PHIL 454: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 13:05 to 14:25
New building: Sherbrooke Street 680, Room 1916.
Professor Gaëlle Fiasse
http://www.mcgill.ca/philosophy/people/faculty/fiasse

Contacting me
Email: write to me at gaelle.fiasse@mcgill.ca: please write “PHIL 454” in the subject.
Phone: 514-398-4400 extension: 094409
Office hours (Leacock 940): Thursday (after the lecture until 4:20PM) or by appointment at
scheduled times of mutual convenience

Topic:
Can we separate reason from desire? Do we really have to suppress our passions in order to be
moral? What is the role of experience in leading an ethical life?
While some philosophers want to separate reason from emotions, passions, feelings or desires,
Aristotle defines ethical choice as an intellect which desires (noûs orektikos) or a desire which
understands (orexis dia noètikè). We will analyze the correlation between desire and reason, by
focusing closely on the ethics of Aristotle. Aristotle will be our major point of reference, but we will
also pay attention to the control of the passions in Stoicism, and the roles of pleasure and desire
in Epicureanism. Through the theme of reason, desire and action, we will revisit the notion of
happiness in ancient philosophy, the role of pleasure, the distinctions made between different
desires, the correlation between the activity and its determination, the definition of a voluntary
action, the relationship between reason and what is external to it, and ultimately the particular role
of friendship.

Evaluation:

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<th>Class Participation</th>
<th>10%</th>
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<tr>
<td>One in-class test</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>One seven-page research paper (double-spaced)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Take-home Exam (double-spaced)</td>
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Late submissions
Late papers will be penalized by 1/3 of a grade per day (e.g. from a B to a B-, etc.). The hardcopy
is the official submission of the paper.

Required textbooks (available at McGill Bookstore, and on reserve at the library):

ISBN : 978-0-915145-69-0
– Course Pack : glossary, some handouts, and other readings (on Epicurus and Stoicism)

I recommend Terrence Irwin’s translation and edition of the *Nicomachean Ethics* for the quality of
the translation. Irwin’s edition also contains interesting endnotes, a glossary and a bibliography.

Electronic equipments are not permitted in lectures
All computers, mobile phones, web-accessible electronic devices (IPads, etc.) must be turned off during the class period and stored. Exceptions will only be made with an official note from the student disabilities office.

**Academic Integrity**

Not mentioning your sources, published or unpublished, constitutes an act of plagiarism. For instance, if you use a website without due reference in the text and in the bibliography; if you use a paper written by another (ideas or words of someone else), without making any reference to the author; if you quote a book or a paper as a reference of your own, without having read it; if you use your own work submitted for another class.

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**Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability please contact me to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful for you to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 398-6009 (online at http://www.mcgill.ca/osd) before you do this.