This is the first book devoted to an examination of Kant’s lectures on ethics, which provide a unique and revealing perspective on the development of his views. In fifteen newly commissioned essays, leading Kant scholars discuss four sets of student notes reflecting different periods of Kant’s career: Herder (circa 1762–1764), Collins (roughly 1774–1777), Mrongovius (1784–1785), and Vigilantius (1793–1794). The essays cover a diverse range of topics, from the relation between Kant’s lectures and the Baumgarten textbooks, to obligation, virtue, love, the highest good, freedom, the categorical imperative, moral motivation, and religion. Together they will provide the reader with a deeper and fuller understanding of the evolution of Kant’s moral thought. The volume will be of interest to a range of readers in Kant studies, ethics, political philosophy, religious studies, and history of ideas.

LARA DENIS is Professor of Philosophy at Agnes Scott College. She is the editor of Kant’s Metaphysics of Morals: A Critical Guide (Cambridge, 2010), and has published numerous essays in journals and books, including in Kant-Studien, Kantian Review, and Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, and Kant’s Tugendlehre: A Comprehensive Commentary (2013), Perfecting Virtue: New Essays in Kantian Ethics and Virtue Ethics (Cambridge, 2011), and The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy (Cambridge, 2006).

OLIVER SENSEN is Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in Philosophy at Tulane University. He is the author of Kant on Human Dignity (2011), editor of Kant on Moral Autonomy (Cambridge, 2012), and co-editor of Kant’s Tugendlehre (2013).
CAMBRIDGE CRITICAL GUIDES

Titles published in this series:

Hegel’s "Phenomenology of Spirit"
EDITED BY DEAN MOYAR AND MICHAEL QUANTE

Mill’s "On Liberty"
EDITED BY C. L. TEN

Kant’s "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim"
EDITED BY AMÉLIE OKSENBERG RORTY AND JAMES SCHMIDT

Kant’s "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals"
EDITED BY JENS TIMMERMANN

Kant’s "Critique of Practical Reason"
EDITED BY ANDREWS REATH AND JENS TIMMERMANN

Wittgenstein’s "Philosophical Investigations"
EDITED BY ARIF AHMED

Kierkegaard’s "Concluding Unscientific Postscript"
EDITED BY RICK ANTHONY FURTAK

Plato’s "Republic"
EDITED BY MARK L. MCPHERRAN

Plato’s "Laws"
EDITED BY CHRISTOPHER BOBONICH

Spinoza’s "Theological-Political Treatise"
EDITED BY YITZHAK Y. MELAMED AND MICHAEL A. ROSENTHAL

Aristotle’s "Nicomachean Ethics"
EDITED BY JON MILLER

Kant’s "Metaphysics of Morals"
EDITED BY LARA DENIS

Nietzsche’s "On the Genealogy of Morality"
EDITED BY SIMON MAY
KANT’S
Lectures on Ethics
A Critical Guide

EDITED BY
LARA DENIS
Agnes Scott College
and
OLIVER SENSEN
Tulane University
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributors</th>
<th>page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. B. Schneewind</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translations and abbreviations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Introduction**

