



## Master Course Syllabus

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

**Course Prefix:** PHIL

**Course Title:** Ethics and Values

**Year:** 2025

**Course and Section #:** 205G X61

**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:** Dr. Blair Van Dyke

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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***

**\*Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: The Original 1845 Edition.* (The Autobiography Classics of Frederic G. Douglass)**

**\*Class readings are posted on Canvas**

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## ***Course Requirements***

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

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

**\*All Students are expected to read assigned texts carefully and be prepared to be tested on content and write responses to the concepts and premises put forward by philosophers we will study this semester. It is vital that you engage the texts critically.**

**\* All Students are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty as outlined in the student handbook. Students who cheat on exams or plagiarize material will be at the mercy of the professor within the bounds of school policy. Academic standards regarding cheating and plagiarism are outlined here: *Student Rights and Responsibilities Code--UVU* on the UVU website. It is entirely inappropriate to employ Artificial Intelligence programs to write papers or responses to essay test questions. That is cheating and penalties apply.**

**In addition to the above requirements, grades for this course depend upon the following elements:**

**Examinations (200 pts): Two examinations (midterm & final) will be administered--each consisting of essay questions. A list of all questions will be distributed prior to both exams for student review (that is correct, you will have the actual test questions 2 or 3 days before you take the exam). Important: if you fail to take an exam on the appointed day without making prior arrangements with me your grade will automatically be docked 50% for each day you do not take the exam following the scheduled test date.**

**Vocabulary Test (50 pts): A multiple-choice vocabulary test will be administered with the final exam. Over the course of the semester, it is important that you become very familiar with vocabulary terms employed by different philosophers. If you work at this consistently, this will be a straightforward, fairly simple test. If you neglect studying vocabulary terms, this test will be difficult. The bulk of the vocabulary terms are posted in “Files” on Canvas. Terms may be added during the semester.**

**Response to the “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass” (50 points):**

***This response is due February 25 by 11:59 pm.***

**Douglass was the most prominent African American of the nineteenth century that was born into slavery and wrote and spoke about the horrors of enslavement after he escaped bondage and settled in the northern states. Knowing his writings is essential to understanding the reality of white supremacy and its’ relationship to Christianity in the United States then and now. The specifics of this assignment will be posted on Canvas. Begin your careful reading of the book immediately. It is available at the UVU Library or for purchase online for about \$9.**

**Reading Quizzes (approximately 80 pts): The quizzes are straightforward if you have read carefully. Usually, there is one quiz per reading. Quizzes are posted on Canvas. IMPORTANT: missed quizzes may not be made up.**

**Response to & Analysis of Selected Videos (approximately 75 points): Throughout the semester you will watch assigned videos that are relevant to our focus on Christianity and white supremacy. Specific directions on approach for writing will be posted in assignments. To receive an “A” on these papers you must follow directions with precision and write an essay that is clearly articulated, argued, and is made up entirely of your analysis. A mere overview of the video or**

recap of story line will result in a very low grade. **Reminder: using AI to write your papers in this class is not appropriate. Outline your thoughts, write your essay, use “traditional” editorial tools such as spell check and grammar check, and submit your best work (emphasis on *your* work).**

**Thought Exercise Writing Assignments (approximately 30 points):** two or three times during the semester you will be assigned to respond to scenarios that are ethical dilemmas. You will take a position and justify your position using the theories and tenets of philosophers we have studied to that point. If your response is clearly articulated and carefully argued, you will receive full credit for the assignment.

**Grading:**

**Grading breakdown:**

94 –100% = A

90 – 93.9% = A-

87 – 89.9% = B+

84– 86.9% = B

80 – 83.9% = B-

77 –79.9% = C+

74 – 76.9% = C

70 –73.9% = C-

67 – 69.9% = D+

64 –66.9 = D

60 –63.9% = D-

0 – 59.9% = E

- A. Video Response Papers: approximately 75 points
- B. Response to “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass”: 50 points
- C. Exams: 250 points
- D. Quizzes: 80-100 points

**GENERALLY RUBRIC & GRADING STANDARDS**

\*Please be aware that grades for written assignments depend upon the quality of your work.

