UVU UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY™

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 #: 2050-608
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: Shannon Atkinson, M.A., FHEA

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of several different theories of ethics, and contemporary ethical issues.
2. Demonstrate ability to critically read works of philosophy, literature, religion, and history toward understanding the basis of their ethical views.
3. Clearly articulate and rationally support their own ethical views and positions.
4. Demonstrate the ability to interrelate knowledgably, reflectively, responsibly, and respectfully with a society of increasing intercultural connections.

Traits

1. Knowledge of several different theories of ethics, and contemporary ethical issues.

2. Knowledge of the ethical views expressed in works of philosophy, literature, religion, and history.
3. Recognition of the rational underpinnings of ethical views and positions; their own, and others. Recognition of the value of interrelating knowledgably, reflectively, responsibly, and respectfully with a society of increasing intercultural connections.

Course Materials and Texts

The Moral of the Story, An Introduction to Ethics. 8th edition. Nina Rosenstand.

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

In this course, you will be graded on four tests, two 'argumentative' project papers, handouts/homework submissions, participation in online discussions and in class, plus attendance in class. Details for the course are below:

Handouts/Homework – 10 handouts = 10 points each = 100 points = weighted 7.5% of grade

We will cover 10 handouts during the semester that are all under the Files Tab as are all of our readings—It is your responsibility to have your homework/handouts completed *before* class, *before* the discussion of the day's topics and uploaded into Canvas (due dates are already in Canvas with notifications). Read the syllabus carefully or read what I have written on the board to know which handout/readings we will be discussing during class and for the next class as your handout/homework must be uploaded to Canvas via an uploaded document and/or image/picture by the beginning of class or it may be considered late. All handout questions are taken from the textbook and added websites and will be discussed and answered more thoroughly during the discussion. You may need extra notes to answer the handout questions, as the space I provide on the handout may not be adequate. All test questions are taken directly from these handouts; so, fill them out carefully and add to them from the discussions as needed. *(I also have modules and pages that will aid you through the readings. But these must be completed in order and marked as done in order to use them)*. You will receive 10 points for each *completed* handout. Completed handouts are those that have all the questions answered and uploaded to Canvas to the best of your abilities about the topics we will be discussing during that class *before the class has occurred/begun. Partially* completed and *late* handouts may receive half-credit (5 points) and you may receive no points if the handout is not uploaded at all. These handout checks cannot be made up so please make it a habit to have them completed and uploaded *before* you attend class. Simply put, this is your homework and students who do their homework invariably do better in the class.

Canvas discussion prompts – 10 prompts = 10 points each = 100 points = weighted 7.5% of grade

For each handout there is a discussion prompt on Canvas that you should participate in. I do this because students who are willing to participate in online discussions, are much more willing to participate in the class discussions. What I expect here is that you are willing to briefly share your thoughts about the topics we discuss each week and comment on two other students' comments or reply to a comment made to your post. As for this class, discussion prompts are due by Saturday at 11:59 p.m. The grading rubric for these is on Canvas, but I provide you with the wording here: What students will be graded on here is whether or not they answered the entire questions and/or questions asked for the discussion post

and show some critical thinking skills in the process. I will be looking for whether or not the student just 'answered' the question or actually put some depth of thought into answering the question and replying to others' comments in the same manner. I also provide an example of "netiquette" (how to discuss things online appropriately) on Canvas.

Exams – 4 exams = 75 points each = 300 points = weighted 30% of grade

You will have 4 exams that are T/F, multiple choice, short answer, a three to four paragraph (at least) essay question to be written on the exam, plus a few extra credit questions. All exam questions are taken directly from the handouts with some variations (although they cannot be used during the test) and I always provide an exam review the class prior to each exam. Missing classes and only attending the exam reviews will not only affect your attendance and participation points but may result in at least a 20-point penalty on your exam.