Lara Denis and Oliver Sensen

### PART I  THE SOURCES

1. Kant’s lectures on ethics and Baumgarten’s moral philosophy
   - Stefano Bacic

2. Herder: religion and moral motivation
   - Patrick R. Frierson

3. Collins: Kant’s proto-critical position
   - Manfred Kuehn

4. Mrongovius II: a supplement to the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
   - Jens Timmermann

5. Vigilantius: morality for humans
   - Robert B. Louden

### PART II  PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

6. Ancient insights in Kant’s conception of the highest good
   - Stephen Engstrom
## Contents

7 Kant’s history of ethics  
*Allen W. Wood*  
120

8 Moral obligation and free will  
*Oliver Sensen*  
138

9 The elusive story of Kant’s permissive laws  
*B. Sharon Byrd*  
156

10 On the logic of imputation in the Vigilantius lecture notes  
*Joachim Hruschka*  
170

### Part III Ethics

11 Freedom, ends, and the derivation of duties in the Vigilantius notes  
*Paul Guyer*  
187

12 Proper self-esteem and duties to oneself  
*Lara Denis*  
205

13 Virtue, self-mastery, and the autocracy of practical reason  
*Anne Margaret Baxley*  
223

14 Love  
*Jeanine Grenberg*  
239

15 Love of honor, emulation, and the psychology of the devilish vices  
*Houston Smit and Mark Timmons*  
256

*Works cited*  
277

*Index*  
288
Contributors

Stefano Bacin is currently Lecturer in Moral Philosophy at the Università San Raffaele (Milan), and has been an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at the Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz and a Marie Curie Fellow at the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main. He is coeditor, with Marcus Willaschek, Georg Mohr, and Jürgen Stolzenberg, of the Kant-Lexikon (forthcoming).

Anne Margaret Baxley is Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in Philosophy at Washington University in St. Louis. Her book is on Kant’s account of virtue, Kant’s Theory of Virtue: The Value of Autocracy (Cambridge, 2010).

B. Sharon Byrd was Professor in the School of Law, Friedrich Schiller University. She coauthored (with Joachim Hruschka) Kant’s Doctrine of Right: A Commentary (Cambridge, 2010), and authored many articles on Kant’s theory of right, including “Kant’s Theory of Punishment: Deterrence in Its Threat, Retribution in Its Execution,” Law and Philosophy (1989); and “The State as a Moral Person,” Proceedings of the Eighth International Kant Congress (1995).

Lara Denis is Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Ethics Program at Agnes Scott College. She is author of Moral Self-Regard: Duties to Oneself in Kant’s Moral Theory (2001) and editor of Kant’s Metaphysics of Morals: A Critical Guide (Cambridge, 2010).

Stephen Engstrom is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh. He is a coeditor of Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Duty (Cambridge, 1996) and the author of The Form of Practical Knowledge: A Study of the Categorical Imperative (2009).

Patrick R. Frieron is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Whitman College. He is author of Freedom and Anthropology in Kant’s Moral
List of contributors


Jeanine Grenberg is Professor of Philosophy at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. She is author of Kant and the Ethics of Humility: A Story of Dependence, Corruption and Virtue (Cambridge, 2005), and Kant’s Defense of Common Moral Experience: A Phenomenological Account (Cambridge, 2013).


Joachim Hruschka Professor in the School of Law, Friedrich Alexander University, Erlangen, Germany, is coauthor (with B. Sharon Byrd) of Kant’s Doctrine of Right: A Commentary (Cambridge, 2010). Among his many other publications are Das deontologische Sechseck bei Gottfried Achenwall im Jahre 1767 (1986).

Manfred Kuehn is Professor of Philosophy at Boston University. He is author of Scottish Common Sense in Germany (1987) and Kant: A Biography (Cambridge, 2001), and coeditor, with Heiner F. Klemme, of the two volume work Immanuel Kant: An International Anthology of Essays on Kant (2000).

Robert B. Louden is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern Maine. His publications include Kant’s Impure Ethics (2000) and Kant’s Human Being (2011). Louden is also coeditor and translator of two volumes in The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant.

J. B. Schneewind is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Johns Hopkins University. He is editor of Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant (Cambridge, 2003), as well as of the Cambridge Edition translation of Kant’s Lectures on Ethics. He is author of Sidgwick’s Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy (1977) and The Invention of Autonomy (Cambridge, 1998).
List of contributors

OLIVER SENSEN is Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in Philosophy at Tulane University. He is the author of Kant on Human Dignity (2011), as well as the editor of Kant on Moral Autonomy (Cambridge, 2012).

HOUSTON SMIT is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Arizona. He specializes in the history of medieval and early modern philosophy and is currently writing a book with the working title “Kant’s Theory of Cognition.”

JENS TIMMERMANN is Reader in Moral Philosophy at the University of St. Andrews. He is the author of Sittengesetz und Freiheit (2003) and Kant’s Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A Commentary (Cambridge, 2007). Among the several works of which he is an editor is Kant’s Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A Critical Guide (Cambridge, 2009).

