

PHIL 0002 - INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: ETHICS

Catalog Description

Advisory: Eligibility for ENGL 1A

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: The concept of morality and values, Western systems of ethics including Virtue Ethics, Utilitarianisms, Kantian ethics, Feminist Moral Theory and their application to contemporary moral dilemmas. (C-ID PHIL 120) (CSU, UC)

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Identify and explain major ethical theories.
- CSLO #2: Apply ethical theories to contemporary moral and social issues and evaluate the theory's strengths and weaknesses.
- CSLO #3: Compare and contrast major ethical theories.
- CSLO #4: Communicate effectively orally or in writing on a topic in moral philosophy.

Effective Term

Fall 2022

Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

Contact Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Student Learning Hours

162

Course Objectives

1. Explain in written and/or oral activities moral reasoning, including virtue, deontological ethics, contractarianism, utilitarian ethics, natural law, divine command theory, and feminist approaches to ethics;
2. Critically analyze, compare and contrast the strengths and weakness of virtue, deontological ethics, contractarianism, utilitarian ethics, natural law, divine command theory, and feminist approaches to ethics;
3. Evaluate moral relativism, subjectivism and objectivism;
4. Identify the kind of ethical reasoning used in essays seeking to resolve contemporary moral issues;
5. Apply virtue, deontological ethics, contractarianism, utilitarian ethics, natural law, and feminist moral theories to a contemporary social issue in at least one formal written assignment;
6. Identify and assess the role of the metaphysical assumptions presupposed by each of the ethical systems discussed.

General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
 - AA/AS - Literature & Language

- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
 - CSUGE - C2 Humanities
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)
 - IGETC - 3B Humanities

Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable
- UC Transferable

Methods of Evaluation

- Classroom Discussions
 - Example: Small groups of 4-5 students will discuss the following prompt and reach individual student answers to (a) what a utilitarian ethicist would say about the moral worth of the store owner's actions, and (b) what Kant would say about the moral worth of the store owner's actions. Discussion prompt: A store owner sells some groceries to a child (apparently shopping for his mother who is home with the flu). The shop owner knows that he could short-change the child without the child knowing it. The show owner decides not to short-change the child because word could get out and negatively impact his business. What would a Utilitarian say about the moral worth of the store owner's actions? What would Kant say about the moral worth of the store owner's actions? Responses will count as a formative assessment of student's ability to compare and contrast ethical theories of utilitarianism and Kantian ethics.
- Essay Examinations
 - Example: 1. Students write a formal essay resolving a moral dilemma from the perspectives of three of the moral theories studied throughout the semester. 2. Students will write a formal essay defending a moral theory of choice by (a) identifying common misconceptions and (b) clarifying the strengths and weaknesses of the moral theory. Student papers will be graded based upon a rubric that includes correctness, thoroughness, clarity of thought and expression.
- Objective Examinations
 - Example: Students will take a multiple-choice examination aligning moral attitudes with the corresponding moral theory definitions. Example: Which of the following is true of the person with the virtue of courage? A. the courageous person acts without regard for existing danger. B. the courageous person acts courageously because it's excellent to do so. C. behaving courageously will make the virtuous person happy. D. the courageous person acts from fear of being seen as a coward.
- Projects
 - Example: Students create a chart defining the meaning of the statement "X is morally wrong" from the perspective of each of the moral theories studied. Students will create compare/contrast charts detailing the linguistic semantics of the compared/contrasted theories. Charts will be graded based upon (a) correctness and (b) thoroughness.

Repeatable

No

Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. Instructor will present during an in-person or online lecture case studies or scenarios that elicit various moral judgments. Instructor will lead an in-person or online discussion exploring the various moral issues of the case studies. Students will identify and explain the ethical theory that supports their moral judgment, and the compare and contrast the relative strengths and weaknesses of those ethical theories as they relate to the moral issues.

Distance Learning

1. Instructor will present during an in-person or online lecture case studies or scenarios that involve some type of deception or dishonesty. In small group in-person discussions or an online discussion forum students will be divided in half according to utilitarian and Kantian ethicists, and debate whether the form of dishonesty was morally justified.

Typical Out of Class Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read Plato's Euthyphro and describe how the issue raised concerning the definition of piety is relevant to Divine Command Theory of morality.
2. Read John Stuart Mill's Utilitarianism and describe how a utilitarian would determine the moral value of an action.

Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

1. Create a dialogue between a divine command ethicist and an existential ethicist that explores and contrasts the nature of moral goodness according to each. 2. Drawing upon the main ethical theories students will write an essay exploring the ethical dimensions of self-driving cars.

Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

Required Materials

- The Elements of Moral Philosophy
 - Author: James Rachels and Stuart Rachels
 - Publisher: McGraw-Hill
 - Publication Date: 2018
 - Text Edition: 9th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Ethics: The Essential Writings
 - Author: Gordon Marino
 - Publisher: Modern Library Classics
 - Publication Date: 2010
 - Text Edition: 1st
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:

- Beginning Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy
 - Author: Lewis Vaughn
 - Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company
 - Publication Date: 2014
 - Text Edition: 1st
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Exploring Ethics: An Introductory Anthology
 - Author: Cahn, Steven
 - Publisher: Oxford University Press
 - Publication Date: 2013
 - Text Edition: 3rd
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:

Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.