Phil 290J: Promises
Fall, 2022

Tuesday and Thursday, 5:20–6:55pm, Hum 1 400

Contact Information

Professor: Abe Stone (abestone@ucsc.edu)
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Course Description

Readings from the history of philosophy (and religion, and law) on the nature and source of the obligation created by a promise, if indeed a promise can create an obligation. This will necessarily involve a certain amount of discussion of other things. For example: special types of promise such as vows, oaths, and contracts; virtues and/or duties that may be related to the obligation of promises, meaning, for the most part, the virtues and/or duties of justice and veracity (truthfulness); and, because promises are usually (always?) expressed in language, general issues about the force and function of language.

Course Requirements

Seminar participation. One in-class presentation (approximately 15 minutes for presentation and 15 minutes for discussion). One final paper (approximately 10–20 pages), due Wednesday, December 7.

Readings

Thursday, September 22: no reading, first class.

Tuesday, September 27: **No class** due to the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

Wednesday, September 28: *Iliad*, 2.1–40; 3.275–301; 4.50–72; 4.232–239; selections from the Bible; *Institutes* of Justinian, 3.19; readings from the *Code* of Justinian; *Digest* of Justinian, 2.14.1–7 and 50.12.1–7.

Thursday, September 29: Plato, *Republic* 1.331c–336a, *Crito* 49a–53a; Aristotle *EN* 4.7; Cicero *De oficiis* book I, ch. 7 ch. 10 and book III, ch.'s 24–32 (continued here).

Monday, October 3: Thomas Aquinas, *ST* 2–2, q. 88, a.'s 1–4; q. 89 a. 2 and a.'s 7–8, q. 109 a. 1; q. 110 a.'s 3–4; also, q. 80 obj. 3 and ad 3.

Tuesday, October 4: **No class** due to Yom Kippur (which begins just before sundown).

Thursday, October 6: Cajetan, commentary to *ST* 2–2, q. 113; Molina, *De iusticia et iure*, disp.'s 262 and 266; Lessius, *De iusticia et iure*, book 2, ch. 17, dub. 5 James Gordley, *The Philosophical Origins of Modern Contract Doctrine*, ch. 4.

Tuesday, October 11: **No class** due to the second day of Sukkot.

Wednesday, October 12: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 6; ch. 14 and beginning of ch. 15 (through "hath the same relation to grace that injustice hath to obligation by covenant"); Locke, *Essay*, 1.3.5–8; *Letter concerning Toleration*, paragraph beginning "Lastly"; *Second Treatise*, 2.14, 4.23, 16.176, 16.186, 16.195; Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, end of 4.8.

Thursday, October 13: Grotius, *The Laws of War and Peace*, 2.11, 2.16.1–2, 2.16.20–27.

Tuesday, October 18: **No class** due to Simchat Torah.

Wednesday, October 19: Pufendorf *Of the Law of Nature and Nations*, 3.5–8; Wolff, *Ius naturae methodo scientifica pertractum*, Part III, §§361 ff. (if I can find time to translate).

Thursday, October 20: Hume, *Treatise* 3.2.5; *Second Enquiry*, §§3, 5, and 9.2; "Of the Original Contract."

Tuesday, October 25: Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers*, Essay V, ch. 3 and ch.'s 5–6.

Thursday, October 27: Kant, *Groundwork*, Ak. 4:420-425 (but especially, of course, example 2, on Ak. 4:422); *Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Right, §§18–21, Ak. 6:271–6; Doctrine of Virtue, §9, Ak. 6:428–31; Emerson, "Self-Reliance," five paragraphs beginning "The other terror that scares us" (through "even if shewn in a young person"); Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, 2.1–3.

Tuesday, November 1: Godwin, *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, 2.2 (without the Appendices); 2.5.

Thursday, November 3: Godwin, *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, 3.3; 3.5, 4.4, section 2. and Appendix 2.

Tuesday, November 8: Bentham, *A Fragment on Government*, 1.36–48; Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. 5.

Thursday, November 10: Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, 3.5–6 and and 4.3.3–5.

Tuesday, November 15: Anscombe, "On Promising and its Justice";"On Brute Facts"; "Modern Moral Philosophy"; "Rules, Rights, and Promises."

Thursday, November 17: Austin, "Other Minds," section titled "If I know I can't be wrong"; *How to Do Things with Words*, lectures 1, 2, beginning of 4 (through p. 45), and beginning of 6 (through p. 73)

Tuesday, November 22: Rawls, "Two Concepts of Rules"; *Theory of Justice* (original edition), §§18 and 52

Thursday, November 24: **No class (Thanksgiving)**

Tuesday, November 29: Cavell, "Must We Mean What We Say?," pp. 12–31; *The Claim of Reason*, ch. 11

Thursday, December 1: David Lewis, "Scorekeeping in a Language Game"; "Languages and Language" (selections); "Utilitarianism and Truthfulness".

Wednesday, December 7: **Final paper due**.