

PHIL 109-6-20

First-Year Seminar:  
"Values and Power"  
Professor Lackey

T/Th  
11:00 - 12:20  
Kresge 3410



Overview of class

In this course, we will look at questions about what we value, what we ought to value, whether there are objective values, and what makes something valuable through an examination of some fundamental philosophical problems. We will pay particular attention to the role that power dynamics play in value-driven disagreements, regarding, for example, mass incarceration, abortion, euthanasia, affirmative action, and animal rights.

Learning Objectives

Students will be expected to have: Familiarity with central philosophical concepts. The ability to employ these concepts in arguments.



Overview of class

One prevalent picture of action is this: we desire things, and action is the motion we take in order to fulfill our desires. This view of why we act is compelling, but also very problematic. In this class we'll examine this view as it appears in Augustine of Hippo, and then see how it is developed in female philosophers writing at the turn of the 18th century. We then turn to other traditions for alternate conceptions of how to think of action and personhood: the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna, Akan philosophy from Ghana, and finally Confucius and his followers from China.

Learning Objectives

To write clearly and concisely so that every sentence answers a question.

PHIL 109-6-21

First-Year Seminar:  
"Why do We Do What  
We Do? A Global View"

Professor S. Ebels-Duggan  
M/W 9:30 - 10:50  
Univ. Library 3322