GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1) COURSE GOALS: The goals of this course are to promote the following:
   a. student familiarity with a wide range of ethical positions and arguments from antiquity to the present and from diverse cultural and socio-political contexts.
   b. student ability to reason critically and to engage in ethical reflection through considering a variety of problems involving ethical and moral issues.

2) COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Students who complete this course successfully should be able to
   a. interpret assigned texts and other learning materials by accurately explaining and/or describing concepts and arguments presented.
   b. reason about moral issues and ideas by (a) evaluating the content, structure, and strategies involved in addressing ethical problems and (b) applying concepts and arguments to contemporary ethical issues at the global/national level and to their personal lives.
   c. collaborate with other students by presenting their ideas and supporting them in a rational manner, through adopting a *charitable attitude and using sound argument** principles.

*For the purposes of this course a charitable attitude will be one in which the student assumes that the person who disagrees with her ideas or her position on an issue, is both rational and intelligent, and will treat her as such.

**An argument will be considered sound if it has valid form in which the conclusion follows from the premises and the reasons given for the conclusion are true (see p. 10 MacKinnon text)
Part 1: Theoretical Ethics

Module One   The BIG Questions and Ideas

- What is ethics and why study it? Can one learn to be ethical?
- How do we come to know or to think we know right from wrong, good from bad?
- What is the purpose of an ethical theory?
- Why are ethical problems “of a different kind” than are mathematical problems for example?
- Is a global (universal ethics) possible? On what can we agree? How do religion and free speech influence the potential for a global ethics?
- How does the problem of relativism relate to the “dream” of a global ethics?
- Is it possible to be a moral person if one does not believe in God or in a god? i.e. does one have to be a “believer” to be moral?
- What might the 4-way stop teach us about the beginnings of moral ideas in early humans?

Reading Assignments (Module 1)

Chapter 1. Ethics and Ethical reasoning p. 1-14
Chapter 2. Religion and Global Ethics p.20-34
*End of Chapter (EOC) Reading Assignment: Euthyphro p.34-37
Chapter 3. Ethical Relativism p.46-56

*Omit end of chapter readings unless specifically assigned

Learning Activities

- PPT: Ch. 1, 2, 3
- Video Clip: An Absolute Good
- Video Clip: Sophie’s Choice

PPT Briefs

The 4-way stop (TBP)
In the beginning (TBP)

Salon Discussion Post

Your Childhood Narrative (guide posted)

Chapter 1

Some questions and ideas to think about before reading this chapter

- What first comes to mind when you think about ethics and morality?
As a child how did you learn about good and evil, right and wrong?

Think about a moral (ethical) dilemma you have experienced in your life. How did you (or will you) decide what to do?

Student Learning Objectives

After Studying Chapter 1 and related learning materials, students will be able to do the following:

1. Define ethics and list two reasons for studying ethics.
2. Explain the importance of reasoning in making moral choices.
3. Explain ethical theories, in terms of type, purpose and their relationship to moral decision making.
4. Explain the difference between objective and subjective approaches to ethical decisions.
5. Discuss the major reasons people use for making specific moral judgments and decisions.
6. Explain the difference between solving ethical problems and solving mathematical ones, providing an example of each.
7. Discuss the relevance of the video clips, Sophie’s choice and an absolute good to our study of ethical choices
8. Write an essay describing a personal experience related to a moral story from childhood.

CHAPTER TWO: Religion and Global Ethics

Some questions and ideas to think about before reading this chapter

- The WITANG Question: a hypothetical question that asks “What if there ain’t no God- just us to work it out?” (Where do our ideas of right and wrong come from?” Is it possible to be a moral person if one does not believe in God or in a god?)
- What are the major sources of early human ideas about right and wrong, good and bad?

