



## PHIL 205G Ethics and Values

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

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**Semester:** Spring

**Year:** 2025

**Course Prefix:** PHIL

**Course and Section #:** 205G-V27

**Course Title:** Ethics and Values

**Credits:** 3

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### *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.

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### *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.](#)

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### *Instructor Information*

**Instructor Name:** Jeffrey Neilsen

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### *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*

Braiding Sweetgrass, by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Dhammapada: Introduction and Translated, by Eknath Easwaran

Discourses and Selected Writings by Epictetus, Penguin Classics

Letters from a Stoic, by Seneca, Penguin Classics

Meditations, Marcus Aurelius, Penguin Classics

## ***Course Requirements***

### **Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy**

- Vocabulary quizzes on philosophy vocabulary. Four quizzes in the term at 10 points each TBA. These will be the only quizzes or exams that will be closed book. (40 points)
- Quizzes on the class readings. There will be 10 throughout the term at 5 points each. (50 points)
- Reflection Essay. Choose one of the philosophers discussed in class and respond to some questions about their philosophy. The questions will be supplied to you. (50 points)
- Happiness Journal. During the day keep track of moments when you experience happiness however you define it. Before sleep, record the time of day and what you were doing. Then tell yourself three things you are grateful for and write them down as well. (50 points)
- Self-assessment paper. Stating your own sense of vision, purpose, and values. (50 points)
- Comparison paper. Where you interview a person from a different cultural or religious background, ask this person about his or her sense of vision, purpose, and values, and contrast these to your own (100 points)
- Class attendance: you will start out with 50 points but with every unexcused absence you may lose 5 points. Let me know if you can't make class. (50 Points)
- Final Exam. (60 points)
- Ethics slams. Based on real world topics. (10 at 5 points each points for 50 points)
- Group projects on poverty, prejudice, violence, democratic governance, and climate change. (100 points)

Grades: Each student needs to earn between 550 and 600 points for an "A". See the grade points breakdown below. On canvas ignore the percentages and only pay attention to total points. Below is the grade for different point totals:

A = 600-550 points B- = 400-350 points  
A- = 550-500 points C+ = 350-300 points  
B+ = 500-450 points C = 300-250 points  
B = 450-400 points C- = 250-200 points

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### **Required or Recommended Reading Assignments**

See Schedule

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### **General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion**

Week One

M Jan 6

W Jan 8

F Jan 10 Introduce ethics and values as the Art of Being Human: Living with graceful presence in each moment Review Syllabus Talk about the practices to achieve our course goals. Introduce ethics slams and moral reasoning Friday Activities Professor Nielsen's essays: 10 Habits of Miserable People and On Being Your Best Possible Self (on canvas) Review philosophy vocabulary Handout on ethics slams (on canvas) Prepare and present one ethics slam in class on Friday Quiz on syllabus and course materials

Week Two

M Jan 13 Discuss the obstacles to living with graceful presence Sample of Michel de Montaigne's aphorisms on canvas Happiness Journal due

W Jan 15 F Jan 17 Learning to live well in our decision-making and choosing Graceful Presence: care for the moment Read Plato's Apology in Trial and Death of Socrates or at [classics.mit.edu](http://classics.mit.edu) (see canvas) See handouts and the reading guide to the Apology on canvas Reading Quiz

Week Three

M Jan 20 (Holiday)

W Jan 22

F Jan 24 The ethics of civil disobedience Graceful Presence: care for one's body Graceful Presence: care for one's emotions/feelings Letter from a Birmingham Jail, reading on canvas Handouts on care for the body, on canvas The Dart Discourse, by Buddha, on canvas Happiness Journal due Reading Quiz

Week Four

M Jan 27

W Jan 29

F Jan 31 Graceful Presence: care for one's thoughts Graceful Presence: care for one's desires Friday Activities Selections from Marcus Aurelius' Meditations, (Books One, Five, and Twelve) or found at [classics.mit.edu](http://classics.mit.edu) and on canvas The Enchiridion from Epictetus, found in the Discourse or at [classics.mit.edu](http://classics.mit.edu) and on canvas Happiness Journal due Ethics Slams in class Reading Quiz Vocabulary Quiz

Week Five

M Feb 3

W Feb 5

F Feb 7 Graceful Presence: engage life with love Graceful Presence: love of self Friday Activities Commencement address by David Foster Wallace on canvas Mo Tzu on Universal Love on canvas Golden Rule Handout on canvas Excerpts from Rousseau, Aristotle, and Nietzsche, on canvas Happiness Journal due Ethics Slams in class Self-assessment paper Due Reading Quiz

Week Six

M Feb 10

W Feb 12

F Feb 14 Graceful Presence: love of others Friday Activities Excerpts from Kierkegaard on canvas Some writings on forgiveness on canvas Happiness Journal due Ethics Slams in class Reading Quiz

Week Seven

M Feb 17 (Holiday)

W Feb 19 Open TBA Happiness Journal due

F Feb 21 No class (National Ethics Bowl Competition)

Week Eight

M Feb 24 (no class-  
returning from bowl)

W Feb 26

F Feb 28 Graceful Presence: love of world & love of place Selections from Kimmerer's Braiding Sweetgrass See readings on canvas Selections from Native American philosophers on canvas Happiness Journal due Reading Quiz Vocabulary Quiz

Week Nine M Mar 3 W Mar 5 F Mar 7 Graceful Presence: love of time Moral Reasoning: Justice & Animals Friday Activities Selections from Viktor Frankl, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche on canvas Tom Regan reading on canvas Other readings on canvas Happiness Journal due Ethics Slams in class Reading Quiz

Week Ten

M/W/F Mar 10-14

Spring Break Enjoy the Break! Enjoy the Break! Enjoy the Break!

Week Eleven

M Mar 17

W Mar 19

F Mar 21 Examine Hindu and Buddhist ethical beliefs Examine Confucius & Daoist ethical beliefs  
Examine Jewish & Christian ethical beliefs Examine Islamic ethical beliefs See readings on canvas  
Selections from the Dhammapada Happiness Journal due Ethics Slams in class Should complete  
Interview for comparison paper Reading Quiz

Week Twelve

M Mar 24

W Mar 26

F Mar 28 Learning to live well together in society The nature of government, modes of production, and  
ways of life Friday Activities Handouts and readings on canvas Happiness Journal due Ethics Slams in  
class Reading Quiz Vocabulary Quiz

Week Thirteen

M Mar 31

W April 2 Attend symposium Learning to live well together in cont. Handouts and readings on canvas  
The Story of the Fisherman and the MBA, on canvas Ethics Slams in class

F April 4 (Religious Symposium)

Week Fourteen

M April 7 (Ethics

Symposium)

W April 9

F April 11 Attend symposium Work on group projects Friday Activities Handouts and readings on  
canvas Comparison paper due Ethics Slams in class

Week Fifteen

M April 14

W April 16

F April 18 Presentation of group projects · Democratic governance · Poverty · Prejudice · Violence ·  
Climate change Handouts on canvas and slides Presentation of group projects Vocabulary Quiz

Week Sixteen

M April 21

Course Review Readings & handouts on canvas Ethics Slams in class Reflection essay due

TBA April 24 -- 30 FINAL EXAM Final Exam (open on canvas all final's week)

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## ***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

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### **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.

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## ***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](mailto: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](mailto:DHHservices@uvu.edu)

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

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### **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

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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](#).

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### **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](mailto:TitleIX@uvu.edu) – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

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### **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](mailto: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.