

Course Syllabus

Institut des Études Politiques Saint Germain

ETHICS AND MORAL REASONING IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Fall 2019

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Lectures: Mondays, 10.00-12.00, Room D-310

Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW:

In recent decades, attention to the moral dimension of international affairs has risen. Greater interdependence affects state sovereignty, creating new sources of insecurity and threats to peace. Repeated conflicts (Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, the Palestinian Territories, Central Africa), the 9/11 attacks, security threats posed by failed states, the displacement of millions of refugees and internally displaced persons, human rights violations, climate change, and the spread of environmental damage have led to questioning the place of moral concerns and imperatives in international politics.

This raises the question: Where do the norms for ethical behavior and considerations of right and wrong fit into decision-making and intervention in international affairs?

This course explores the limits and possibilities of intervention in an increasingly uncertain, interdependent, and unequal world. It discusses parameters and principles that can guide decision-makers when choosing among values, weighing priorities, and responding to tradeoffs. Challenges addressed include: 'just war' and the use of force; limits and opportunities of humanitarian intervention; distributive justice amid poverty; the role of business in world affairs; duties for tackling the global environmental tragedy; and strategic ethics in public service.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

This course is mandatory for a Master's in Politics and International Cooperation.

Prerequisites: The flexibility to apply concepts gleaned from the readings to practical situations decision-makers face. There are no other formal prerequisites.

Expectations: The course demands time, effort, and written analysis. Weekly assignments and a final project are required. You are expected to be prepared for each class. It is essential that you conscientiously do the readings and prepare for and carry out your role in the case

studies and exercises and be ready to make thoughtful contributions. Failure to prepare for the class will hurt your class participation grade.

Attendance: Class attendance is strictly mandatory. Absences will be excused for medical or family emergencies. Students are expected to schedule interviews, routine medical appointments, and all other business around the classes. Students are also expected to attend the entire class. Late arrivals and early exits count as absences. Use of phones, laptops, tablets, and other mobile devices is prohibited during lectures, except to present group work.

Reading: This course relies extensively on modern and classical works of philosophy and politics as a point of departure for a conversation on some of the most critical dimensions of ethical decision-making. Literature, in addition to its aesthetic interest, will also be used to mirror human experience in all its complexity and ambiguity.

Case method: As part of the assigned daily reading, all lectures will include a case study. These cases are the foundation for class discussions. When discussing a case, you must deliver reasonable judgments and make appropriate references to the principles, criteria, or theories discussed in the course.

Assessment and grade distribution: There are three ways to demonstrate your mastery of the course material:

- 1) *Class participation:* as a function of both the quantity and quality of your contributions in lectures, tutorial meetings, and the online community (30% of the final grade).
- 2) *Weekly policy debate:* As part of a team, you will imagine yourself in the role of a “protagonist” (typically a seasoned decision-maker) acting as a senior official facing sudden adversity, a problem out of the ordinary that requires a ‘hard choice’ that determines the fate of your organization/government and affects people’s lives. The policy debate is based on the case study assigned for the week. After carefully reading the case, you must work in an assigned group to closely examine the problems and available options. You are required to come to class prepared to make solid and convincing arguments with rhetorical flair (40% of your final grade); and
- 3) *End-of-term project:* To be prepared as part of your assigned group (30% of the final grade).

Books and course materials: All readings are in the list below.

ADDENDUM:

Addendum 1: It is impossible to teach a course examining ethical decisions, especially one that aims to engage the world on its terms and not to retreat into the abstract, that only regularly touches upon issues that will be challenging for some students. Part of our task is to learn how to discuss these topics productively. A non-negotiable norm will be to create a safe space to tackle these matters. Safe, however, does not mean avoiding difficult, troubling, upsetting, unsettling, and sometimes emotionally charged topics. Great care will be taken to confront these issues responsibly.

Addendum 2: This course assumes all students understand and comply with the code of academic integrity. Students should re-familiarize themselves with all material on academic integrity and referencing.