Project Papers – 2 papers = 100 points each = 200 points = weighted 30% of grade

You will be required to write two, 5 to 7-page, double-spaced 'argumentative' papers where you will interview and question a member of the community (you may interview more than one person for each paper) about a general problem in ethics and 'argue' that you recognize and can explain the moral theory they are using to justify the answers they give you and can recognize and define any fallacies in their reasoning (if any). The questions you will ask are on Canvas. A member of the community is a close family member (*although you can't interview family for both papers*), spouse, significant other, politician, civic leader, friend, boss, pastor, professor, priest, bishop, co-worker, student, etc., and if you have questions about whom to interview and if it is acceptable, please ask me. Be bold and branch out of your comfort zone to find someone to interview. The point of these papers is to 1) see if you are thoroughly understanding the theories discussed in class and can relate them to the philosophers/philosophies, 2) can write effectively and coherently about those theories, and 3) integrate these views in a manner which expresses why ethics is important in our society today. Although you must at least use the questions I provide, I expect you to have follow-up questions for your interview (you should check with me if you want to stray too far from the provided questions). These papers are the most valuable and rewarding part of the class as this is your opportunity to get out into your community and investigate why people believe, value, and act in the ways they do and how they view ethics. The project paper ought to aid in you becoming a part of 'the moral community' and help you further understand the importance of ethics in our society. You will submit these papers either hard copy or via e-mail/Canvas *at the beginning of class on the due date*. If you do not, your paper is late and *may* receive at least a 1/3 grade deduction every day it is late. If you submit the paper via Canvas, here is how you view my comments after your submission: How to view Canvas Comments. I am happy to help you during the writing process of your papers, so please do not hesitate to ask for help with your thesis statements, formulation/reproduction of arguments, and/or anything relating to the writing of your papers if it's not too close to the due date. I provide sample philosophy papers on Canvas. I also encourage you to use the writing center (UVU writing Center Links to an external site.). Details about the papers are at the end of the syllabus.

In class participation – 50 points = weighted 12.5% of grade

Students receive participation points when they ask questions or make comments—relevant to the course material—during class, after class, before class ***and/or*** via e-mail. Especially when we are conducting the discussions online. I expect, and you should want to participate in the discussions somehow as this will aid in your understanding of the material. As a rule, you should participate through a comment or question at least once in each class. If you do not find a way to participate, *you*

will not receive participation points. Simply put, a student that does not find a way participate in the course cannot and will not receive an 'A.' *'A' student's find ways to participate in the course.*

Attendance - 50 points = weighted 12.5% of grade

I realize you all have lives outside of school. If you miss a class or cannot attend, communicate with me via e-mail at least. It may not 'excuse' your absence, but it lets me know you care enough about the course that you are involved in it, Missing class *may* result in missing attendance points for each class. Communicate with me to avoid any attendance point penalties.

Grading for the course is as follows:

<div align="center">Grading</div>

A = 94-100%   A- = 90-93%   B+ = 87-89%   B = 84-86%   B- = 80-83%   C+ = 77-79%

C = 74-76%   C- = 70-73%   D+ = 67-69%   D = 64-66%   D- = 60-63%   E = 59% and below

<u>Expectations and grading of the 'argumentative' project paper (I have several examples on Canvas that you should read through, also)</u>

Grading of your paper will be based on the following criteria, although they are not exhaustive. These are not just 'rules' for writing a philosophy paper for my course, but are effective guidelines for good college writing in general.

1. ***Thesis statement: 20 points***. A proper thesis statement is generally fixed within and/or surrounded by an effective opening paragraph. A thesis statement tells the reader *exactly* what you will be doing in the paper *and* how you will get the reader there. A title of a paper or just introducing a philosophy/philosopher or who you will be interviewing to your reader is an introduction, not a thesis statement. A good thesis statement, presented after your opening comments, is often as simple as something like, "The purpose of this paper is to argue how John Doe uses the moral theories of consequentialism and the divine command theory of ethics in order to justify his view towards lying, all of which will be defined and explained below," or, "In the following paper with my interview of Mary Jane, I will argue that she uses the moral theory of emotivism to justify her views towards drug use while also committing the appeal to force fallacy and begging the question fallacy, which I will define and explain later in the paper." In the body paragraphs you should always be asking yourself if that paragraph supports, strengthens, buttresses and reinforces your thesis. If it does not, it may not need to be part of the paper.
2. ***Spelling/grammar/punctuation/style/structure: 15 points.*** Do not use fancy, enlarged, **bolded** fonts or margins that are wider than usual. 12-point font in Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial is typical. Standard margins are generally one inch all around. I will be grading you on punctuation, spelling, grammar and style. Pay attention to all such errors, i.e., *proofread your paper!*
3. ***Paper length: 10 points.*** You must type a 5 to 7-page double-spaced paper. If it is longer, no problem, but shorter is unacceptable. Title pages, works cited, bibliographies, do not count as a page. Having a page requirement encourages students not just to learn to write, but also to follow directions.

