



Course Outline

2026-2027 Catalog

PHIL 4 - Introduction to Ethics and the Good Life

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: This course examines the concept of morality and values, representative ethical theories, and may include their applications to moral problems. (C-ID PHIL 120).

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of major ethical theories, including Kantianism, Utilitarianism and virtue ethics.
2. Apply knowledge of major ethical theories to moral problems.
3. Compare and contrast competing ethical theories and subject them to critical analysis.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
	<u>Lecture</u>
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Intuitionism	6.00
Non-cognitive theories (relativism, emotivism, prescriptivism)	6.00
Ethical naturalism (theological naturalism, eudaimonian ethics)	6.00
Ethical egoism (psychological egoism, Butler's refutation of psychological egoism)	6.00
Deontological ethics (Kantianism)	6.00
Utilitarianism (Bentham, Mill)	6.00
Virtue ethics (Aristotle, Hume)	6.00
Contemporary moral issues (may include: war, hunger and homelessness, global resource inequality, animal rights, the trolley problem, the free rider problem, the environment and future generations, racial and gender injustice, sexual and reproductive autonomy, exploitation, or personal and social responsibility)	9.00
Total Hours: 51.00	

Methods of Instruction

- A. Discussion
- B. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- C. Lecture
- D. Multimedia Presentations

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Quizzes
- B. Journal
- C. Short papers
- D. Examinations
- E. Class Discussion

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read Jeremy Bentham's justification of utilitarianism, and outline his argument in a slide presentation.
2. Read excerpts from Nietzsche's writings on morality and explain what "God is dead" means in the context of his moral philosophy.

Writing Assignments

1. In a 500-word essay, compare the Kantian and utilitarian response to a student who takes cuts in the line for Financial Aid just before the deadline and the closure of the office.
2. In a 1000-word essay compare and contrast any two theoretical ethical approaches to the question of whether bribery ought to be permitted to be used by transnational corporations.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. In a daily journal, write about your experience endeavoring to follow the moral law perfectly, according to Kant. Be prepared to submit a 500-word essay summing personal insights gained about deontological ethics.
2. Interview three strangers on what constitutes the “good life,” then in a 1000-word essay critique what was said from the Aristotelian approach to virtue.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Pojman, L & Fieser, J. (2016). Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong. *Cengage Learning*, 8th. 9781305584556.

Fischer, B. (2020). College Ethics: A Reader on Moral Issues That Affect You. *Oxford University Press*, 2nd. 9780190063337.

Other Learning Materials

OER: Philosophical Ethics (<https://www.oercommons.org/courses/philosophical-ethics>)

OER: Introduction to Ethics (<https://www.oercommons.org/courses/introduction-to-ethics>)

Minimum Qualifications

Philosophy (Masters Required)

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