

**1. Abbreviated Course Title:** Ethics in Everyday Life

**2. Full Course Title:** Ethics in Everyday Life

**3. Credits:** Three (3)

**4. Course Components:** Lecture

**5. Course Level:** 100-level

**6. Catalog Description:** This course introduces students to basic ethical reasoning. Starting out from real-life situations, students analyze ethical problems by conceptualizing the moral intuitions and beliefs they already possess. With the help of short philosophical readings, they develop methods of applying ethical theories to moral decision-making in their disciplines and own lives.

**7. Course Prerequisites or Co-requisites:** N/A

**8. Rationale:** This course will take the place of the Department of Philosophy and Religion's Contemporary Moral Issues course. Its revised methodology will serve majors and minors in Philosophy and Religion as well as the wider student population. For the former, the course presents a practical, hands-on introduction into ethics that will serve those of our majors and minors who decide not to further pursue the more theoretical study of moral philosophy. For the latter, the course will offer the opportunity to analyze ethical problems in a more systematic fashion than commonly happens and leave them with the skills to apply fundamental ethical concepts and theories in their own disciplines as well as their own lives. For both groups, this course will provide an introduction to the study of ideas, systems of thought, and cultures through the close reading of texts and other artifacts (including philosophical, political, cultural and literary narratives). Students will analyze real-life situations, case studies, and thought experiments in light of their pre-existing moral intuitions, rules of sound argument, as well as theoretical ideas and thus hone their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, enabling them to critically evaluate diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives in relation to their own. In writing analyses of moral decision situations, such as found in their own experience, popular culture (e.g. scenes from movies), case studies, and philosophical thought experiments, they will develop effective writing skills. At the end of the course, they will have moved closer towards becoming ethically reflective practitioners of their own discipline and morally responsible individuals and citizens of the world.

**9. Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

**I. Discipline-specific (DS) Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will be able to

DS1                      ANALYZE moral decision situations, such as provided in case studies

DS2	DEFINE basic ethical concepts and ideas
DS3	INTERPRET short passages from philosophical texts
DS4	APPLY ethical concepts and ideas to real-life situations
DS5	COMPARE competing ethical perspectives in their application to real-life situations
DS6	EXAMINE the ethical dimensions of their own conduct
DS7	DETERMINE some social, economic, and political implications of moral reasoning

## **II. University-wide Student Learning Outcomes (to be included in programmatic assessment activities, i.e. assessed in the signature assignment(s))**

### **Tier 1 Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Outcomes (T1CTPS)**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

T1CTPS1	Identify a topic that, while manageable/doable, is too narrowly focused and leaves out relevant aspects of the topic.
T1CTPS2	State issue/problem to be considered critically, but the description leaves some of the terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.
T1CTPS3	Take information from sources with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Take viewpoints of experts mostly as fact, with little questioning.
T1CTPS4	Question some assumptions. Identify several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).
T1CTPS5	State a specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) that acknowledges different sides of an issue.
T1CTPS6	Develop a methodology or theoretical framework that may be incorrectly developed, unfocused, or missing critical elements.

T1CTPS7      Provide a conclusion that is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); clearly identify some related outcomes (consequences and implications).

### **Tier 1 Written Communication Outcomes (T1WC)**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

T1WC1      Demonstrate awareness of context, audience, and purpose for writing, and attention to the assigned tasks (e.g. begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).

T1WC2      Use appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.

T1WC3      Follow expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation.

T1WC4      Demonstrate an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.

T1WC5      Use language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.

### **10. Instructional Procedures:**

Discussion (SLO DS1-7; CT1, 2, 4-7)

Lectures (SLO DS2-3, 7; CT1-3, 5, 7)

Reading Assignments (SLO DS1-5, 7; CT1-7)

Listening/Viewing Assignments (SLO DS1, 4, 5, 7; CT1-5, 7)

Written Assignments (incl. **Signature Assignment**) (SLO DS1-7; CT1-7; WC1-5)

Student Presentations (Individual or Group) (SLO DS1-7; CT1-7)

### **11. Course Content (all chapter assignments from required textbook):**

Week 1      Introduction: What Is Ethics? Examples of Moral Decision Situations  
Ch. 2: Some Basic Points about Arguments (Arguments)  
(SLO CT1, 7)

