

Philosophy 300b: First-Year Colloquium
Harvard University, Spring 2024

Instructor: Prof. Selim Berker

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Office location: Emerson 201

Office hours: Fridays, 12:45–2:45 p.m., or by appointment

Time and Place: Thursdays, 3:00–5:00 p.m., Emerson 106

Course Website: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/127167>

Texts:

Nagel, Thomas. *The Possibility of Altruism*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970.

Scanlon, T. M. *What We Owe to Each Other*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998.

One additional reading will be made available on the course website for downloading.

Requirements:

- A short paper (approximately 5–6 pages in length) on a specific paper topic on Nagel, due by 11:59 p.m. on Tue., Feb. 26.
- A revision/expansion of the above paper (up to a maximum of 7 pages), due by 11:59 p.m. on Sun., Mar. 17 (the final day of Spring Break).
- A slightly longer paper (approximately 6–8 pages in length) on a specific paper topic on Scanlon, due at a date and time during Exam Period to be determined by the Harvard Registrar.
- Four individual presentations.

Laptop Use:

The use of laptops, tablets, etc. for any purposes other than displaying electronic versions of the course readings during class meetings is prohibited, except in cases of medical necessity.

Reading and Assignment Schedule:

[Note: 'IP' is short for 'individual presentation'.]

- Thu., Jan. 25:* Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, chs. 1–4 (pp. 3–23) [IP #1]
- Thu., Feb. 1:* Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, chs. 5–6 (pp. 27–46) [IP #1]
- Thu., Feb. 8:* Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, ch. 7 (pp. 47–56) [IP #1]
Baier, *The Moral Point of View: A Rational Basis of Ethics*, ch. 3 (pp. 85–106)
- Thu., Feb. 15:* Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, ch. 8 (pp. 57–76) [IP #2]
FIRST PAPER TOPIC DISTRIBUTED
- Thu., Feb. 22:* Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, chs. 9–10 (pp. 79–98) [IP #2]
- Tue., Feb. 26:* **FIRST PAPER DUE BY 11:59 P.M.**
- Thu., Feb. 29:* Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, chs. 11–12 (pp. 99–124) [IP #2]
- Thu., Mar. 7:* Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, chs. 13–14 (pp. 125–146) [IP #3]
- Thu., Mar. 14:* **NO CLASS (Spring Break)**
- Sun., Mar. 17:* **REWRITE OF FIRST PAPER DUE BY 11:59 P.M.**
- Thu., Mar. 21:* **NO CLASS (instructor out of town)**
- Thu., Mar. 28:* Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, intro. & ch. 1, §§1–7 (pp. 1–36) [IP #3]
- Thu., Apr. 4:* Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, ch. 1, §§8–14 (pp. 37–77) [IP #3]
- Thu., Apr. 11:* Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, ch. 2 (pp. 78–107) [IP #4]
- Thu., Apr. 18:* Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, ch. 4 (pp. 147–188) [IP #4]
- DATE TBD:* Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, ch. 5 (pp. 189–247) [IP #4] (make-up session sometime during Reading Period, Apr. 25–May 1)
SECOND PAPER TOPIC DISTRIBUTED
- DATE TBD:* **SECOND PAPER DUE** (sometime during Exam Period, May 2–11)