



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
Course Prefix: PHIL

Year: 2025
Course and Section #: 2050-605

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: Alexander James

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

Digital textbooks will appear in the Textbooks & Course Materials section of Canvas automatically through the Wolverine Access Program. If you have technical difficulties, please contact the UVU Store or the IT Help Desk.

- (i) Plato: Five Dialogues (2nd Edition, Hackett Classics)
- o Plato, John M. Cooper (Ed.), G. M. A. Grube (Trans.)

- o ASIN: B016RBMJZO (Digital)
- (ii) The Dhammapada (Easwaran's Classics of Indian Spirituality, Book 3)
 - o Eknath Easwaran
 - o ASIN: B004DI7R56 (Digital)
- (iii) Tao Te Ching
 - o Lao Tzu, Sam Torode (Trans.)
 - o ASIN: B085KZZYMG (Digital)
- (iv) The Monarchy of Fear: A Philosopher Looks at Our Political Crisis
 - o Martha C. Nussbaum
 - o ASIN: B075RKFHVB (Digital)

In addition to these required books, you will have access to chapters, articles, and other supplementary materials provided at no cost via Canvas. These additional readings are offered in accordance with fair use provisions and will be available through the semester.

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

A 100-94% B- 82.9-80% D+ 69.9-67%

A- 93.9-90% C+ 79.9-77% D 66.9-63%

B+ 89.9-87% C 76.9-73% D- 62.9-60%

B 86.9-83% C- 72.9-70% E <60%

Assignment Categories:

Activity Points

Discussion posts 60%

Papers 10%

Attendance and Participation 20%

Exams 10%

Assignments:

Class Preparation/Discussion/Reading Assignments: these assignments challenge you to read difficult texts carefully and critically. They also ask you to document how you further challenge yourself in class to understand and critique arguments.

In terms of objectives, the class preparation and participation assignments most directly foster these:

- Objective: Explain how philosophers analyze and critically evaluate arguments (aligns with course outcome 1)
- Objective: Identify criteria for evaluating arguments philosophically (aligns with course outcome 1)
- Objective: Construct and critique arguments (aligns with course outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- Objective: Extrapolate ethical arguments (aligns with course outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- Objective: Create and appraise arguments verbally and in writing (aligns with course outcomes 1, 3, and 4)

There will be 10 or more mandatory discussion forums, total, (the amount will vary depending upon time constraints), each worth 100 points. Your final grade will be based upon a cumulative total of points, out of a total possible number of points.

2. Class Participation/Group Work: group projects challenge you to learn about a contemporary ethical issue, striving to understand cultural diversity and varying viewpoints both by grappling with the issues and by working with classmates.

In terms of objectives, group projects most directly fosters these:

- Objective: Investigate cultural differences about the relationship between religion and ethics, virtue ethics, race and gender. (aligns with course outcome 4)
- Objective: Apply knowledge about religion and ethics to applied cases (aligns with course outcomes 1, 2, and 3)
- Objective: Construct and critique arguments (aligns with course outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- Objective: Extrapolate ethical arguments (aligns with course outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- Objective: Create and appraise arguments verbally and in writing (aligns with course outcomes 1, 3, and 4)

3. Paper assignments: these assignments are designed to help you understand the critical thinking tools that philosophers use for creating, analyzing, and critically evaluating arguments. These can help you apply those tools to generate arguments of your own, to analyze and critically evaluate other arguments, and help you delve more deeply into the theories and show how what we learn in the readings can help us better understand and think about the world around us.

In terms of objectives, the writing assignments facilitate these objectives:

- Objective: Explain how philosophers analyze and critically evaluate arguments (aligns with course outcome 1)
- Objective: Identify criteria for evaluating arguments philosophically (aligns with course outcome 1)
- Objective: Construct and critique arguments (aligns with course outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- Objective: Extrapolate ethical arguments (aligns with course outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- Objective: Create and appraise arguments verbally and in writing (aligns with course outcomes 1, 3, and 4)
- Objective: Apply knowledge about various theories to applied cases (aligns with course outcomes 1, 2, and 3)
- Objective: Apply knowledge of theories and arguments to a film (aligns with course outcomes 1, 2, and 3)

4. Exams: The final exam ask you to synthesize what you have learned in class, furthering your writing skills and ensuring that you understand what we've done in class.

In terms of objectives, the exams foster these:

- Objective: Explain concepts and theories like metaethics, utilitarianism, and more (specifics are contained in each module) (aligns with course outcome 1)
- Objective: Extrapolate arguments for and against the divine command theory (aligns with course outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- Objective: Assess said arguments (aligns with course outcomes 1, 3, and 4)
- Objective: Create and appraise arguments verbally and in writing (aligns with course outcomes 1, 3, and 4)
- Objective: Construct and critique arguments (aligns with course outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4)

Attendance and Participation:

You are expected to attend all classes. Attendance and participation is worth 20% of your final grade. Points will be deducted for missed classes, in proportion to the number of classes missed. E.g., if attendance is taken 20 times and a student misses one of these classes, this will mean a student receives 95% in attendance.