Simply “doing all the work” or “completing” an assignment does not guarantee an “A.”

\*Assignments that receive an “A” indicate superior work, the product of effort and ability. “A” papers exceed minimal standards of the assignments in which the writer considers class discussions, reading assignments, relevant analysis, and writes clearly, without grammatical and compositional errors. “A” papers and test responses effectively employ the vocabulary of authors and theories associated with the question.

\*Assignments that receive a “B” are better than average, indicating focused and concise thinking. A “B” grade indicates obvious care in composition and grammar and indicates a strong understanding of the relevant course material.

\*Assignments that receive a “C” indicate average university-level work. These assignments manifest thoughtful inquiry and skillful writing (no misspelled words, few typographical errors). Such papers show an adequate grasp of the course material from the readings and class discussions. “C” papers may exhibit minor flaws in grammar, spelling, or format. Excessive errors in this respect reduce the grade to a C- or D.

**\*Assignments that receive a “D”** reflect poor work, failure to grasp basic concepts covered in the course, and may be a result of poor writing and expression.

**\*Assignments that receive an “E”** are characterized by mechanical and grammatical deficiencies and fail to address the relevant material.

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## **Required or Recommended Reading Assignments**

See General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture below

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

### **SECTION ONE: The Enlightenment & Foundational Issues in Ethics**

#### **Tuesday, January 6-10 (Intro and Plato’s Ethics)**

**Introduction to the course and its focus**

**Assignments:**

1)\***Read the Syllabus carefully**

**RS—Syllabus (located in “Files” which are organized alphabetically)**

**\*Review power point presentation**

**RS—Review “Intro Lecture E&V” (in “Files” which are organized alphabetically)**

**\*Take Quiz 1 (NOTE: the quizzes are timed so don’t open the quiz until you are ready to take the quiz (due no later than Jan 10 by 11:59 pm) after you have studied the readings & power points assigned)**

**RS—Plato, “The Ring of Gyges” (located in “Files” which are organized alphabetically)**

2)\***Read Plato’s “The Ring of Gyges” carefully (listed as “Plato, Ring of Gyges” in Files)**

**\*Review power point presentation**

**\*Take Quiz 2 (due no later than Jan 10 by 11:59 pm) Reminder: the quizzes are timed so don’t open the quiz until you are ready to take the quiz)**

#### **Week 2: January 13-17 (Christian Belief Contrasted to Plato’s Ethics)**

**RS—Paul to the Romans (listed as “Romans 5-8” in Files)**

**Assignments:**

1)\***Read Romans 5-8 in Files**

2)\***Review power point presentation (listed as “Paul’s Epistle to the Romans” in Files)**

**\*Take Quiz 3 (due no later than January 17 by 11:59 pm)**

#### **Week 3: January 21-24 (The Enlightenment)**

**RS—Rubenstein & Smith, “History of the Jefferson Bible” (listed as “Jefferson Bible, History of” in Files)**

**Assignments:**

1)\***Read Rubenstein & Smith**

2)\***Review power point presentation (“Enlightenment & the Jefferson Bible,” in Files)**

**\*Take Quiz 4 (due no later than Jan 24 by 11:59 pm)**

#### **Week 4: January 27-31 (Systemic Racism? Video Response)**

**Assignments:**

1)\***Watch “13<sup>th</sup>” an award-winning documentary—available on YouTube (100 minutes in length (available on YouTube)**

2)\*Write a response according to the assignment posted on Canvas.  
**IMPORTANT: Read the assignment and the question to answer before you watch the video. Due Friday, January 31 by 11:59 pm. This video is 100 minutes.**

**Week 5: February 3-7 (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau “The Social Contract”)  
RS—Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau (listed as “Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau in files)**

**Assignments:**

1)\*Read the posted excerpts from Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau (in Files)  
2)\*Review power point presentation (“Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau Social Contract” in Files)