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|--------|---|
| Week 2 | Ch. 1: A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy (Relativism)<br>Ch. 2: Moral Skepticism<br>Case 1: Baby Theresa [Blackboard (hand-out)]<br>Ch. 1: (Utilitarianism)<br>Jeremy Bentham: <i>The Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> (BB)<br><b>Written Assignment 1 due</b><br>(SLO DS1-4, 6-7; CT1-4, 6-7; WC1-2, 5)   |
| Week 3 | Case 1: Baby Theresa continued<br>Immanuel Kant: <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , Second Formulation of the Categorical Imperative (BB)<br>Ch. 7: The Categorical Imperative (Kant)<br>Ch. 1: (Kant)<br>Case 2: Jodie and Mary (hand-out)<br>Ch. 1: (Divine Commands)<br>Plato: <i>Euthyphro</i> (BB)<br><b>Written Assignment 2 due</b><br>(SLO DS1-5, 7; CT1-7) |
| Week 4 | Case 3: Tracy Latimer (hand-out)<br>Ch. 34: James Rachels: The Morality of Euthanasia<br>Radiolab: The Bitter End<br>(SLO DS1-5, 7; CT1-5, 7)   |
| Week 5 | Ch. 8: The Virtues (Aristotle)<br>St. Thomas Aquinas: <i>Summa Theologiae</i> (BB)<br>Ch. 1 (Natural Law)<br>John Locke: <i>Second Treatise on Government</i> (BB)<br>Ch. 1 (The Social Contract)<br>Ch. 31: Martin Luther King Jr.: Letter from the Birmingham City Jail<br>(SLO DS2-3, 7; CT1, 4-6)   |
| Week 6 | Ch. 32: Peter Singer: Is Racial Discrimination Arbitrary?<br>Charles Lawrence III: On Racist Speech (BB)<br><b>Written Assignment 3 due</b><br>(SLO DS1-7; CT1-5, 7; WC1-5)   |
| Week 7 | Derek Bok: Protecting Freedom of Expression on the Campus (BB)<br>Ch. 15: Alastair Norcross: Torturing Puppies and Eating Meat: It's all in Good Taste<br>(SLO DS1-7; CT1-7)  |
| Week 8 | <i>speaker on veganism</i><br>Ch. 14: P. Singer: All Animals Are Equal<br>(SLO DS1-7; CT1-7)  |

Week 9	<i>library visit</i> preparation for presentations <b><i>Written Assignment 4 due</i></b> (SLO DS1-2, 4-6; CT1-2, 4-5, 7; WC1-5)
Week 10	Climate Change (documentary, hand-out) P. Singer: <i>One World</i> (ch. 1: One Atmosphere) (BB) <b><i>Written Assignment 5 first draft due (Signature Assignment)</i></b> (SLO DS1-5, 7; CT1-7; WC1-5)
Week 11	Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: It's Not My Fault: Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligation (BB) Ta-Nehisi Coates: The Case for Reparations (BB) (SLO DS1-7; CT1-7; WC1-5)
Week 12	Robert Nozick: <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> (BB) <i>Student Presentations</i> <b><i>Written Assignment 5 second draft due (Signature Assignment)</i></b> (SLO DS1-7; CT1-7; WC1-5)
Week 13	<i>Student Presentations</i> (SLO DS1-7; CT1-7)
Week 14	<i>Student Presentations</i> (SLO DS1-7; CT1-7)
Week 15	Review <b><i>Written Assignment 6 due</i></b> (SLO DS2, 5; CT1, 3-7; WC1-3, 5)

## 12. Undergraduate General Education Courses:

a) Approval is sought for a 100-level Tier 1 course, since this is an introductory course that will offer students a first encounter with ethical concepts and theories in their application to everyday moral problems. Students will have the opportunity to focus on developing their skills in two university-wide student learning outcomes, critical thinking and problem-solving and effective writing skills, as they analyze, discuss, and write about moral problems and their possible solutions. At the same time, the course will introduce them to work in the discipline of philosophy by, again, honing their critical thinking skills, introducing them to the reading and interpretation of theoretical philosophical texts, and to the practice of philosophy through dialog/exchange of ideas.

b) Approval in Mode 2: Language, Literary, and Cultural Studies is sought. While philosophy as a discipline works in different modes, it is mainly located in the second one, which includes the theoretical inquiry into ideas and their applications in reality.

Ethics does just that, and the proposed course is indeed an introduction into the analysis of human praxis in the light of ideas, and in particular the study of the normative character of values and beliefs as they direct human actions. The course introduces students to the distinction between descriptive and normative judgments; makes them recognize the importance of norms, values, and beliefs in society; and encourages them to critically examine their own ethical beliefs and values and become aware of their hidden assumptions. It studies the status of universal versus relative, culturally determined ethical beliefs and the importance of different values as they determine different ways of acting and being in the world. And it introduces students—in a modest way—to engaging with philosophical arguments and theories by analyzing their meanings, underlying assumptions, and social, cultural, and historical contexts through close readings of short passages from philosophical texts.

c) This course will be listed in the Philosophy & Religion Department (PHIL).

**13. Graduate Course Status:** N/A

**14. Degree Requirements:** The course is required for the major and the minor in Philosophy & Religion. It will not change the total number of credits in the major or minor.