Student Learning Outcomes

After Studying Chapter 2 and related learning materials, students will be able to do the following:

1. Discuss the relationship between ethics and religion with specific reference to the Divine Command Theory (Euthyphro), and the Golden Rule.
2. Critique both religious and secular approaches to developing a global ethics
3. Analyze examples of arguments and identify sound and unsound arguments.
4. Discuss and define some of the most common fallacies used in arguments – e.g. ad hominem; hasty generalizations; false analogies
5. Explain the meaning of the suffix ism in the words such as sexism, racism etc.
6. Explain the 4- way stop example in terms of the beginning of morality?

Chapter 3

Some Questions to think about before reading this chapter
Is morality simply a matter of what we feel is right, or what our culture tells us is right or wrong?

Are there better or worse choices – i.e. “good” ethical judgments and “not so good” ethical judgments?

Are there some eternal moral truths? If a society changes its views on what is right or wrong, does that mean that morality changes- or

How do values enter into the issue of relativism? (See KBVA PPT)

Student Learning Outcomes

After studying Chapter 3 and related learning materials students should be able to

1. Define the various relativisms summarized in the chapter:
   a. ethical individual and cultural strong and weak

2. Are there moral truths to which every rational person would agree. If so what are they?

3. Define and be able to explain the difference between normative ethics and metaethics

4. Define objectivism, subjectivism, relativism and moral reasoning and be able to describe the perspectives of both ethical relativists (subjectivists) and of non-relativists (objectivists).

5. Explain moral realism and moral pluralism and how these relate to relativism

MODULE TWO: Chapters 4, 5, 6 The BIG Questions and Ideas

- What guides our moral choices? Is it what we think the result (consequence) will be? What our intention or motive is? Something else?
- How much does self-interest matter in terms of making a moral choice?
- What is the purpose of a social contract in terms of selfishness?
- How do pleasure and happiness relate to moral choices.
- Is it reasonable to measure happiness or unhappiness?
- What makes you happy? Are there different kinds of happiness? If so- is one type better than another? How do you measure your happiness.
- Of what importance is “doing the right thing” – even if it does not bring happiness?

Reading Assignments

Chapter 4  p.67-77
Chapter 5  p. 91-103
Chapter 6  p. 110-121

EOC Assignments : 0

Learning Activities

Video: Ayn Rand Love is Selfish- (URL posted)
Chapter 4

Some questions and ideas to think about before reading this chapter

- Is everyone basically selfish?
- Do we have a “selfish gene”? Is there survival value to selfishness? To altruism?
- Is being selfish immoral?
- Is it true that “nice guys” finish last?
- Is anyone really altruistic?
- How does imagination relate to morality? Empathy and the moral imagination
- How does nationalism relate to egoism?

Student Learning Outcomes

After studying Chapter 4 and the related learning material students should be able to:

1. Describe the differences between psychological egoism (the “is”) and ethical egoism (the ought)
2. Describe the prisoner’s dilemma and explain how it relates to ethical egoism
3. Explain how the social contract relates to the egoisms; discuss the purpose of the contract, and the assumptions upon which it is based
4. Discuss some “reasons to be moral” – at the individual level and the group level
5. Discuss the major ideas presented in the video Love is Selfish
6. Discuss the poem No Man is an Island as a critique of egoism

Chapter 5

Some Questions to think about before reading this chapter

- What about pleasure and happiness? How does happiness relate to ethics?
- Are there different kinds of happiness? Are some pleasures better than others?
- Can happiness and unhappiness be treated as simply a math problem to be solved using a formula?

Student Learning Objectives

After studying Chapter 5 and the related learning material students should be able to:

1. Explain the difference between utilitarianism and egoism with respect to consequences.
2. Explain the way in which pleasure and happiness is involved in utilitarian thinking.
3. Explain the difference between act and rule utilitarianism.
4. Discuss some of the challenges to the theory of utilitarianism using the example of the trolley problem, and the attempted murder narrative.
5. Discuss the Omelas Narrative as a critique of utilitarianism.

Chapter 6

Some Questions to think about before reading this chapter

- How important is doing the right thing – even if it does not make one happy? Is that more important than being happy?
- How might one decide what the “right thing” is?
- What does the phrase “the end justifies the means” mean?

