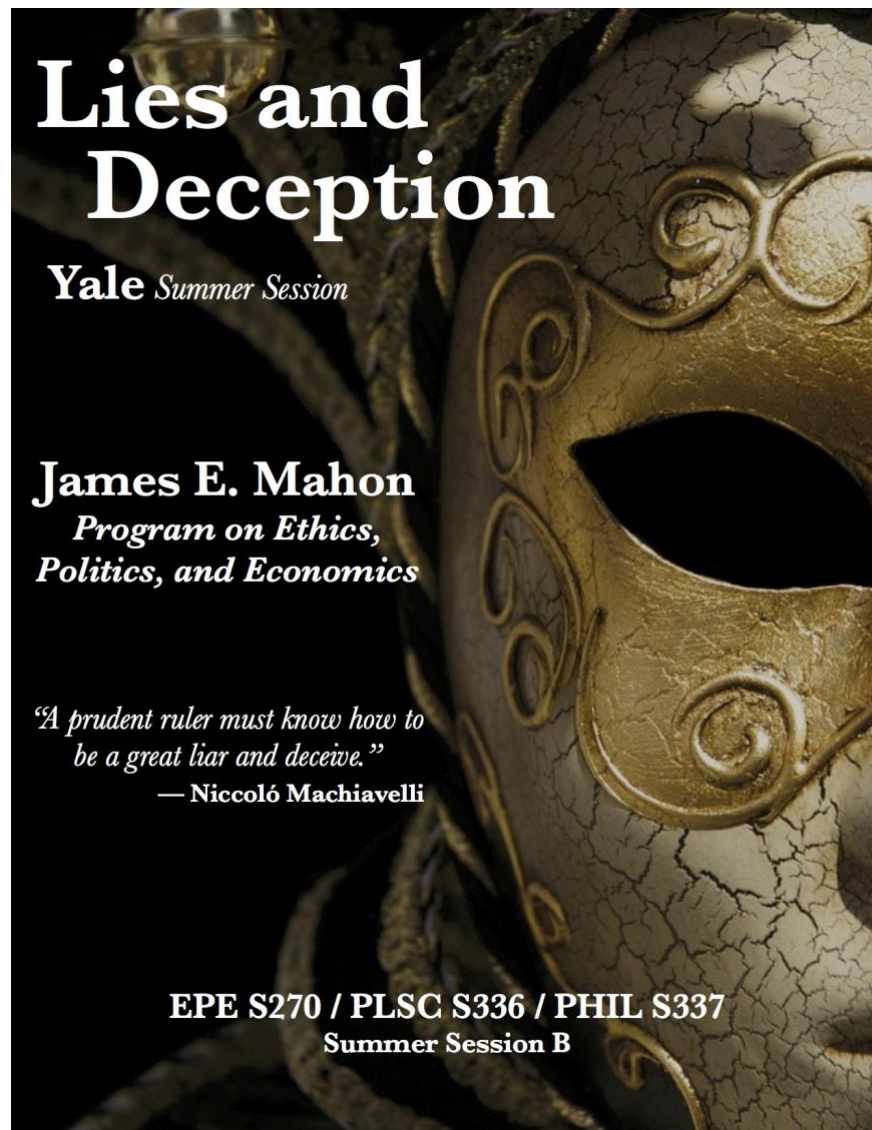# LIES AND DECEPTION

EPE S270 / PLSC S336 / PHIL S337

Summer Session B, July 12 - August 13, 2021

Monday-Wednesday-Friday
6:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.

Lies and
Deception

Yale *Summer Session*

James E. Mahon
*Program on Ethics,
Politics, and Economics*

*"A prudent ruler must know how to
be a great liar and deceive."*
— Niccoló Machiavelli

EPE S270 / PLSC S336 / PHIL S337
Summer Session B

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office Hours: Normally MWF, after class, by appointment. Extra meetings can be arranged outside
                   of those times on MWF, and on other days.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar will introduce students to the contemporary debate about lies and deception. We will consider the questions of what is a lie, what is deception, and whether all lies aim to deceive. We will also consider the many different forms of deception that fall short of lying. We will consider the moral questions of whether lying and deceiving are always, or almost always, or usually, morally wrong; what, exactly, the moral wrongness of lying and deceiving is supposed to consist in; and when, if ever, lying and deception are morally justified. Here we will look at what the philosophers Plato, Augustine, Aquinas, and Kant had to say about lying. We will examine the claims of sociologists and psychologists that lying and deceiving are widespread in society and discover what kinds of lies and deceptions are most common. We will look at lies and deception in the media, war, business, advertising, and politics, and in everyday electronic communication. Finally, we will examine self-deception, and consider the questions of whether self-deception is a particular case of deception, and whether the moral arguments against other-deception apply to self-deception.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *Lying and Insincerity*, Andreas Stokke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)
  (Available as ebook)

- *Deception: From Ancient Empires to Internet Dating*, ed. Brooke Harrington (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009)

Other selected readings will be made available electronically.

