



## **Facts, Values, and Flourishing**

Course Outline

Craig Biddle, July 2018

### Pursuing Personal Happiness and Being Fully Moral: A Contradiction?

1. The seeming contradiction and what is at stake
2. “The moral versus the practical”: a civil war that severs souls and destroys lives
3. Our project: to see whether we can integrate practical strategies and tactics for pursuing personal happiness with fact-based moral principles that fully support and fundamentally guide that endeavor

### Facts and Values: What’s the Connection?

1. The “fact-value” or “is-ought” problem: “You can’t get morality from reality”
2. How Ayn Rand solved the problem by means of observation and logic
3. Answering objections to Rand’s solution (and further demonstrating its soundness)

### Objective Values as Both Absolute and Conditional

1. The objectivity of moral values—and why a person can reject them if he wants to
2. The meaning of life—and why a person can deny it if he wants to
3. Objective morality as neither dogmatic nor confining, but chosen and liberating
4. Disciples of causation versus disciples of “duty”—two kinds of people, two kinds of lives

## Morality as the Science of Human Flourishing

1. “God said, ‘Take what you want, and pay for it.’”
2. Value hierarchies and the “moral math” of flourishing
3. The principles of non-contradiction, non-sacrifice, and non-neutrality

## Virtue as the Art of Human Flourishing

1. Virtues as principled, life-serving, rights-respecting actions
2. Fundamental virtues and fundamental vices
3. Personalized virtues, standing orders, and habit formation: basic elements of self-help and self-improvement

## The Overarching Integration and Its Vital Implications

1. Values as a species of fact and the motor of life
2. Personal consequences of this understanding
3. Social and political implications
4. How to embrace and advance these ideas