Addendum 3: A student needing academic adjustments or accommodations must speak with the professor at the beginning of the course. Failure to do so may result in the inability to respond promptly.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

PART 1: SHAPING THE ETHIC

1. Setting the frame: Principles of moral decision-making in international affairs

Monday, September 23

In this session, we discuss the proper place of moral concerns, imperatives, or restraints in international affairs. We seek to answer these questions: Where do norms of moral behavior, and considerations of right or wrong help arbitrate hard choices in international politics? Is there a way—even narrow—to reconcile what is usually referred to as the ‘realistic approach’ to international politics, with the demands of morality?

Required Readings:

- Sophocles, *Antigone* (37 pages)
- “The Ones Who Walked Away from Omelas”, Ursula K. Le Guin (5 pages)
- “Mr. Order Meets Mr. Chaos” (6 pages), Robert Wright, *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2001 (Finding greys in a world of black and white)

Further Suggested Reading:

- B. Eggleston, “Utilitarianism”, University of Kansas, Elsevier, 2012, pp. 452-458
- Dominique Moïsi, “The Clash of Emotions”, in *Foreign Affairs*, 1 January 2007

2. Moral and nonmoral approaches in the decision-making process

Monday, September 30

We examine principal theories of ethics and how they apply to international affairs. These theories provide the content of ethics as used in this course, as well as the terminology to describe situations in ethical terms—to see how ethics is part of the landscape for policymakers and to provide resources for leaders to defend their choices. We distinguish moral approaches to practical problems in international affairs from nonmoral approaches based on legal, historical (analogy), special interests, economic, and scientific considerations. We review normative ‘moral frameworks’ (such as utilitarian, libertarian, Aristotelian, and Kantian/Rawlsian) that can guide responses to adverse situations in world affairs.

We pose these questions: Can the din of conflicting moralities prevent us from reaching an ethical standard in international politics? Or can we agree on principles and parameters to

propose a framework to help respond to practical issues, choose between values, weigh priorities, and respond to tradeoffs?

Required Reading:

- Thierry Senechal, “Smart Decision-Making Design: A Guiding Framework for Formulating Ethical Decision in International Affairs” (6 pages)
- Elke Weber, “The Influencers of Choice and Decision Making”, in *Ecology, Ethics, and Interdependence*, Wisdom Publications, 2018, pp. 177-201 (24 pages)
- Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, “Introduction”, in *Essence of Decision*, Addison Wesley Longman, 1999, pp. 1-12 (12 pages)
- “Moral Theory, Frameworks, and the Language of Ethics and Business”, Darden Business Publishing, 2017 (10 pages)

Further Suggested Reading:

- The Queen V. Dudley and Stephens, December 9, 1884 (11 pages)
- Joshua D. Greene, R. Brian Sommerville, Leigh E. Nystrom, John M. Darley, Jonathan D. Cohen, “An fMRI Investigation of Emotional Engagement in Moral Judgment”, in *Science*, Volume 293, 14 September 2001 (4 pages)
- Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism, Ethics in a World of Strangers*, The Shattered Mirror, pp. 1-11 (11 pages)
- “Ethical Theory”, in *Ethics in Practice: An Anthology*, Wiley Blackwell, 2014, pp. 23-70
- Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, *International Norm Dynamics and Political Change*, *International Organization*, 52, No. 4 (Autumn, 1998)

Case:

- UNRWA and the Palestinian refugee crisis: Renewing the mandate or pulling funding?

PART 2: TESTING THE ETHIC

3. The Use of force and the ethics of humanitarian intervention

Monday, October 7

The problem of the use of force is central to ethics and foreign policy. We define the areas, conditions and procedures for legitimate intervention in international affairs. We argue that barriers to illegitimate interventions must be recognized. Attention will be paid analytically and historically to the “Just War/Just Defense” ethic, due to the challenges from the nonviolent tradition and modern warfare.

