

Summer School in Ethics

Institute of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Charles University

Dates: Monday 11 July to Wednesday 13 July

Place: conference room (zasedací místnost) of Filozofický ústav Akademie věd ČR, Jilská 1

Instructor: Christopher Cowley, University College Dublin

This Summer School is designed as an introduction to ethics for students (i) with some background in philosophy and (ii) a good knowledge of English. No previous study of ethics is required.

Importantly, it will not be too concerned with the history of ethics (who said what), nor with any of the big theories of ethics (utilitarianism etc.).

Instead, it will examine some central ethical concepts used in our ordinary lives.

UK students can register for the Summer School in SIS (AFSV00254).

Schedule:

The Summer School will comprise eight teaching hours. (One teaching hour = 45 minutes.) The schedule will run as follows:

- Monday 11 July: 10-11.30, and 13.30-15.00
- Tuesday 12 July: 10-11.30
- Wednesday 13 July: 10-11.30

One of the aims of the Summer School is to prepare students for the [Colloquium on the Modalities of the Good](#). This will be a three-day workshop, held at the Akademie Ved at Jilská 1, Prague 1, from 14th – 16th July 2016.

Content:

The Summer School will comprise an introduction to ethics. Here are some of the topics which we will examine, depending on students' interests:

- What it means to be a good or bad person, to have good or bad character traits, to have good or bad intentions, to perform good or bad actions, and to produce a good or bad situation.
- The relationship between perception, deliberation, emotions, understanding and action.
- The different concepts of the virtues and vices; how virtues are acquired; the role of such concepts in moral criticism; the nature of moral education, moral improvement and moral perfectionism.
- The question of moral responsibility, praise and blame; of taking responsibility, of denying responsibility, and of holding another responsible.
- Different attitudes towards my own or others' past actions: guilt and forgiveness.

Reading:

It is very important to do the reading in advance of the relevant session, since the discussions will be closely based on the readings. There will be three chunks (available in SISS or upon request, jakub.jirsa@ff.cuni.cz):

1. Iris Murdoch, 'The Idea of Perfection' from her book *The Sovereignty of Good*, 1970. This should be read before the Friday, and we will spend most of Friday discussing it.
2. Michael Weston, 'Morality and the Past' from his book *Morality and the Self*, 1975. This should be read before the Monday. The article discusses a particular literary example from Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*. If students are really keen, they should also read the novel!
3. Some of the papers at the Colloquium will be available the week before. We can choose one or two of these to read before the Tuesday session.