4. ***Proper citations and use of citations: 10 points.*** Although these are not research papers, you must use three different sources for citations. The textbook, class notes, your interview, and one or more of the following websites (Philosophy Pages.; Stanford Encyclopedia.; IEP Encyclopedia.) will suffice, but you may use other sources with permission. *Wikipedia is NOT a source and ought not to be cited from,* but you may cite from the sources they are citing. I do not care what style you cite in (MLA, APA, Chicago-Turabian), but if you are using or re-stating information that is not common knowledge (like detailed history or definitions of terms) from outside sources, you still must provide a citation. If you cite in the body of the paragraph, it should look like (Minch and Weigel, p. 45) or (Philosophy Pages Aristotle.) or (class notes, Handout 7) or (Interview, 02/09/18) generally with the punctuation on the outside of the parentheses. Quotation marks generally go before the parentheses. *You may use a works cited page or a bibliography, but these only tell the reader where you got your information, what works you cited directly from or what works you used in research. These do not tell the reader where in the paper these works were used, or which quote goes with which work cited and thus is an incomplete way to cite. You must tell the reader not just where you got your information from, but which quote, definition or historical information, is from where. The reader should know exactly where your information comes from and which works cited it goes with.* Punctuation errors within your citations are also citation errors. I believe footnotes[1] and endnotes[i] are the most effective and professional way to cite in a paper. You do not have to use them as you may decide to cite in the paragraph body, but I would encourage you to get to know how to use them. See sample papers on Canvas a guide.
5. ***Proper understanding/representation/explanation of the philosopher/philosophy/argument: 25 points.*** Remember, this is *your* paper with *your* ideas and *your* understanding of a theory of ethics from your interview. Make the paper reflect *your* understanding of the topic. You are being graded here on how well you understand and explain the theory of ethics or fallacy your interview is using and how clearly you re-present it to the reader. Using examples from the past to the present, perhaps even from your own life or your interviewee, as to how these theories apply is surely relevant. Follow the project paper question as to what needs to be answered and make sure you answer it in your writing.
6. ***Effective interview with follow-up questions: 15 points.*** I have only included a very basic set of questions to your interview that must be answered. It is your job to include follow-up questions that may help bring out the moral theory they appear to be using to justify their views or the fallacies they are committing in their thinking. You may want to include questions as to why they believe their way of thinking is a rational. You should not intentionally point out to your interview that they are committing fallacies or which moral theories they are using, but follow-up questions on the ones I have provided or that you choose to use will surely add to the clarity of your justification for why you think they are using one moral theory over another or perhaps committing a fallacy. You must not miss pointing out moral theories or fallacies.
7. ***Closing paragraph: 5 points.*** Give a clear and concise closing paragraph, which basically re-states what you have accomplished in the paper and often re-states your thesis. This is an effective way to remind your reader of your topic, your arguments and how you worked your way through them.
8. So, re-stating the grading it is as follows: Thesis statement: 20 points; paper length: 10 points; spelling/grammar/style: 15 points; proper citations: 10 points; effective interview: 15 points; proper presentation/identification/understanding of the theory of ethics and/or fallacy: 25 points; closing paragraph: 5 points = 100 points.

[1] This is a footnote. They are organized, professional, and easy for the reader to follow and appear at the bottom of the paper. They may look like this, Minch, Michael and Weigel, Christine, Eds., *Living Ethics: An Introduction.* Boston: Wadsworth, 2012. Second Edition. Pages 47-49. Or they may be as simple as Living Ethics, pp. 47-49 or Class Notes, Handout 7 or Stanford/Plato/Ethics. or Interview, 02/09/2018.

[i] This is an endnote. It's also professional and organized and allows your reader to easily follow not just where you got your information but exactly where in the paper it was used. They should look just like a footnote, but they appear at the end of the paper rather than at the bottom of the page.

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments
All required or recommended readings use chapters from the course text and the modules on Canvas that correspond to the class discussions below

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General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion
Module 1 – Introduction to Philosophy and Introduction to Moral Theories and Fallacies
Module 2 – Relativism and some criticisms
Module 3 – Skepticism and the Foundations of Morality
Module 4 – Contrasting learning ethics through formal education or experience
Module 5 – Gender and ethics, Abortion, Euthanasia
Module 6 – Social Contracts
Module 7 – Just War Theory
Module 8 – Ethics and Film
Module 9 – Environmental Ethics, Animal Rights, and AI
Module 10 – Existential ethics and finding meaning in suffering

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Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI
AI programs are not a replacement for your human creativity, originality, and critical thinking. Writing, thinking, and researching are crafts that you must develop over time to develop your own individual voice. At the same time, you should learn how to use AI and in what instances AI can be helpful to you.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Bard, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas;

- Fine tuning your research questions;

- Finding information on your topic;

- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts; and

- Checking grammar and style.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts/responses assigned to you or content that you put into a Teams/Canvas chat.

- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool.

- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.

- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty.

Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out to me for a conversation before submitting your work.

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.