Required Reading:

- Leslie H. Gelb and Justine A. Rosenthal, “The Rise of Ethics in Foreign Policy: Reaching a Values Consensus”, in *Foreign Affairs*, 1 May 2003 (6 pages)
- James P. Sterba, “Hoffmann’s Kantian Justification for Humanitarian Intervention”, in *The Ethics and Politics of Humanitarian Intervention*, University of Notre Dame, 1996, pp. 87-86 (10 pages)

Further Suggested Reading:

- Immanuel Kant, Perpetual Peace, in Perpetual Peace and Other Essays, available online at: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kant/kant1.htm>
- Brian Orend, “Michael Walzer on Resorting to Force”, in Canadian Journal of Political Science, September 2000, pp. 523-547 (25 pages)
- L. P. Jacks, “An International Ethic”, in Foreign Affairs, 15 December 1924 (8 pages)
- The Ethics of War in Asian Civilizations, Edited by Torkel Brekke, Routledge 2006
- Basham Tibi, “War and Peace in Islam,” in Sohail Hashmi, ed., Islamic Political Ethics, pp. 175-193
- Bryan Hehir, Just War Theory in a Post-Cold War World, The Journal of Religious Ethics, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1992, pp. 237-257

Case:

- New Peril, Old Adversary: George W. Bush, 9/11, & Iraq (B) The Road to War

4. Justifying humanitarian intervention and promoting transitional justice

Monday, October 14

We discuss human rights as an extreme example of the difficulties in reconciling ethics and international relations. We ask these questions: Can equal importance be given to all human rights? If we consider human rights the domain of solid moral obligation, what are the duties of world leaders in the face of abuses? What are the issues related to assessing human rights violations? How do we address large-scale or systematic human rights violations when the justice system cannot respond adequately? How do we design ethical dispute resolution systems, truth-seeking, and reparation processes?

Required Reading:

- Amartya Sen, “Culture and Human Rights”, in Development as Freedom, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 227-249 (22 pages)
- Gary Haugen and Victor Boutros, “And Justice for All: Enforcing Human Rights for the World’s Poor”, in Foreign Affairs, 1 May 2010 (8 pages)

Further Suggested Reading:

- U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. online at: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>
- International Committee of the Red Cross, What Is International Humanitarian Law, online at: https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/what_is_ihl.pdf
- Ethics & International Affairs, Sri Lanka 2.0: Independent Inquiry Shows UN “Systemic Failure” in Myanmar, July 2019, <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2019/sri-lanka-2-0-independent-inquiry-shows-un-systemic-failure-in-myanmar/>
- Alexander Betts and Paul Collier, “Help Refugees, Help Themselves: Let Displaced Syrians Join the Labor Market”, in Foreign Affairs, 11 September 2015
- Samantha Power, Bystanders to Genocide, The Atlantic Monthly, September 2001, Vol. 288, No. 2, pp. 84-108.

Case:

- Fallen Idol? Aung San Suu Kyi & The Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis

5. Responsibilities in the face of poverty and the principles of distributive justice

Monday, November 4

We examine how to fairly distribute the benefits and burdens of international cooperation and especially the role of international development aid in alleviating poverty. We confront not just a debate on priorities (such as, which comes first, political or economic rights?), but fundamental disagreements about the role of international aid for the most vulnerable countries.

Required Reading:

- Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, “Think Again, Again”, *Poor Economics, Public Affairs*, 2011, pp. 1-18 (18 pages)
- Stanley Hoffmann, *Problems of Distributive Justice*, in *Duties Beyond Borders*, Syracuse University Press, 1981, pp. 141-180.
- Daniel Miller, “Sachs, Easterly and the Banality of the Aid Effectiveness Debate: Time to Move On”, in *Mapping Politics, Volume 3*, 2010-2011, pp. 72-86 (15 pages)

Further Suggested Reading:

- Charles R. Beitz, *Economic Rights and Distributive Justice in Developing Societies*, *World Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (April 1981), pp. 321-346 (26 pages)
- Mathias Risse, “Do We Owe the Global Poor Assistance or Rectification?” *Ethics and International Affairs* 19:1 (Spring 2005)
- Thomas Pogge & Mitu Sengupta, *Rethinking the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Eight Ways to End Poverty Now*, in *Global Justice: Theory Practice Rhetoric* (7) 2014

Case:

- The decision for a new governance program in the Central African Republic: Setting a priority for rehabilitation of the central state or providing essential public services to the poorest?