**15. Specialized Accreditation, Certification, and Licensure:** N/A

**16. Assessment/Evaluation of Student Outcomes and Determining Student Grades:**

Class Participation .....	20%
(SLO DS1-7; CT1-7)	
Presentation .....	20%
(SLO DS1-7; CT1-7)	
Written Assignment 1: Preliminary analysis of example of moral problem from own experience .....	5%
(SLO DS1, 6; CT1-3; WC1-2, 5)	
Written Assignment 2: analysis of scene from popular movie .....	5%
(SLO DS1-2, 5; CT1-2, 4-5, 7; WC1-3, 5)	
Written Assignment 3: analysis of case-study (midterm) .....	15%
(SLO DS1-7; CT1-7; WC1-5)	
Written Assignment 4: reworking of Written Assignment 1 .....	10%
(SLO DS1-7; CT1-7; WC1-5)	

Written Assignment 5: analysis of case-study (final, **Signature Assignment**) ..... 20%  
(SLO DS17; CT1-7; WC1-5)

Written Assignment 6: Reaction to other students' presentation ..... 5%  
(SLO DS1, 4-5, 7; CT1, 3-5, 7; WC1-3, 5)

The **Signature Assignment** in this course will test both students' critical thinking and problem solving skills and effective writing skills. It asks students to write an analysis of a moral case study, in which they apply most of the ethical concepts developed during the semester and at least one moral theory studied in class. The form of this written piece will take the form of a thesis-defense essay, where students clearly identify the moral issue, present their solution in the form of a thesis, and provide proof for it by means of premises, which make use of facts pertinent to the case as well as normative concepts and principles. The list of sources needs to include at least one peer-reviewed article.

## **17. Bibliography (MLA)**

### **a. Required Text**

Rachels, James. *The Right Thing to Do. Basic Readings in Moral Philosophy*. 6E, ed. Stuart Rachels. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012.

### **b. Supporting Bibliography**

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Experiments in Ethics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2008.

Betzler, Monika (ed.). *Kant's Ethics of Virtue*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008.

Bok, Sissela. *Exploring Happiness: From Aristotle to Brain Science*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2010.

Callahan, Sidney, and Sissela Bok (eds.). *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education*. New York: Springer, 2011.

Connolly, Peggy, et al. *Ethics in Action. A Case-Based Approach*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Copp, David (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006.

Corlett, J. Angelo. *Race, Racism, and Reparations*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003.

Corrigan, Richard H., and Mary E. Farrell (eds.). *Ethics: A University Guide*. Gloucester, UK: Progressive Frontiers Press, 2010.

- Cruft, Rowan, S. Matthew Liao, and Massimo Renzo (eds.). *Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014.
- Davis, Michael. *Ethics in the University*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Driver, Julia. *Consequentialism*. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Elliott, Deni. *Ethics in the First Person: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Practical Ethics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.
- Holder, Cindy, and David Reidy (eds.). *Human Rights: The Hard Questions*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013.
- Hunt, Lynn. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. New York and London: Norton, 2007.
- Korsgaard, Christine M. *The Constitution of Agency: Essays on Practical Reason and Moral Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008.
- Lazari-Radek, Katarzyna de, and Peter Singer. *The Point of View of the Universe: Sidgwick and Contemporary Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014.
- Neiman, Susan. *Moral Clarity: A Guide for Grown-up Idealists*. Revised ed. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009.
- Nussbaum, Martha. *Frontiers of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2007.
- Pojman, Louis. *How Should We Live?* Stamford, CT: Cengage, 2004.
- Rachels, James. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. 7E, ed. Stuart Rachels. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012.
- Rossman, Gretchen B., and Sharon F. Rallis (eds.). *Everyday Ethics: Reflections on Practice*. London: Taylor & Francis, 2012.
- Singer, Peter (ed.). *A Companion to Ethics*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.
- . *The Expanding Circle: Ethics, Evolution, and Moral Progress*. Princeton UP, 2011.
- Strike, Kenneth, Pamela Moss, and James Bittker. *Ethics and College Student Life: A Case Study Approach*. 3E. New York: Prentice Hall, 2007.
- Timmermann, Jens. *Kant's 'Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals': A Commentary*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2007.



----- (ed.). *Kant's 'Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A Critical Guide*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2008.

### **c. Relevant Periodical Sources**

*Ethics*

*Ethical Theory and Moral Practice. An International Forum*

*International Journal of Ethics*

*Journal of Ethics & Social Philosophy*

*Journal of Moral Philosophy*

*Res Publica*

*The Journal of Ethics*

*The Journal of Value Inquiry*

*Theoretical and Applied Ethics*

### **d. Relevant Online Materials**

Ethics Updates ([ethics.sandiego.edu](http://ethics.sandiego.edu))

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy ([www.iep.utm.edu](http://www.iep.utm.edu))

Moral Foundations ([MoralFoundations.org](http://MoralFoundations.org))

Radiolab ([www.radiolab.org](http://www.radiolab.org))

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy ([plato.stanford.edu](http://plato.stanford.edu))

The Determinism and Freedom Philosophy Website  
([www.ucl.ac.uk/~uctytho/dfwIntroIndex.htm](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uctytho/dfwIntroIndex.htm))

The Internet Classics Archive ([classics.mit.edu](http://classics.mit.edu))

Utilitarianism Resources ([www.utilitarianism.com](http://www.utilitarianism.com))

**18. Budget:** No additional budget is required.