases, even lifesaving. Hopefully, none of you will need this information, but just in case…
Student-Wellness Services:

Just In Case Web App
http://codu.co/cee05e
Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)
(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / rhscaps.rutgers.edu/
CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students’ efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)
(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / vpva.rutgers.edu/
The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Disability Services
(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / https://ods.rutgers.edu/
The Office of Disability Services works with students with a documented disability to determine the eligibility of reasonable accommodations, facilitates and coordinates those accommodations when applicable, and lastly engages with the Rutgers community at large to provide and connect students to appropriate resources.

Scarlet Listeners
(732) 247-5555 / http://www.scarletlisteners.com/
Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.