6. Environmental justice and climate change

Monday, November 18

Climate change presents a major ethical challenge. In recent years, several questions have arisen: Is it fair for our generation to exploit the future by taking modest benefits while passing on potentially catastrophic costs? When confronted with global warming, might we reach an optimal decision in which all human beings may not be equal, rational, or perfectly governed? Would a policy demanding significant sacrifices to the most vulnerable nations be profoundly unjust, violate fundamental rights, and do significant harm to people? Or, how do we balance the rights and responsibilities of the developed and developing world? Which moral frameworks to adopt when we take action about global climate change?

Required Reading:

- “Why Climate Change is an Ethical Problem”, *The Washington Post*, 9 January 2016
- “The Ethics of Climate Change, A primer”, *The Washington Post*, 9 January 2016

- Clare Palmer, Ethics and the Environment, in Ecology, Ethics and the Interdependence (20 pages)
- Stephen Gardiner, “A Perfect Moral Storm”, The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 19-48 (30 pages)

Further Suggested Reading:

- Ethics & International Affairs, Tackling Climate Change: Why Us Now? February 2019 (<https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2019/tackling-climate-change-why-us-now/>)

Case:

- Protecting the Amazonian Forest as a Common Good: Hard choices for intervention

7. Moral dilemmas and the limits of markets

Monday, November 25

Required Reading:

- Sozaboy, Ken Saro-Wiwa (Extracts)
- Michael J. Sandel, “What Money Can’t Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets, The Tanner Lectures on Human Values”, Oxford, 1998 (36 pages)

Further Suggested Reading:

- Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, Markets, State and Social Opportunity, pp. 111-145 (44 pages)
- Ethan B. Kapstein, The Corporate Ethics Crusade, 1 September 2001
- Michael E. Porter and Mark R. Kramer, Creating Shared Value: How to reinvent capitalism (17 pages)
- Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia, Foreword by Thomas Nagel (8 pages)

Case:

- Royal Dutch/Shell in Nigeria (A), HBS Case 9-399-126

PART 3: WRAP-UP

8. Principles of Moral Agency: Maintaining Integrity, Dealing with Corruption and Wrongdoing, Bearing the Onus for Actions, Staying Alive

Monday, December 2 (09.00-11.00)

In this session, we argue that moral decision-making in international affairs is in the art of execution; principles without practical means or awareness of possible trade-offs will remain an abstraction of little use. We debate instances of deception and wrongdoing in public affairs. We discuss the capacity for students to engage in strategic ethics in public service and how to create public value during their professional lives.

Required Reading:

- Michael Walzer, Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Winter, 1973), pp. 160-180 (20 pages)
- <http://aeon.co/magazine/philosophy/why-moral-character-is-the-key-to-personal-identity/>
- Ethical Problems in Public Careers, HKS C15-80-548 (10 pages)
- Mo Yan, *Bull* (15 pages)

Further Suggested Reading:

- Ethics Training for Public Officials, OECD, 2013, www.oecd.org/corruption/acn/resources/EthicsTrainingforPublicOfficialsBrochureEN.pdf

Case:

- Hero or Traitor? Edward Snowden and the NSA Spying Program

9. Final presentations

Monday, December 2 (11.00-13.00)

In this session, students in their assigned group's present end-of-term projects (the topic will be provided in Session 4).

Required Reading:

- Rudyard Kipling, *If* (1 page)