

PHIL 2500: Philosophy of Moral Responsibility

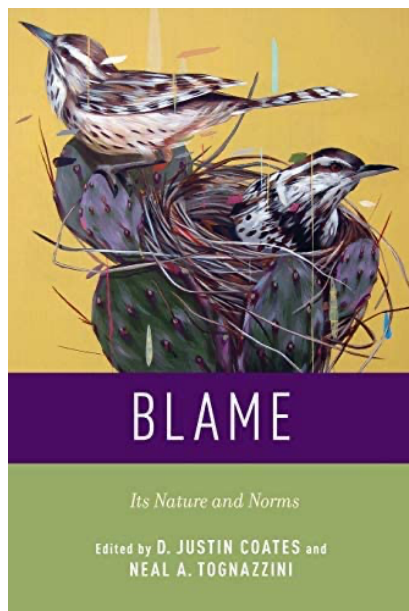
University of Virginia | Spring 2023
Main lectures on Mondays & Wednesdays 10-10:50am in Nau 211

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TA Nikolina Cetic
Office Hours Tuesdays & Wednesdays 11-12pm in Cocke Hall 207 or by appointment.
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Course Description. In this course we will take up philosophical questions about the nature and ethics of blame. What is blame and how is it related to moral responsibility? What does it take to be blameworthy for something? We will also look at questions about blame/worthiness, or what it takes to be in a position to hold another person or institution accountable.

Course Website. You can access our course site on UVA Collab here:
<https://collab.its.virginia.edu/portal/site/a7f9a21f-6dc6-4a84-afbd-844baaef6622>

Accessibility. UVA is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please feel welcome to discuss your concerns with me. If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you may also want to meet with the Student Disability Access Center (SDAC), to request an official accommodation. You can find more information about SDAC, including how to apply online, through their website at www.studenthealth.virginia.edu/SDAC. If you have already been approved for accommodations through SDAC, please make sure to send me your accommodation letter and meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.



Course Text.

In this course we will work primarily the text *Blame: Its Nature and Its Norms*, edited by D. Justin Coates and Neal A. Tognazzini.

If you have opted into UVA Inclusive Access, then you should be able to access this text on our Collab site. *I strongly suggest accessing the text in this way.* It is possible to buy a print copy (paperback or hardcover) but it's considerably more expensive to do that, and so I recommend against it.

All other course readings will be posted on our Collab site.

Course Goals.

This course has three primary aims. The first is to give you a sense for the major debates in the philosophy of blame, and the ways in which questions about the nature and ethics of blame are linked to questions about the nature of freedom and moral responsibility more broadly. The second is to give you practice reading, summarizing, evaluating, and producing your own sophisticated philosophical arguments. And the third is to give you practice applying abstract moral theory to contemporary issues, through assignments which ask you to apply the arguments and discussions in the course readings to real-world relationships and events.

Course Policies.

Late work	I accept it. Please see the late work policy posted on Collab.
Academic honesty	Don't cheat. (If you cheat on an assignment, that will result in an F on that assignment. If you do it again, you will fail the class.) Using generative AI to write your essays counts as cheating.
Communication	The more the better! Seriously, please communicate with me about any questions or concerns about the class. In general, it's always best to get in touch with me as soon as possible if you anticipate that something will affect your ability to participate and complete your responsibilities in the course.

Course Requirements.

Discussion Section (10%)	Students will attend one discussion section meeting a week.
Short Papers (20%)	Each student enrolled in the course is responsible for two, 1,500-word papers. In these papers, you'll be asked to take an argument from one of our course readings and apply it to a contemporary issue in which the nature and/or ethics of blame is relevant. Each paper is 10% of the course grade. Detailed paper instructions will be posted to Collab.
Weekly Write-Ups (30%)	Each week, students need to turn in one brief write-up in response to a prompt about one of the readings assigned that week. Write-ups are due on Wednesdays at 11:59pm Eastern via Collab.
Exams (40%)	There are two exams in this course, each worth 20% of your course grade. The first exam will cover the material that we look at in the first half of the course; the second exam will cover the material in that we look at in the second half. These are in-class, short-essay exams. A study guide will be distributed prior to each.

Reading Schedule^Ω

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Wednesday 1/18: course syllabus

Week 2: The Contours of Blame

Monday 1/23: *Blame*, ch. 1*

Wednesday 1/25: *No class*

Week 3: Cognitive Accounts

Monday 1/30: Strawson 1962*

Wednesday 2/1: Watson 1996*

Week 4: Cognitive Accounts

Monday 2/6: Hieronymi 2004*

Wednesday 2/8: Catch-up & Applications

Week 5: Conative Accounts

Monday 2/13: *Blame*, ch. 3

Wednesday 2/15: *Blame*, ch. 4

Week 6: Conative Accounts

Monday 2/20: *Blame*, ch. 5

Wednesday 2/22: *No class*

Week 7: Catch-up & Exam

Monday 2/27: Catch-up & Applications

Wednesday 3/1: Exam #1

—*Spring Break*—

Week 8: Reactive Attitudes

Monday 3/13: Wallace 2011*

Wednesday 3/15: Wolf 2011*

Week 9: Reactive Attitudes

Monday 3/20: *Blame*, ch. 8

Wednesday 3/22: Catch-up & Applications

Paper 1 Due Friday 3/24 at 11:59pm

Week 10: Protest & Punishment

Monday 3/27: *Blame*, ch. 2

Wednesday 3/29: *Blame*, ch. 6

Week 11: Who has the standing to blame?

Monday 4/3: Friedman 2013*

Wednesday 4/5: *No class*

Week 12: Who has the standing to blame?

Monday 4/10: Smilansky 2006*

Wednesday 4/12: *Blame*, ch. 13

Week 13: Who has the standing to blame?

Monday 4/17: *Blame*, ch. 14

Wednesday 4/19: Catch-up & Applications

Paper 2 Due Friday 4/21 at 11:59pm

Week 14: The Value of Blame

Monday 4/24: *Blame*, ch. 10

Wednesday 4/26: *Blame*, ch. 11

Week 15: Review

Monday 5/1: Exam review

Exam 2 on Saturday May 6th from 9am-12pm.

**Reading posted on Collab*

^Ω*This schedule is subject to change. If that happens, the syllabus will be updated & redistributed.*

Grading Scale.

97.5-100	A+
92.5-97.4	A
90-92.4	A-
87.5-89.9	B+
82.5-87.4	B
80-82.4	B-
77.5-79.9	C+
72.5-77.4	C
70-72.4	C-
67.5-69.9	D+
62.5-67.4	D
60-62.4	D-
0-59.9	F