

**RETH 30100**  
**Minor Classics in Ethics**  
2020-21 Reading List [1<sup>st</sup> Cycle]

This is the first year of a three-year cycle of articles for an informal, non-credit reading group of RETH Faculty and all Master's and doctoral students interested in religious ethics to discuss minor classics in contemporary ethics, philosophy, social thought, and theology.

Selected articles have revitalized forgotten themes or have launched new problems for moral philosophy, social thought, and religious ethics. They exhibit ways of combining attention to concepts and arguments in moral theory, on the one hand, with concrete matters in practical experience and public life, on the other.

**Format:** The format is informal. You should come prepared to identify one sentence or paragraph that you find illuminating, obscure, or problematic, and explain why this is so.

**Fall 2020**

- Oct. 7** Wm. David Solomon, "Normative Ethical Theories," in the *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*
- Oct. 21** Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1971): 47–66.
- Nov. 4** Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1, no. 3 (Spring 1972): 229-243.
- Nov. 18** H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Meaning of Responsibility," in Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy*, 47-68.
- Dec. 2** John McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," *The Monist* 62 no. 3 (July 1979): 331-350.

**Winter 2021**

- Jan. 13** Bernard Williams, "Moral Luck," and "Postscript," in Daniel Stratman, ed., *Moral Luck*, 35-58, 251f.
- Jan. 26** Margaret Urban Walker, "Moral Luck and the Virtues of Impure Agency," in Daniel Stratman, ed., *Moral Luck*, 35-58, 251f.
- Feb. 10** Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (3767) (March 10, 1967): 1203–1207

- Feb. 24** William James, “What Makes a Life Significant” in *On Some of Life’s Ideals* at <https://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/jsignificant.html>
- Mar. 10** Michael Walzer, “Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* Vol. 2, No. 2 (Winter, 1973), pp. 160-80.
- Spring 2021**
- Mar. 31** Susan Wolf, “On Moral Saints,” *Journal of Philosophy* 79 no. 8 (August 1982): 419-439.
- Apr. 14** Harry Frankfurt, “The Importance of What We Care About,” *Synthese* 53 (1982): 257-72.
- April 28** Calvin Warren, “Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope,” *The New Centennial Review* 15.1 (Spring 2015): 215-48.
- May 12** Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans., ed., with introduction by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 118-28.
- May 26** Larry Rasmussen, “Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice: Moral Theory in the Making?” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 24.1 (2004): 3-28.