Grading:

The writing assignments will ask you to practice one or another cognitive skill or activity: interpretation, conceptual analysis, argument analysis, synthesis, critical thinking, creative thinking, or conceptual clarification. --- There are some skills and qualities that you will be expected to demonstrate and reflect in your writing assignments:

- (i) reading comprehension,
- (ii) argumentative rigor,
- (iii) proper grammar, diction, punctuation and spelling,
- (iv) clear essay and paragraph composition/organization in light of argument,
- (v) conscientiousness and thoroughness,
- (vi) thoughtfulness and reflection,
- (vii) intellectual creativity and imagination.
- (ix) argument analysis,
- (x) argument construction

Your grade on each assignment will be based upon how well your work reflects a synthesis of these qualities.

The Intellectual Virtues:

There are also a number of intellectual virtues that I encourage students to exhibit and cultivate throughout this course: intellectual integrity, intellectual curiosity, intellectual fortitude, intellectual tenacity, open-mindedness, intellectual courage, conscientiousness, and thoughtfulness. Intellectual virtues are not skills, capacities or talents, but are traits or dispositions of character: they refer not to what a student is capable of doing, intellectually, but rather to the manner in which a student is disposed to go about inquiry in their role as a student: as such they can be encouraged, practiced, cultivated and acquired. Students are encouraged to practice these intellectual virtues in all contexts of this course --- in class discussions, in writing and in preparation for class meetings. Students will be rewarded for their efforts in this direction.

Late Work Statement:

Late papers/discussion posts will not be accepted for credit, unless you present a formal medical excuse.

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

In general, all the information you will need on Canvas will be found in five areas of the site: (1) Modules, (2) Assignments, (3) Files, (4) Announcements., (5) Discussions. Please set up your "Notifications" in the "Account" area of Canvas to alert you each time new content from any of these four areas is published.

- In "Modules," will track the course syllabus and contain mandatory discussion forums, video lectures, lecture notes, and readings. Note: our homepage is set to the course Modules.
- In "Files," you will find access to all readings for the course.
- In "Announcements," you will find periodic update

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

Course Schedule:

Jan. 6 Introduction

8 Plato, Euthyphro

10 Bruce and Barbone, 11, "The Euthyphro Dilemma"

13 Plato, Crito

15 Plato, Meno

17 Plato, Apology

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan 20

II. Eastern Philosophy

22 Zhu Xi, Mencius

24 Confucius, Analects

27 Laozi, Tao Te Ching

29 The Dhammapada

31 Upanishads

III. Meta-Ethics

Feb. 3 Shafer-Landau, "Eleven Arguments Against Moral Objectivity"

5 Kelley, "Logical Forms" and "Fallacies"

7 Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature

IV. Classic Ethical Theories

10 Bruce and Barbone,

51, "Justice Brings Happiness in Plato's Republic"

52, "Aristotle's Function Argument"

12 54, "Aristotle's Argument for Perfectionism"

55, "Categorical Imperative as the Source for Morality"

56, "Kant on Why Autonomy Deserves Respect"

57, "Mill's Proof of Utilitarianism"

58, "The Experience Machine Objection to Hedonism"

14 Sophocles, Antigone

Washington & Lincoln Day (President's Day), Feb. 17

V. Ethics and Political Philosophy: Foundations of Democracy

19 Dworkin, Is Democracy Possible Here?

21 Dworkin, Justice for Hedgehogs

24 Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have a Dream"

26 Aeschylus, Oresteia

VI. Aristotle: Human Nature, Political Philosophy and Ethics

28 Aristotle, On the Soul

Mar. 3 Aristotle, Politics

5 Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

7 Martha Nussbaum, "Aristotle's Philosophy," interview with Bryan Magee

Spring Break, March 10-15

17 Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

VII. Ethics and the Humanities

19 Alice Crary, Inside Ethics: on the demands of moral thought

VIII. Theology

21 Augustine, On the Free Choice of the Will

24 A Hidden Life, dir. Malick (Film)

IX. Esthetics

26 Plato, Symposium

28 Plato, Phaedrus

X. Ethical Communication: Kierkegaard and the Concept of Irony

31 Kierkegaard, The Point of View of My Work as an Author

XI. Democracy and the Emotions

Apr. 2 Martha Nussbaum, The Monarchy of Fear

· Center for the Study of Ethics Events

4 Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, Culture & Diversity Symposium, “Appeals to Heaven: Religion and Political Power,” Livestream Event
7 Center for the Study of Ethics, Student Ethics Symposium, “Living Our Ideals: Ethics & Participatory Democracy”, Livestream Event
XII. Applied Ethics: animals, environment, bioethics
9 Alice Crary, “Human, Animals, Right and Wrong”
11 Cora Diamond, “Experimenting on Animals: a problem in ethics”
14 Martha Nussbaum, Justice for Animals: our collective responsibility
16 Dworkin, Life’s Dominion
18 Sandel, The Case Against Perfection
21 Last Day of Class: Review
Apr. 24-30 Final Exam Week

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.