PARTICIPATION

This course consists of online synchronous class meetings with assigned readings. You will need to have a working computer with both video and audio capability in order to participate. You are required to join all synchronous classes on time. If, for any reason, you believe that you will be unable to join a class, or if for any reason you miss a class, notify me and arrange to conference with me to determine what work needs to be done to make up for missing the class.

You are required to complete all of the assigned readings prior to class. The assigned readings are given in the Class Schedule (see below). A prepared student will not only have read the material assigned but will have reflected on the claims and arguments of the authors. You should plan on making notes while reading the material. It may be difficult, and it may require more than one reading. You will be asked questions on the readings, and you will be expected to spontaneously contribute to the class discussions. If you do not do so, you will be called upon.

As far as possible, you should be clear, concise, relevant, and incisive in your contribution to class discussions, and you should respect classmates and the professor by listening to the contributions of classmates and by 'raising your hand' - using a hand-raising or chat function on the online platform - if you wish to ask a question or answer to a question thrown out to the class. When not speaking, you should mute your microphone to better enable others to be heard and to avoid accidental noise.

You may also discuss the readings, assignments, and paper topics with me outside of class by arranging video conference calls with me outside of the class meetings or by e-mailing with me. All participation in synchronous class meetings and e-mailing and video conferencing counts towards the overall grade for participation.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

In order to help you to develop your critical reading skills, and as a way of focusing class discussion, you will normally be asked to write a short (one page) response to at least one of the readings each week. The assignment will take the form of an answer to a question about the readings. These assignments will be awarded an individual grade.

PAPERS

You will have to write two 6-8-page papers for this course. The due dates for the papers are provided in the Class Schedule below. You will choose from a selection of paper topics. Papers should be typed (double-spaced). More details (about margins, the correct use of secondary sources, citations, and so forth) will be given closer to when the first paper is due.

Papers will be awarded individual grades. Students who hand in their papers after the due without receiving permission from me will be penalized by half a letter grade per day.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All work submitted for credit for this course should be your own work and should be new. If you use other sources (books, journal articles, newspaper articles, websites, etc.), then you must give them full and accurate credit. You are not permitted to use other students' work, or your own past or current work. Concealment of sources, intentionally or unintentionally, may constitute plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and may result in a failing grade for the assignment or paper, as well as referral to the university for disciplinary action. Please familiarize yourself with university's policy on plagiarism: http://catalog.yale.edu/undergraduate-regulations/policies/definitions-plagiarism-cheating/

BREAKDOWN OF COURSE GRADE

Participation Grade	20 %
Class Assignment Grade	20 %
First Paper Grade	30 %
Second Paper Grade	30 %

CLASS SCHEDULE

Wk. 1

July 12:   Definitions of Lying

- James Edwin Mahon, "The Definition of Lying and Deception," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (rev., 2015) https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/lying-definition/
- Extra reading, not required: "Contemporary Approaches to the Philosophy of Lying," in *The Oxford Handbook of Lying*, ed. Jörg Meibauer (Oxford University Press, 2018), 32-55

July 14:   Lies and Assertions

- Roderick M. Chisholm and Thomas D. Feehan, "The Intent to Deceive," *Journal of Philosophy* 74 (1977), 509-514
- David Simpson, "Lying, Liars and Language," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 52 (1992), 623-639
- Jonathan Adler, "Lying, deceiving, or falsely implicating," *Journal of Philosophy* 94 (1997), 435-452

July 16:   Lying without Deceiving?

- Thomas L. Carson, "The Definition of Lying," Noûs 40 (2006), 284-306
- Roy Sorensen, "Bald-Faced Lies! Lying Without The Intent To Deceive," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 88 (2007), 251-264
- Andreas Stokke, Chapter 1, "Lying, Deception, and Deceit", in *Lying and Insincerity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 17-36

Wk. 2

July 19:   Deception

- James Edwin Mahon, "A Definition of Deceiving," *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 21 (2007), 181-194
- Shlomo Cohen, "Manipulation and Deception," Australasian Journal of Philosophy 96 (2018), 483-497
- Don Fallis, "Is Making People Ignorant as Bad as Deceiving Them?," in *Perspectives on Ignorance from Moral and Social Philosophy*, ed. Rik Peels (New York: Routledge, 2017), 120-133

July 21:   Linguistic deception

- Andreas Stokke, Chapter 4, "What is Said,", and Chapter 5, "The Difference between Lying and Misleading," in *Lying and Insincerity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 75-136
- Jonathan Webber, "Liar!" *Analysis* 73 (2013), 651-659
- Clea Rees, "Better lie!" *Analysis* 74 (2014), 59-64
- Berstler, Sam, "What's the Good of Language? On the Moral Distinction between Lying and Misleading", *Ethics* 130 (2019), 5-31.