MARK TIMMONS is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Arizona. He has published widely on topics in metaethics, normative ethics, and Kant’s ethics. He is editor of Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics, and is currently working on a book with Terry Horgan entitled Illuminating Reasons: An Essay in Moral Phenomenology.

ALLEN W. WOOD is Ruth Norman Halls Professor at Indiana University and Ward W. and Priscilla B. Woods Professor emeritus at Stanford University. He is author of ten books, including Kant’s Ethical Thought (Cambridge, 1999), Kantian Ethics (Cambridge, 2008) and The Free Development of Each (2014).
Foreword

Kant was a popular teacher until late in his long career. Even when he was a young instructor, he attracted older residents of Königsberg as well as many students to his lectures. But the lectures were designed for the students, who were usually younger than conventional undergraduates are now. Kant was helping to bring them up. He was teaching them the rudiments of morality as well as moral philosophy. Although they had to be able to read–or puzzle out–enough Latin to cope with the Baumgarten textbooks that Kant used, they were not very well educated. Students normally took the moral philosophy course as part of their first-year curriculum. It was part of the preparation for more advanced studies of law or medicine or theology. These were the professions for which students were educated.

Lecture classes met four times a week, for forty or forty-five minutes. There were additional discussion sessions. In addition to notes from the ethics courses, notes have survived from several other courses that Kant taught—for example, those on logic, anthropology, metaphysics, and physical geography. Students generally kept their notes in bound volumes, often inscribed with the student’s name. The notes are conventionally identified by using the name of the student whose copy is involved. Copies of the notes circulated widely among students and others during Kant’s lifetime. Many of the notes have been known to scholars for a long time. Some notes once available are now lost, perhaps destroyed during World War II. And some are fairly recent discoveries.

The first publication of notes from Kant’s courses on moral philosophy was that by Menzer, in 1924 (see Menzer 1924a). His edition was the basis for the 1930 translation by Louis Infield, which was frequently reprinted. A three-volume edition of the ethics notes, edited by Gerhard Lehmann, was published in 1974 as part of the Akademie-Ausgabe of Kant. Although the

1 This is volume 27 of the Academy edition of Kant’s works (see AA 27). It consists of three separate parts, paginated continuously.
editing has been the target of much criticism the edition has not yet been replaced and serves as the main source for work on the notes. A previously unavailable manuscript of notes on the ethics lectures, in a notebook owned by a student named Johann Friedrich Kaehler, turned up in 1997. It was edited by Werner Stark and published in 2004 (see Stark 2004a).

Stark makes strong claims for Kaehler. He admires Menzer’s work and is highly critical of Lehmann’s. He thinks Kaehler should replace all of these printings of the ethics notes. One reason for his assurance is that there are twelve other texts from the middle of the 1770s that are the same as Kaehler (Stark 2004b, cf. his 1999). He finds it astonishing that there should be so many identical sets from such a short period of time. Of no other lecture notes, Stark asserts, is this true. He takes this as evidence that many students found in these notes a “well worked out and very comprehensive report of Kantian moral philosophy.” Moreover, in the preparation of the text, Stark tells us, modern editorial technology not available to Lehmann has been used (Stark 2004b, 392f).

Stark’s claim for Kaehler is no doubt warranted. But this poses a problem for those who do not wish to read the notes in the original German. Kaehler was not available in the mid-1990s when Peter Heath translated a substantial selection of ethics notes using the Lehmann edition. Heath’s translation is the fullest, and the most likely to be used by readers of English. How reliable is it?