Student Learning Objectives

After studying Chapter 6 and the related learning material students should be able to:

1. Explain the difference between Kant and JS Mill in their approach to ethics- focus on the relevance of the outcome (consequence) of a moral action, and on the concept of duty.
2. Discuss Kant’s question “what gives an act moral worth?”
3. Explain why Kant was not an ethical relativist?
4. Why does the golden rule not fit with Kant’s view?
5. State Kant’s two categorical imperatives: the first and second form.
6. Explain how these two imperatives can be applied in everyday life.

SLOs (PPT Briefs)

1. Define and distinguish among the following concepts: knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and values.
2. Explain the analogy of the jigsaw puzzle as it relates to one’s core beliefs.
3. Explain the way KBAVs influence moral and other types of choices - and other types of choices we make - for e.g. the individual vs. the collective; the notions about the purpose of government.
4. What is a lie? What are the criteria for telling a lie?
Module 3 the BIG questions and ideas

- What is natural law and how does it relate to our ideas about good and bad, right and wrong.
- What might a squirrel teach us about “the good”.
- What can we learn about morality from the natural world?
- Do animals have a sense of right and wrong?
- What is virtue – how do you recognize virtue?

Do males and females think about morality in similar or different ways?

Reading Assignments

Chapter 7 p.133-142
Chapter 8 p. 149-156
Chapter 9 p. 173-183
EOC Assignments : 0

Learning Activities

PPT: Chapters 7, 8, 9,
PPT Briefs
Video: Barry Schwartz: Loss of Wisdom

Practice Questions

- Chapter 7

Some questions and ideas to think about before reading this chapter

- What does this quote mean? “What is tells us nothing about what ought to be”
- What is human nature? Is there such a thing?
- How do laws of nature differ from natural law?
- How is natural law related to human rights?

Student Learning Objectives

After studying Chapter 7 and the related learning material students should be able to:

1. Summarize Natural Law theory – the major concepts and assumptions
2. Explain the difference between “natural law” and the “laws of nature”
3. Explain how natural law theory relates to human rights
4. Discuss the idea of “human nature” – is there such a thing?
Some Questions to think about before reading this chapter

- What does it mean to be a good person? Think about someone you admire for his/her virtue? Describe that person in terms of what you think makes her or him a good person.
- Are there different categories of virtue? If so, what are they?
- If, as Aristotle says the good is that to which all things aim” what does “the good” look like? That is, how do we recognize goodness? What might make a “virtuous” college student? Or a virtuous professor?
- Think about the film clip from Schindler’s List - “the idea of an “absolute good”.
- Does virtue require perfection? Can one be too good?

Student Learning Objectives

After studying Chapter 8 and the related learning material students should be able to:

1. Explain the way in which virtue ethics differs from other approaches to ethics.
2. Summarize Aristotle’s views on virtue and the relationship between morality and human nature.
3. Discuss the four cardinal virtues that emerged from the Greek tradition and how these can be used to illustrate the golden mean.
4. Discuss Aristotle’s thinking about the uniqueness of humans- that is wht did he think separated humans from other creatures?
5. Explain how Aristotle categorize the various “goods” to which he says “all things aim”. Use Aristotle’s examples of a squirrel, and a ship builder, in your response .
6. Using Aristotle’s ideas, explain what might make a virtuous college student, a professor?
7. Discuss some problems with Virtue ethics. Especially the idea of “ there is no virtue if no choice” “ or is virtue in doing something that you want to do anyway”. What was Kant’s criticism of Aristotle’s beliefs about virtue.
8. Define the terms extrinsic good and extrinsic ( instrumental ) good and provide an example of each.
9. How do the ideas presented in the video clip Absolute Good and the story of The man in the Water relate to this chapter?

Chapter 9

Some Questions to think about before reading this chapter

- What does the term “feminism” mean to you. Is it a positive or a negative term? Compare the term feminism with the other isms - sexism and racism for example? Different? In What way?
- From your experience, in general, do you think that males and females think differently about good and bad, right and wrong?
- What does it mean “to care” – is it a feeling or an action? How do we recognize it? What does a caring father look like? a caring mother? a caring doctor? A caring professor?
- Do we need a masculinism movement, and if so why?