July 23:   Non-linguistic Deception and Frankfurtian Bullshitting

- Paul Ekman, "Lie Catching and Microexpressions," in *The Philosophy of Deception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 118-135
- Mark G. Frank, "Thoughts, Feelings, and Deception," in *Deception: From Ancient Empires to Internet Dating*, 55-73
- Harry Frankfurt, *On Bullshit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005)

Wk. 3

July 26:   Plato and Augustine on Lying

- James Edwin Mahon, "Classical Philosophical Approaches to Lying and Deception," in *The Oxford Handbook of Lying*, ed. Jörg Meibauer (Oxford University Press, 2018), 13-31
- Augustine, *Lying* (*De mendacio*)
  http://web.mit.edu/aorlando/www/HT610Augustine/On%20Lying.pdf
- Paul J. Griffiths, "Lying," in *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2004), 25-39

July 28:   Kant on l=Lying

- James Edwin Mahon, "Kant and the Perfect Duty to Others Not to Lie," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 14 (2006), 653-685
- Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated and edited by Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
  https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/blog.nus.edu.sg/dist/c/1868/files/2012/12/Kant-Groundwork-ng0pby.pdf
- Immanuel Kant, "On Lying", from *The Metaphysical Elements of the Doctrine of Virtue* [translated by Jens Timmermann and Jeanine Grenberg, unpublished manuscript]
- *On a supposed right to lie because of philanthropic concerns* [translated by Jens Timmermann, unpublished manuscript]

July 30:   Contemporary Moral Philosophers on Lying

- Alan Strudler, "Deception and Trust," in *The Philosophy of Deception*, ed. Clancy Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 139-152
- Tom Dougherty, "Sex, Lies and Consent," *Ethics* 123 (2013), 717-744

Aug 3: First paper due at 6:00 p.m.

Wk. 4

Aug 2:   Lies and Deception in Relationships

- Bella DePaulo and Deborah A. Kashy, "Everyday Lies in Close and Casual Relationships," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74 (1998), 63-79
- Bella DePaulo, 'Lying in Social Psychology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Lying*, 436-445
- Maureen O'Sullivan, "Why Most People Parse Palters, Fibs, Lies, Whoppers, and Other Deceptions Poorly," in *Deception: From Ancient Empires to Internet Dating*, 74-95

Aug 4:   Lies and Deception in the Media and on the Internet

- Hany Farid, "Digital Doctoring: Can We Trust Photographs?", in *Deception: From Ancient Empires to Internet Dating*, 95-108
- Jeffrey Hancock, "Digital Deception: The Practice of Lying in the Digital Age," in *Deception: From Ancient Empires to Internet Dating*, 109-120
- Paul Thompson, "Cognitive Hacking: Detecting Deception on the Web," in *Deception: From Ancient Empires to Internet Dating*, 121-134

Aug 6:   Distortion, 'False News', and Race

- Chris Heffer, "Epistemically Irresponsible Discourse Pathologies", in *All Bullshit and Lies: Insincerity, Irresponsibility, and the Judgment of Untruthfulness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 177-210
- Jennifer Saul, "Negligent Falsehood, White Ignorance, and False News", in *Lying: Language, Knowledge, Ethics, and Politics*, eds. Andreas Stokke and Eliot Michaelson (Oxford University Press, 2018), 246-261
- Robert Mejia and Kay Beckermann, "White Lies: A Racial of the (Post) Truth", *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, March 2018, 109-126

Wk. 5

Aug 9:   Lies and Deception in Statecraft and War

- Sun Tzu, *Art of War* https://suntzusaid.com
- Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapter XVIII, "Concerning the way in which Princes should Keep Faith," trans. W. K. Marriott https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1232/1232-h/1232-h.htm
- James Edwin Mahon, "All's Fair in Love and War? Machiavelli and Ang Lee's *Ride With the Devil*" in *The Philosophy of Ang Lee*, eds. Robert Arp, Adam Barkman, and Jim McRae (University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 265-290
- William Glenney IV, "Military Deception in the Information Age: Scale Matters," in *Deception: From Ancient Empires to Internet Dating*, 254-274

Aug 11:   Lies, Fiction, and the Arts

- Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, "Lying and the Arts," in in *The Oxford Handbook of Lying*, ed. Jörg Meibauer (Oxford University Press, 2018), 32-55
- James Edwin Mahon, "Novels Never Lie," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 59 (2019), 323-338
- Emar Maier, "Making up stuff", *aeon* 13 January 2020 https://aeon.co/essays/how-to-tell-fact-from-fiction-in-fiction-and-other-forms-of-lies

Aug 13:   Self-Deception

- Ian Deweese-Boyd, "Self-Deception," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2012) https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/self-deception/
- Neil Van Leeuwen, review of Robert Trivers, *The Folly of Fools*, in Cognitive Neuropsychiatry 18 (2013), 146-151.
- TedxJamaica: Robert Trivers, *Deceit and Self-Deception: Fooling Ourselves the Better to Fool Others* (2010) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAljJfR3HZo

August 18: Second paper due