**Take Quiz 5 (due no later than Feb 7 by 11:59 pm)**

**Week 6: February 10-14 Kant: Deontology and the Categorical Imperative)  
RS—Kant, Intro to the Categorical Imperative (in Files)**

**Assignments:**

1)\* Read Kant, Intro to the Categorical Imperative.  
2)\* Review power point presentation (Kant, Intro to the Categorical Imperative in Files)  
3)\* 9/11 thought exercise part one—1 page personal response. Assignment posted on Canvas.  
**Due no later than February 14 by 11:59**

**Take Quiz 6 (due no later than February 14 by 11:59 pm)**

**Week 7: February 18-21**

**Assignment: Watch documentary “Slavery by Another Name—do written response.**

**\*Video Response Assignment: “Slavery by Another Name,” PBS Documentary (available on YouTube). Details for the assignment posted on Canvas in “Assignments.” Read the instructions carefully. This video is 90 minutes.  
DUE FRIDAY, February 21 by 11:59 pm.**

**Week 8: February 24-28**

**Assignment: Midterm Exam**

**Exam is posted on Canvas (posted as “Midterm Exam). Follow instructions very carefully. Due Friday February 28 by 11:59 pm.**

**Week 9: March 3-7 Plato: Divine Command Theory and the Problem of Evil.**

**RS—Plato, “Euthyphro”**

**Assignments:**

1)\* Read Plato, “Euthyphro”  
2)\* Review power point presentation (Plato, Euthyphro in Files)

**Take Quiz 7 (due Friday, March 7 by 11:59 pm)**

3)\*\***Response to Autobiography of Frederick G. Douglass due March 7, by 11:59 pm\*\*\***  
**Assignment posted in Files of Canvas. Follow instructions carefully.**

**Week 10: March 10-14 Spring**

**Week 11: March 17-21 John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism & Classic Liberalism**

**RS—Mill, “On Liberty”**

**Assignments:**

\*1) Read Mill, “On Liberty”

\*2) Review power point presentation on Utilitarianism and Classic Liberalism

Take Quiz 8 (due Friday March 21 by 11:59 pm)

**Week 12: March 24-28 Patrick Devlin, Communitarianism & Moral Legalism**

RS—Devlin, “The Enforcement of Morals

**Assignments:**

1)\*Read Devlin “The Enforcement of Morals”

2)\* Review power point presentation on Moral Legalism

Take Quiz 9 (due Friday March 28 by 11:59 pm)

3)\* 9/11 thought exercise part two: 1 page response. Assignment posted on Canvas.

**Week 13: March 31-April 4 Ethical Dimensions of Christianity & White Supremacy**

RS—Fletcher, “How Christian Supremacy Gave Birth to White Supremacy”

**Assignments:**

1)\* Read Fletcher, “How Christian Supremacy Gave Birth to White Supremacy”

2)\*Review power point presentation on Fletcher.

Take Quiz 10 (due Friday April 4 by 11:59 pm)

\***Video Response Assignment:** “Till,” the motion picture. Available on Prime—perhaps elsewhere (if you don’t have Prime, find someone that does. Details for the assignment posted on Canvas in “Assignments.” This video movie is 130 minutes.

**DUE FRIDAY, April 4 by 11:59 pm**

**Week 14: April 7-11 Liberal Theology & Black Liberation Theology**

RS—Cone, “God in Black Theology”

**Assignments:**

1)\*Read Cone, “God in Black Theology

2)\*Review power point presentation

Take Quiz 11 (due Friday, April 11 by 11:59 pm)

**Week 15: April 14-18 Martin Luther King Jr. & Malcom X**

RS—King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

RS—Malcom X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”

**Assignments:**

1)\*Read “Letter from Birmingham Jail” & “The Ballot or the Bullet”

2)\*Review power point presentation

Take Quiz 12 (due Friday, April 18 by 11:59 pm)

**Week 16: April 21-22**

\***Video Response Assignment:** “Just Mercy,” the motion picture. Available at multiple venues.

Details for the assignment posted on Canvas in “Assignments.” This video movie is approximately 135 minutes.

**DUE TUESDAY, April 22 by 11:59 pm**

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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 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.