Stark gives some comparisons of the texts of Menzer, Collins, and Kaehler (Stark 1999, 89–97). I have myself done a comparison of the Kaehler text with Collins as in Heath’s translation of it. Stark ignores some of the differences in paragraphing, single words, and short sentences or parts of sentences. Many of the discrepancies that he notes are trivial, for example, stärkste (strongest) for höchste (highest) (Stark 1999, 91). But there are a few important differences. The most substantial are certain passages in Kaehler but not in Collins. Heath has, however, used passages from notes taken by a student named Mrongovius to make up for the larger of these gaps in Collins. In these locations, Kaehler has essentially identical passages, thus validating Heath’s additions. Another difference is also substantial. Stark argues convincingly that a dozen lines of Collins (27:375:12–24, pages 148f. of Heath’s translation), should not be included. The disputed text begins, “So long as we acknowledge . . .” and ends, “defies the latter’s

---

2 In Heath and Schneewind 1997. The Collins translation provided by Heath will be referred to as “Heath-Collins.”

3 Heath-Collins 68–73 is taken from 27:1425–1430; Heath-Collins 81f is taken from 27:1438.
intention.” Stark says that it is probably a copyist’s error, inserting some-
one’s later marginal annotation into the body of the notes (see Stark 2004a, 
225, n. 179).

The other differences make – as far as I can see – no philosophical 
difference to what Kant said. A few examples will suffice. There are differ-
ences of paragraphing here and there. Collins has Kant attributing to 
Socrates the saying, “My friend, there are no friends” (Collins 27:424, 
Heath-Collins, 185), while Kaehler has him attributing it to Aristotle 
(Kaehler 295). Heath-Collins 215 differs by a few sentences from Kaehler 
351f. Here and there Collins has a sentence not in Kaehler. Apart from these 
and perhaps a dozen other minor divergences, Collins and Kaehler are the 
same. The very large amount of overlap among Kaehler, Collins, and 
Heath-Collins should if anything strengthen our confidence in Heath-
Collins as representing Kant’s lectures. In my opinion, readers who do 
not use Kaehler can use Collins or Heath’s accurate and fluent translation of 
it to get as good an idea as we can have of what Kant told his students.

The notes that students took as they attended Kant’s lectures on ethics 
are a rich source of information about his views on morality, the metaphy-
sics of morals, and religion. They add general claims as well as fascinating 
details to what Kant says in his published writings on these topics. They 
enable us to trace some aspects of the development of his philosophical 
views of morality. They present Kantian views that are hardly if at all 
discussed in the published work – for instance, Kant’s understanding of 
the history of moral philosophy (discussed by Wood in the present volume). 
And they give us a glimpse of the passion with which Kant pursued certain 
ideas – perhaps most notably his strong opposition to any form of religion 
that relies on formulae, ritual, and dogma rather than on living a moral life 
from purely moral motives. They also show us Kant urging his students to 
enjoy life as fully as possible, of course within the boundaries set by the 
moral principle. No ascetic, he! Quite the contrary. The essays in the 
present volume will help the reader work through the rich and complex 
material in the notes. They will add to our understanding of Kant’s moral 
philosophy as a whole, and perhaps help us even to enjoy it more.

J. B. SCHNEEWIND
Translations and abbreviations

Unless footnoted otherwise in their essays, authors use translations from the Cambridge Edition of the Writings of Immanuel Kant, series editors Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge University Press, 1992–). Page citations are to Kants gesammelte Schriften, Ausgabe der Königlich-Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902–) using the volume:page number format or the volume:page number:line format; exceptions are noted. In some cases, section numbers or headings are used in addition to or instead of page numbers. Abbreviations that authors use within citations include the following.

AA Akademie-Ausgabe
CE Cambridge Edition
ApH Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht [1798] (AA 7)
  Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, Robert B. Louden (trans.) (CE Anthropology, History, and Education, Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller [eds], 2007)
  Excerpts also in CE Notes and Fragments, Paul Guyer (ed.), Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer, Frederick Rauscher (trans.), 2005
Translations and abbreviations xvii


C Moralphilosophie Collins [reflecting notes originally from 1774–1777; transcribed for or by Collins, 1784–1785] (AA 27) Collins notes on Kant’s moral philosophy lectures (CE Lectures on Ethics, Peter Heath [trans., ed.] and J. B. Schneewind [ed.], 1997)


