



PHIL 2025 Ethics and Values

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

Semester: Spring 2025

Year: 2025

Course Prefix: PHIL

Course and Section #: 2050-033

Course Description

This course challenges students to explore and clarify their values by critically reading 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: Michael Mitchell

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.
-

Course Materials and Texts

- The Death of Ivan Ilyich and Other Stories, by Leo Tolstoy
 - All other required reading will be posted in Canvas. All assigned reading will be posted in the Files and Module pages in Canvas.
-

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

- Midterm paper: 20%
- Essay on influential writer 10%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Weekly reading quizzes: 25% (See explanation of Reading Quiz schedule below)
- Four discussion questions in CANVAS: 20%

Grading scale A = 93-100 A- = 90-92 B+ = 87-89 B = 83-86 B- = 80-82 C+ = 77-79 C = 73-76 C- = 70-72 D+ = 67-69 D = 63-66 D- = 60-62

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

See course schedule

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

MODULE 1

January 7-9 Ground rules for class – Definition of ethics – The importance of studying in the humanities – The nature and importance of critical thinking.

o Reading Assignment:

- Plato's Cave
- Reading #1, excerpt from "Screwtop Proposes a Toast."

First discussion question due by midnight, Sunday, January 12.

14-16 Critical Thinking

o Reading Assignment:

- How to Read a Society
- The Breakdown of Higher Education (excerpts)

21-23 Moral Ontology vs. Moral Freedom

o Reading Assignment:

- Nietzsche, The Problem with Socrates
- C.S. Lewis, "The Poison of Subjectivism" Second discussion question in Canvas due by midnight, Sunday, January 26 (Be sure to do assigned reading before responding to the discussion question).

28-30 Naturalism vs. Supernaturalism

o Reading Assignment:

- Reading #2, Naturalism and Theism
- Book 5, Ch. 4 from The Brothers Karamazov
- On Living in an Atomic Age

February 4-6 Virtue Ethics

o Reading Assignment:

- The Death of Ivan Ilyich
- Excerpt from Man's Search for Meaning

11-13 Ethical Theories

o Reading Assignment:
- Aristotle, Virtue Ethics
Kant & J.S. Mill.

18th Beauty and Human Flourishing.

o Reading Assignment:
- Kallenberg on Beauty
- Reading #3 on Beauty
- Excerpt from Augustine's Confessions.

NO CLASS ON FEB. 20TH Midterm Paper Due by midnight Sunday, February 23

25-27 Beauty and Transcendence

o Reading Assignment:
- Soul's Upward Yearning, Beauty & Transcendence.
- Chance or The Dance Ch.1

MODULE 2

4-6 Ethics and the Media

o Reading Assignment Reading #4 Journalism and Media Bias

11-13 Spring Break! 18-20 Race and Racism

o Reading Assignment:
- Adrian Piper.
- Reading #6, On Race.
Third discussion question in Canvas due by midnight, Sunday, March 23

25-27 Race, Politics, and Economics

o Reading Assignment:
- Reading #7, Opposing Views on Race
o Reading Assignment:
- At the Edge of Poverty
- How Much Land Does a Man Need? Essay on influential writer due by midnight, Sunday March 30

April 1-3 Bioethics, Abortion, and Euthanasia

o Reading Assignment:
- Aroha Mead, Geneology, Sacredness, and the Commodities Market.
- Hursthouse on abortion
- Warren on Abortion Fourth discussion question in Canvas due by midnight Sunday, April 6th

8-10 Seeking Justice in Political and Personal Conflict

o Reading Assignment: - Johnson, War and Values
- Holmes & Gandhi on War and Nonviolence.

15-17 Excerpts from Fahrenheit 451, 1984, and Brave New World (to be discussed in class)

22 Closing Discussions and Exam Review

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.