

PHLS210: Ethics in the Modern World

College of Graduate and Continuing Studies, Norwich University

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Course Description

This course introduces students to the study of ethics and its application to problems in everyday life, society, the workplace, and the broader world. The course examines the principal moral theories and ethical systems that have shaped our personal values and behavior, including consequentialist, non-consequentialist theories, virtue ethics, and others. In addition, students will explore the connections between ethics and religion and examine the challenges to morals posed by relativism, subjectivism, emotivism, and egoism. Finally, the course seeks to provide students with some skills of critical reasoning, helping them to evaluate positions, theories, and arguments as they apply them to concrete matters of personal, socio-political, and global concern. (3 credits)

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be expected to:

1. Identify and discuss major theories, thinkers, and concepts of ethics, including consequentialist theories such as act and rule utilitarianism and non-consequentialist theories such as natural law theory, Kantian duty ethics, virtue ethics, and the ethics of care.
2. Examine contemporary and perennial moral problems in light of these ethical theories.
3. Understand the challenges posed to moral life by relativism, subjectivism and emotivism, and egoism, and understand the strength and weaknesses of these points of view.
4. Develop and understanding of basic ethical and meta-ethical terms.
5. Distinguish between beliefs, morals, values, religion, customs, and laws.
6. Understand the connections between ethics and religion and appreciate the difference between religious and philosophical approaches to ethics.
7. Read, think, and write critically about ethical issues.
8. Understand, criticize, and construct philosophical arguments on matters of ethical concern.

Weekly Outline

Week	Topic	Requirements
Week 01	The Existentialist Dilemma - Part 1: Decision-Making and the Instinctual, Emotional, and Volitional Self	Discussion Forum
Week 02	The Existentialist Dilemma – Part II: Decision-Making and the Social, Spiritual, and Rational Self	Discussion Forum Discussion Forum & Week 02 Reflection: Academic Honesty and Philosophy Assignment
Week 03	The Consequentialist Dilemma – Part I: The Ethics of Egoism, Care, and Justice	Discussion Forum
Week 04	The Consequentialist Dilemma – Part II: The Ethics of Identity, Utilitarianism, and Environmental Ethics	Discussion Forum & Paper 01 Due
Week	The Deontological Dilemma I: The Ethics of Religion,	Discussion Forum

05	Legalism, and Virtue Deontology and Immanuel Kant	
Week 06	The Deontological Dilemma II: The Ethics of Purpose, Duty, and Rights	Discussion Forum & Paper 02 Due
Week 07	The Pragmatic Dilemma: The Ethics of Pragmatism and Corporate Ethics	Discussion Forum
Week 08	Applied Ethics: Bioethics, Cyberethics, Sexual Ethics, Professional Ethics, Military Ethics, Environmental Ethics, and Economic Justice	Discussion Forum & Paper 03 Due

Required Textbooks

Textbooks required for this course include:

- Pojman, L. P., & Vaughn, L. (2018). The moral life: An introductory reader in ethics and literature (6th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

*See the [Required Readings](#) page for additional weekly course readings.

Course Components

- The introductory lectures provided each week are designed to provide a roadmaps for your exploration each week. They do not contain the destination or constrict you from going down some side roads or alternative learning routes. Each week of this class, you will be learning about 2-3 moral theories and these lectures will be helpful to you as you seek to draw connections between a week's resources and previously studied resources. I would strongly suggest watching/reading the lectures on the first day of your study week so that the flow of the week makes sense and the resources you are asked to read can be adequately synthesized and discussed.
- Each week you will be asked to read (or watch) an assortment of resources that have been curated for specific purposes related to the topic of the week. While it would always be beneficial to read all of them, you have been asked to read at least eight of them.
- Each week, there will be a discussion forum set up for you to post a response to the "essential question" of the week. You may also include in that original essay some response to questions raised in the introductions. Posting your original answers earlier in the week gives you the best odds of getting more and more thorough feedback but the deadline is Saturday night. Let's agree that by Friday night is more ideal. I know we all have lives and difficult weeks and the quality of the work is of greater importance when you have to choose. A minimum of two quality responses to peers is expected. More is invited and appreciated. Imagine yourself to be in a face to face class and contribute when you have some insight that can add value to the learning of your peers. Your discussion work will be evaluated for a grade at the end of each week.
- There are four short writing assignments for this course. These assignments will be due on Saturday night at the end of weeks two, four, six, and eight. Please take the time to provide a course evaluation when the opportunity is presented.

Grades

The following table shows the graded assessment types contained within this course and the assigned weighting to determine the final course grade.

Graded Assessment Types	Points	Weights (%)
Discussions (50 points each x 8 discussions, lowest grade dropped)	350	35%

Written Assignments (200 points each x 3 assignments)	600	60%
Academic Honesty and Philosophy Assignment (50 points x 1 assignment)	50	5%

Letter grades for the course will be based on the following grading scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A	93-100%	4.0
A -	90-92.9%	3.7
B +	87-89.9%	3.3
B	83-86.9%	3.0
B -	80-82.9%	2.7
C +	77-79.9%	2.3
C	75-76.9%	2.0
C -	73-74.9%	1.7
D +	70-72.9%	1.3
D	67-69.9%	1.0
D-	63-66.9%	0.7
F	0-62.9%	0.0

For complete information on the Grading Policy, please refer to the [CGCS Online Catalog](#).

[Discussion Guidelines, Assignment Guidelines, and Online Etiquette](#)

Please review the [Grading Guidelines and Rubrics](#) for an overview of discussion forum guidelines, deadlines for posts, and appropriate online communications in this course.

[Late Work](#)

Failure to submit papers on time will result in a penalty. This penalty can be up to 5% of the maximum final grade point value of the paper per day for each day late (for example if a paper's max value is 400 points, at most 20 points can be taken off each day it is late). The instructor does not have to impose the maximum. However, a penalty will be imposed unless the student has an excuse approved by the instructor.

Unless arrangements have been made beforehand, it is expected that papers will be submitted on or before the due date.

[Academic Honesty and the Norwich University Honor Code](#)

A student must submit work that represents the student's own original analysis and writing. Copying another's work is not appropriate. If the student relies on the research or writing of others, the student must cite those sources. Words or ideas that require citations include, but are not limited to all hardcopy or electronic publications, whether copyrighted or not, and all verbal or visual communication when the content of such communication clearly originates from an identifiable source. While students are encouraged to seek editing

feedback, extensive revisions of one's work by another person is considered a lack of academic honesty, as it is representing another student's work as one's own.

For more information see:

[Academic Dishonesty](#)

[Academic Integrity](#)

[Norwich University Honor Code](#)

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[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/ADA](#)

Please consult [Appendix H: University Policy - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) for instructions on obtaining an accommodation.

Disclaimer: Please note the specifics of this Course Syllabus are subject to change. Students are responsible for abiding by any such changes. Your instructor will notify you of any changes.