HN Handschriftlichen Nachlass (AA 14–23) Handwritten remains (selections in CE Notes and Fragments, Paul Guyer [ed.], Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer, Frederick Rauscher [trans.], 2005, and in CE Lectures and Drafts on Political Philosophy)

I “Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht” [1784] (AA 8) “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim” (CE Anthropology, History, and Education)

Kaehler Kaehler’s transcription of Kant’s lectures on ethics [1777]. Available in Stark 2004a.
Translations and abbreviations

KpV  Kritik der praktischen Vernunft [1788] (AA 5)
     Critique of Practical Reason (CE Practical Philosophy)

KrV A/B  Kritik der reinen Vernunft [1781, 1787], cited by A (first edition) / B (second edition)
     Critique of Pure Reason, Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood
     (trans., eds.) (CE, 1998)

KU  Kritik der Urteilskraft [1790] (AA 5)
     Critique of the Power of Judgment, Paul Guyer (trans., ed.)
     (CE, 2000)

L  Vorlesungen über Logik (AA 9, 24)
     Lectures on logic, J. M. Young (trans., ed.) (CE Lectures on Logic, 1992)

M I  Moral Mrongovius I [1774–1777] (AA 27)
     Mrongovius notes on Kant’s moral philosophy (brief passages used to supplement Collins notes in CE Lectures on Ethics)

M II  Moral Mrongovius II [1784–1785] (AA 29)
     Mrongovius notes on Kant’s moral philosophy lectures (selections in CE Lectures on Ethics)

MA  “Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte” [1786] (AA 8)
     “Conjectural Beginning of Human History” (CE Anthropology, History, and Education)

MS  Die Metaphysik der Sitten [1797–1798] (AA 6)
     Metaphysics of Morals (CE Practical Philosophy)

P  Praktische Philosophie Powalski [1782–83] (AA 27)
     Powalski notes on Kant’s practical philosophy lectures

PS  Preisschrift – “Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral” [1764] (AA 2)
     “Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality” (CE Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770)

R  Reflexionen (AA 14–19)
     Selections appear in CE Notes and Fragments and CE Lectures and Drafts on Political Philosophy. Citations include Reflexionen number.

RGV  Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft [1793] (AA 6)
     Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason (CE Religion and Rational Theology)
Translations and abbreviations

RL  Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre [1797] (AA 6)
    Metaphysical Foundations of the Doctrine of Right, part one
    and the first published part of the Metaphysics of Morals (CE
    Practical Philosophy)

TL  Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre [1797] (AA 6)
    Metaphysical Foundations of the Doctrine of Virtue, part two
    and the second published part of the Metaphysics of Morals (CE
    Practical Philosophy)

TP  “Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein,
    taugt aber nicht für die Praxis” [1793] (AA 8)
    “On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory,
    but It Is of No Use in Practice” (CE Practical Philosophy)

ÜP  Über Pädagogik [ed. Friedrich Theodor Rink (Königsberg:
    Friederich Nicolovius,1803) (AA 9)
    Lectures on Pedagogy, trans. Robert B. Louden (CE
    Anthropology, History, and Education)

V  Die Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius [1793–94] (AA 27)
    Vigilantius’s notes on Kant’s lectures on the metaphysics of
    morals (CE Lectures on Ethics)

VA  Vorlesungen über Anthroplogie (AA 25)
    Lectures on anthropology (selections to appear in CE Lectures
    on Anthropology, Allen W. Wood and Robert B. Louden [eds.,
    2013)

VMS  Vorarbeiten zu Die Metaphysik der Sitten (AA 23)
    Preparatory work on the Metaphysics of Morals

VpR  Vorlesungen über die philosophische Religionslehre [1783–86?]
    (AA 28)
    Lectures on the philosophical doctrine of religion, Allen
    W. Wood (trans.) (CE Religion and Rational Theology)

ZeF  “Zum ewigen Frieden” [1795] (AA 8)
    “Toward Perpetual Peace” (CE Practical Philosophy)