

New for 2023

Philosophy 186e Topics in the History of Ethics

Hume



Kant



AND

Nietzsche



We will discuss the moral philosophies of David Hume (1711–1776), Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900).

These thinkers agree that our motives are the primary focus of morality but they disagree about what those motives are. The fundamental moral motivation, according to Hume, is sympathy for others; Kant maintains it is respect for the law. Nietzsche accepts parts of each of the other philosopher's theories, but he takes a much darker view of morality than they do.

Here are some of the questions they address. Is a good person someone who cares about others or someone who does the right thing regardless of how he or she feels? Does morality require free will? Is morality conventional? Can we make sense of morality without God? Is morality valuable?

Professor Green

Mondays and Wednesdays 11–12:15