Student Learning Outcomes
After studying Chapter 9 and the related learning material students should be able to:

1. Explain the importance of understanding women’s perspectives about morality.
2. Describe the major ideas and assumptions of the Ethics of Care
3. Discuss the theory that men and women exhibit a different type of moral perspective and moral reasoning. Use the duck-rabbit example in your discussion.
4. Describe the major findings about the moral development of men and women that emerged from the research of Carol Gilligan and Lawrence Kohlberg.
5. Discuss the three distinct types of explanations for the possible differences between male and female morality
6. Provide an example from your personal life of the male/female difference or a similarity in views about morality

Part 2: Applied Ethics

Module 4

Assigned Chapter Readings

Chapter 10 195-212
Chapter 13 292 -310
Chapter 14 327- 345

Learning Activities

Chapter PPTs: 10,13,14,
PPT Briefs

➢ Prejudice: yours and mine ( posted)
➢ Video: Dax’s Case ( shown on Oct 16 , and by Appointment
➢ Salon Posting: Prejudice, Yours and Mine  ( Response guide posted )

Practice Questions: Ch. 10,13,14

Chapter 10

Some Questions to think about before reading this chapter

• When you hear the word euthanasia what do you first think about ?
• What are your ideas about “letting die” and “killing” with respect to medical conditions?
• What are your thoughts about “advanced directives” in terms of your own life? That is-what would you want doctors/ nurses to do if you became terminally ill and could not make your own decisions?
• Have you signed the organ donor section on your driver’s license? Why or why not?
• What does it mean to be alive? To be dead?
What does it mean to be a person? When does personhood begin? When does it end? Who decides?

**Student Learning Outcomes**

After studying Chapter 10 and the related learning material students should be able to:

1. Discuss some of the laws related to euthanasia and the differences among the states and among countries regarding these laws.
2. Describe the differences among the various forms of euthanasia described in your text.
3. Discuss the facts and related issues involved in the Terri Schiavo case.
4. Discuss issues related to euthanasia for infants and the disabled – are these different from other cases? If so- why?

**Chapter 13**

**Some questions and ideas to think about before reading this chapter**

- Are “all men (people) created equal”?
- Do animals have rights?
- What does it mean to be “a person? Do animals have “personhood” in any sense of the word?
- What does it mean to discriminate? When might discrimination be a “good thing” and when and how is it harmful?
- What is a race? Is race a reality? What race is President Obama? Are you sure?
- What is racism? stereotyping? Racialism?
- How does racism begin?
- Is stereotyping “natural” in humans – does it have survival value?

**Student Learning Objectives**

After studying Chapter 13 and the related learning materials students should be able to:

1. Define discrimination and explain how it applies to our moral and non-moral daily lives.
2. Define and provide examples of the various types of discrimination discussed in this chapter.
3. Discuss Gordon Allport’s stages of prejudice and be able to identify the stages when embedded in a narrative.

**Module 5**

**Assigned Text Readings**

Chapter 15: P. 363 – 381 (week 10)

**Learning Activities**
Readings.

- Argument (posted)
- The Innocence Project (posted)

Videos: Witness Identification Parts 1 and 2 - link posted

Bioethics Narratives

- The Forgetful Mourner (Posted)
- Wilbur’s Appendectomy (posted)
- Films and Videos

![Conspiracy: The film 2001](image)

**Conspiracy: The film 2001**

**Director:** Frank Pierson  
**Writer:** Loring Mandel  
**Stars:** Kenneth Branagh, Clare Bullus, Stanley Tucci

- Video Clips: Twelve Angry Men  
  Prejudice (link Posted)  
  Power (link Posted)

**In Class Salon Discussions**

Professional Codes of Ethics: examples  
Sports  
Health Education (CHES)

Cheating and Plagiarism: Research Ethics: History and Cases Informed Consent