



Introduction to Ethics (7.5 ECTS credits)

Level: 1st cycle

Discipline: PHILOSOPHY

Course ID: 0342

Admission requirements

General admission for university studies. Students attending the course as a part of their Bachelor's degree program must have completed Course A, Introduction to Theology and Philosophy (30 credits).

Educational goals

After having completed this course students are expected to be able to:

- explain the meaning of important key concepts of ethics and make adequate use of these in argumentation,
- state the basic principles of different normative theories (utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics etc.) and explain how they are applied to ethical issues,
- identify arguments that are commonly presented in current ethical debates,
- analyze the relevance and weight of these arguments for different ethical positions,
- argue in writing for an ethical stance and respond to possible counter-arguments.

Course content

Many of our debates about social, political and also private life concern ethical issues, for example, in the field of health care and medicine or in environmental issues. This course serves as an introduction to basic themes of normative ethics. Its aim is to clarify what we mean when we call an action right or wrong, and to present and discuss some of the most influential forms of ethical argumentation today (utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics). The students will get an overview of ethical theories and concepts and learn how ethical principles can be applied to contemporary moral issues, such as killing, euthanasia, war or animal rights.

Teaching and examination

The course will be given in the form of reading assignments, lectures, seminars and exercises. The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in three areas: 1) active participation in online class discussions and during the two full-day meetings (30 %), 2) three short reflection papers of 1-2 pages (30 %), 3) a 3000-word final paper, which will treat one of the topics discussed (40 %).

Bibliography

The course materials will be available online. However, a short list of introductory books might be helpful for additional studies and for the first steps in writing the paper:

Gensler, Harry J., *Ethics: A Contemporary Introduction*, London: Routledge ³2018.

Gensler, Harry J. /Earl W. Spurgin/James Swindal (eds.), *Ethics: Contemporary Readings*, New York: Routledge 2004.

Tännsjö, Torbjörn, *Understanding ethics*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press ³2013.

Timmons, Mark, *Moral Theory: An Introduction*, Lanham Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers ²2013.

White, Thomas I., *Right and Wrong: A Practical Introduction to Ethics*, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell ²2017.

Williams, Bernard, *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press ¹²2010.

The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (search for key words in: <https://plato.stanford.edu/>) is an additional useful resource, with a high academic level.

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