



PHIL 2050: Ethics and Values

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

Semester: Spring

Course Prefix: PHIL

Course Title: Ethics and Values

Year: 2025

Course and Section #: 2050 010

Credits: 3

Course Description

Challenges students to explore and clarify their values; critically read works of philosophy, literature, religion, and history toward understanding the basis of their ethical views; and read, study, research, discuss, and write about difficult ethical issues. Focuses on issues of good vs. evil, justice vs. injustice, equality vs. inequality, and the necessity of defining and examining happiness and values. Engages students in serious reflection on issues of ethics and values as they relate to the students' own lives.

Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:

- General Education Requirements
- Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
- Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
- Discipline Core Requirements in Program
- Elective Core Requirements in Program
- Open Elective

Other: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Shane Smith

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Explain several different theories of ethics, and contemporary ethical issues.
 2. Describe the moral ethical dimensions of works of philosophy, literature, religion, and other disciplines within the humanities.
 3. Articulate their own ethical views and positions.
 4. Interrelate with a society of increasing intercultural connections.
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Course Materials and Texts

Ethics and Values readings PDFs on Canvas, Video links, Podcasts

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

Grading: The primary grading will be based on two (50 class) or three (G class) papers. One paper explicating on the theory of your choice, one comparison paper on your choice of the issues covered in class, and one paper comparing the “common sense ethics” of a person you interview about one of our issues to the class understanding of the same issue. Each paper will be between 1,800 and 2,400 words, and will be turned in over Canvas. Regular 2050 students may choose between the comparison and interview papers. Global or “G” students must write both, with the interview paper containing the global elements discussed in class. The remaining points will come from three areas: a short graded outline/transcript of the interview that we will work on together as a class, class participation both face to face and in Canvas discussion groups, and a 1/3 to 1/2 page weekly checkin.

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

See General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion below

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

Week 1-2: 1. Intro 1. Syllabus
1/7-9 2. Intro to Philosophy
3. Planning Ahead: Common Sense vs Theory Interview
4. Planning Ahead: Choosing an Issue
1/14-16 5. Value of Humanities Podcast (Interpretation)
6. “We Are Our Values”
Week 3: 2. Theory 1. Utility
1/21-23 2. Deontology
3. Experience Machines and Trolley Problems
Week 4: 4. “On Virtue”
1/28-30 5. “On Moral Taste”
6. “Can Virtue Be Taught”
7. How To Be a Stoic
Week 5: 8. Religion Quiz
2/4-6 9. Euthyphro/Problem of Evil
10. Divine Command
11. Islam and “Ten Steps”
Week 6: 12. Buddhism as Utility, Buddhism as Virtue
2/11-13 13. “Descartes Error” and Sentimentalism
14. “In a Different Voice” Care/Feminism
15. Four ways to write about Theory
Week 7: 3. Education 1. “The Republic” selections
2/18-20 2. Engaged and Liberal Learning selections
3. “Axe Handles”
4. “Trying Out Ones New Sword”
Issues
Week 8: 4. Economics 1. “Wealth of Nations”
2/25-27 2. “Buddhist Economics”
3. “In Praise of Idleness”
4. “What a Billionaire Should Give”
Week 9: 5. Earth 1. “Land Ethic”
3/4-6 2. “Respect for Nature”
3. “Eating Animals”

Week 10: 6. Abortion 1. Personhood, Philosophy, and Law
3/18-20 2. “Why Abortion is Immoral”
3. “Sickly Violinist”
4. “Virtue and Abortion”
Week 11: 7. Conflict 1. “Crito”
3/25-27 2. “The Path is Peace”
3. “When Soldiers Aren’t Heroes”
4. Hi-Phi Nation “Robillard” and “Fishback”
5. Brief remarks on Islamic Ethics of War
Week 12: 8. AI 1. “Sports and Genetic Enhancements”
4/1-3 Enhancement 2. “Moral Enhancements”
3. “AI and Personhood”
4. “Robots and Minds”
5. Memory, Care, Anthropomorphism
Week 13: 9. Art 1. “Studies in Art and Poetry”
4/8-10 Censorship 2. “In Plato’s Cave”
3. “What is Art, What is Porn” video
4. “Art and Censorship” podcast
0.5 Zombie Apocalypse
Week 14: 10. Politics 1. “Leviathan”
4/15-17 2. “Second Treatise of Government”
3. “The Social Contract and Discourses”
4. Rawls Video
Week 15: Papers Bonus. What Keeps Me Up At Night
4/22
G 2050
Papers Week 7 2/22 25% 35% Theory Paper
Week 10 3/22 10% Interview Outline/Transcript (G only)
Week 14 4/19 25% Interview Paper
Week 15 4/26 25% 35% Issues Paper
Participation Ongoing 15% 30% Quiz and Weekly

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

The Department of Philosophy and Humanities recognizes that Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing Tools are largely accessible to students and will be used by many in higher education for the foreseeable future. However, the skills taught in the humanities are unique. We aim to educate students in the careful reading of texts, the development of rigorous writing skills, the analysis and use of arguments, and to foster the thoughtful application of each of these skills in students’ personal and social development. Research has not yet determined what bearing the use of AI tools in the classroom will have upon the successful acquisition of these skills.

Therefore, at this time, online learning support platforms (like ChatGPT or Google Bard) may not be used for course assignments in our department

except as explicitly authorized by the instructor. Any assignment or content composed by any resource other than the student (whether human or digital) must be attributed to the source through proper citation. Unacknowledged use of online learning support platforms is a form of scholastic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

Some of our language has been adapted from the University of Minnesota

Using Remote Testing Software

This course does not use remote testing software.

This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each

course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).

Equity and Title IX

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.