

## **Course Outline The Ethics of Partiality**

### Course Description:

In this course, students will learn about a few of the core issues associated with partiality in ethics. Some philosophers think that an essential feature of morality is that agents reason and act without special reference to their own interests or the interests of their intimates. For example, a basic form of utilitarianism might hold agents should act to bring about the best overall consequences for everyone affected. The idea that agents should reason and act in this way has been challenged. These challenges often focus on the importance of our personal projects or intimate relationships. The first section of this course will focus on topics associated with impartiality, including what justifies our acting impartiality, critiques of impartiality, and attempts to accommodate partiality within impartial moral frameworks. The second section of this course will provide a survey of the three main justifications given for partiality in ethics: our projects, our relationships, and the value of individuals. Within this section special focus will be given to the nature of friendship and parenthood.

### Course Texts:

I am aware of the financial impediments posed by acquiring materials for class. To remove this potential barrier to your academic success, all readings are free-to-use and made available electronically.

### Course Reading Schedule:

#### **Day 1: Introduction**

#### **Day 2: Reading and Writing Philosophy; University Resources**

Reading: 1,000 Word Philosophy, “How to Read Philosophy”

Reading: Harvard Writing Center, “How to Write the Philosophy Paper”

#### **Day 3: What is (Im)Partiality?**

Reading: Brian Feltham, “Introduction: Partiality and Impartiality in Ethics”

#### **Day 4: Impartiality and Impartial Spectators**

Reading: Gilbert Harman, “Moral Agent and Impartial Spectator”

#### **Day 5: Impartiality and Consequentialism**

Reading: Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”

#### **Day 6: Impartiality and Consequentialism**

Reading: Henry Sidgwick, “The Methods of Ethics” (pp. 379-384)

#### **Day 7: The Limits of Impartiality**

Reading: Susan Wolf, “Moral Saints”

#### **Day 8: The Limits of Impartiality**

Reading: Michael Stocker, “The Schizophrenia of Modern Moral Philosophy”

**Day 9: Accommodating Partiality in Consequentialism**

Reading: Peter Railton, “Consequentialism, Alienation, and the Demands of Morality”

**Day 10: Partiality as Impartiality**

Reading: Brad Hooker, “When is Impartiality Morally Appropriate”

**Day 11: Partiality as Impartiality**

Reading: Susan Wolf, “Morality and Partiality”

**Day 12: Partiality and Projects**

Reading: Bernard Williams, “Persons, Character, and Morality”

**Day 13: Partiality and Projects**

Reading: Sarah Stroud, “Permissible Partiality, Projects, and Plural Agency”

**Day 14: Partiality and Projects**

Reading: Monika Betzler, “The Normative Significance of Personal Projects”

**Day 15: Partiality and Relationships**

Reading: Niko Kolodny, “Which Relationships Justify Partiality?”

**Day 16: Partiality and Relationships**

Reading: Samuel Scheffler, “Relationships and Responsibilities”

**Day 17: Partiality and Nationalism**

Reading: Stephen Nathanson, “Patriotism, War, and the Limits of Permissible Partiality”

**Day 18: Partiality and Friendship**

Reading: Diane Jeske, “Friendship and Reasons for Intimacy”

**Day 19: Partiality and Friendship**

Reading: Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett, “Friendship and Moral Danger”

**Day 20: Impartiality and Friendship**

Reading: Stephanie Collins, “Duties to Make Friends”

**Day 21: Friendship and Animal Companions**

Reading: Cheryl Abbate, “The Animals in Our Living Rooms: Friends or Family?”

**Day 22: Friendship and Animal Companions**

Reading: Cynthia Townley, “Friendship with Companion Animals”

**Day 23: Partiality, Parenthood, and Causation**

Reading: Jeffrey Blustein, “Procreation and Parental Responsibility”

**Day 24: Partiality, Parenthood, and Voluntarism**

Reading: Elizabeth Brake, “Willing Parents: A Voluntarist Account of Parental Role Obligations”

**Day 25: Partiality, Parenthood, and Pluralism**

Reading: Tim Bayne and Avery Kolers, “Toward a Pluralistic Account of Parenthood”

**Day 26: Partiality, Parenthood, and Sperm Donation**

Reading: Rivka Weinberg, “The Moral Complexity of Sperm Donation”

**Day 27: Parenthood and Animal Companions**

Reading: Keith Burgess-Jackson, “Doing Right by Our Animal Companions”

**Day 28: Parenthood and Animal Companions**

Reading: Heather Stewart, “Parents of “Pets””

**Day 29: Partiality and Individuals**

Reading: Errol Lord, “Justifying Partiality”

**Day 30: Negative Partiality**

Reading: Josh Brandt, “Negative Partiality”