



Master Course Syllabus

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 037

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: Christian Swenson

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

A. Texts:

All texts will be online.

B. Films

In addition to a few documentaries hosted on YouTube, you will watch one film for this class, and it will be on Canvas:

Inherit the Wind

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

C. Grading Scale:

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

Grade	Percent
A	94-100
A-	90-93
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
E	0-59

D. Coursework:

This course is based on a thousand-point system. As such, each point is worth 0.1% of your final grade:

Random Acts of Curiosity	22.5%
Dialogues	15%
Exams	25%
Ideological Turing Tests	15%
Weekly Quizzes	22.5%

E. Late Work Statement:

The best way to be successful in this course is to submit all assignments by their due date. I will evaluate late-work on a case-by-case basis. If you will not be able to meet a due date, contact your instructor as soon as possible. If you're reading this, send me a picture of a dinosaur on Canvas. That way I'll know you're diligent and thorough and I don't have to worry about you. If you are unable to contact the instructor ahead of the due date, you will be expected to provide appropriate documentation such as a doctor's note to be allowed to turn in an assignment late.

F. Random Acts of Curiosity – Worth 22.5% of your final grade

We tend to get stuck in our ways as we get older. We see less of what's there and more of what we expect to be there. Moreover, many of us are burdened with fear of one kind or another. Curiosity solves both these problems: it helps us notice what we have learned not to notice, and it dispels fear. Curiosity is in many ways the opposite of hatred. So get curious! Every week, do something that breaks with your habits, demonstrates openness, creativity, or mindfulness, and then write about it. Consult the list below for suggestions. **I will give full points to all submissions.**

A (non-exhaustive) list of suggestions. Many of them are from the book *The Art of Noticing*, which is an assigned text. It's required in the class for suggestions on random acts of curiosity.

- Pay attention to things you've never noticed before about a person you know very well.
- Shower in the dark.
- Go without social media for a week.
- Have a dopamine fast (go without electronics, other media, socializing, and food for a day).
- Climb a tree.
- Attend a religious service for a religion or denomination you don't believe in.
- Pretend to be a fish.
- Imagine how you would be different if you were born in a different culture.
- Pretend that your room is a cave for a whole afternoon.
- Pretend that you're a tourist in the city or town where you live. Go where a tourist would go in that city/town.
- Make a Twitter account that convincingly portrays a political opinion that is exactly the opposite to yours.
- Read one of your class readings entirely out loud.
- Speak only in rhyme for an hour.
- Look at the same patch of sky at the same time of day every day for a week.
- Use a random word generator to come up with two words. Then search those words on YouTube.
- Count the number of squares you can find in your house.
- Wake up early and watch the sunrise.
- Use a tool in the way it wasn't made to be used.
- Meditate for thirty minutes (or an hour, or two hours, or four, etc.).
- Find the oldest object in the room you're in.
- Find the newest object in the room you're in.
- Compare memories of an event with someone else who was there.
- Count with the numbers you find on street signs, labels, clocks, etc. (look for a 1, then look for a 2, then look for a 3...) and see how far you get after a whole day.
- Imagine what someone else in the room with you is thinking right now and do this for 30 minutes straight.
- If you're multilingual, act like you don't speak English for a day

G. **Exams** - A midterm and a final worth 12.5% of your final grade each.

They will be largely multiple choice and will ask you to match the philosopher with thoughts they either said or would agree with.

H. **Weekly Quizzes** - worth 22.5% of your final grade

This is a weekly self-report quiz on Canvas where you self-report your reading, participation and attendance.

I. **Dialogues** - worth 15% of your final grade (5% each)

I want you to write dialogues—something like a play script—between two of the philosophers we've read. 4-5 pages doubled spaced (it goes quickly: you press enter a lot). Plato wrote in dialogues, and we will spend a long time near the beginning of the semester learning about dialogues as a way of doing philosophy. For one of these dialogue assignments (but only one) I will let you do a dialogue between

you and your own negative thoughts. If you feel uncomfortable with this kind of creative writing, I can also give you an alternate assignment in essay form.

J. Ideological Turing Tests - Worth 15% of your final grade (5% each)

Alan Turing was arguably the inventor of the computer as we know it, and he invented a way to tell if a computer was intelligent or not. In a double blind test where a computer and a real person both tried to convince you that they were human, the computer would be intelligent if it could fool you at least 50% of the time. You're not a computer, but for this assignment, you'll be doing another, slightly different, kind of Turing test. Instead of trying to convince me that you're a human if you're not, you'll be trying to convince me that you're conservative if you're liberal, liberal if you're conservative, an atheist if you're religious, and so on. In other words, for this assignment, you'll write a 2-3 page double-spaced essay where you'll try to argue the opposite of something you believe. You pick the topic. Argue that pineapple on pizza is gross (if you love it). Try to convince me that it's stupid to go to college. You decide. You'll be graded on whether you fit the length requirements, on grammar and spelling conventions, and on how sincere you sound. This is not an exercise in satire. I'll take points off if I detect irony or sarcasm.

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

Plato: The Allegory of the Cave

Plato: Apology

Read: Current Deseret News Article

Aristotle- Nichomachean Ethics

Marcus Aurelius: Meditations

Laozi: The Dao De Jing; Zhuangzi

Confucius- The Analects

Dhammapada Chapter 1

The Bhagavad Gita Chapter II

The Declaration of Independence

John Locke: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding Book II Chapter 1, sections 1-9

John Locke: Second Treatise of Government Chapter II sections 4-15 AND Chapter IX sections 123-131

Frederick Douglass- What, to the Slave, is the Fourth of July?

W.E.B. Du Bois- The Souls of Black Folk "the Forethought" and Chapter 1: "Of Our Spiritual Strivings"

Random Act of Curiosity

Immanuel Kant- Critique of Pure Reason preface to the second edition

Immanuel Kant- Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals first section

Mary Wollstonecraft- A Vindication of the Rights of Woman chapters 1 and first half of chapter 2

1959 Interview with Carl Jung

Mary Shelley- Frankenstein

Fyodor Dostoyevsky- The Grand Inquisitor

Virginia Woolf- A Room of One's Own

Sojourner Truth- Ain't I a Woman?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe- Faust, Part 1

John Stuart Mill- Utilitarianism

Eric Maria Remarque- All Quiet on the Western Front

Wilfred Owen- Dulce et Decorum Est

Charlotte Perkins Gilman- The Yellow Wallpaper
Malcom X- The Ballot or the Bullet
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – Letter from Birmingham Jail
Eva Feder Kittay on Care Ethics
Random Act of Curiosity
The Cloud of Unknowing
Ludwig Wittgenstein- Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus
Fyodor Dostoyevsky- Notes from the Underground

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

Plato: The Allegory of the Cave
Plato: Apology
Random Act of Curiosity
Watch: Inherit the Wind
Read: Current Deseret News Article
Random Act of Curiosity
Aristotle- Nichomachean Ethics
Marcus Aurelius: Meditations
Laozi: The Dao De Jing: Zhuangzi
Confucius- The Analects
Dhammapada Chapter 1
The Bhagavad Gita Chapter II
Random Act of Curiosity
The Declaration of Independence
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Wilfred Owen- Dulce et Decorum Est
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Eva Feder Kittay on Care Ethics

Random Act of Curiosity
The Cloud of Unknowing
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Fyodor Dostoyevsky- Notes from the Underground

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

Click here to enter text.

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.