



History of Ethics Course Descriptor

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|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Course Title | History of Ethics | Faculty | Philosophy |
| Course Code | NCHPH726 | Course Leader | Dr David Mitchell |
| Credit Points | 20 | Teaching Period | Any |
| FHEQ Level | Level 7 | Date Approved | June 2020 |
| Compulsory/ Optional | Optional | | |
| Pre-requisites | None | | |
| Co-requisites | None | | |

COURSE SUMMARY

This course is an introduction to the history of philosophical ethics in the west. Students will study classic works by philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant and Mill. Besides placing these works in their respective historical settings, the lectures will introduce other important trends and figures from the ancient, medieval and modern periods. Students will consider to what extent the questions of ethics have changed, and how the ostensibly divergent outlooks of different thinkers relate to each other. Students will also link ethical debate with questions about politics, religion and law, and consider the relationship between philosophical and everyday thinking about how to live.

COURSE AIMS

The aim of this course is to:

- develop advanced skills in the interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of historic philosophical texts.
- promote students' ability to categorize, elaborate, and compare, the chief philosophical approaches to questions about right and wrong, good and bad character, well-being, and other types of value.
- enable students to form and defend their own original estimates of the merits of alternative positions on the traditional issues of moral philosophy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1d Demonstrate wide-ranging knowledge of, and recognition of systematic connections between questions and debates in the history of ethics in the west, particularly in relation to virtue ethics, deontology, and consequentialism.
- K2d Engage synoptically and constructively with the texts and theories of a wide range of philosophers.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC SKILLS

- S1d Employ a range of advanced philosophical devices to support, challenge, or adapt, key positions in the ethics literature.

TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- T1d Show self-direction in working independently, creatively, and to deadlines.
- T2d Organize and synthesize information, question assumptions, and engage with competing arguments.
- T3d Produce original, clear, sophisticated, and persuasive treatments of complex topics.
- T3d Consistently apply an excellent level of technical proficiency in written English, using an advanced application of scholarly terminology, that demonstrates the ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and with sophistication.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning strategies for this course will include:

- 30 hours of lectures
- Two one-hour one-to-one tutorials

Course information and supplementary materials are available on the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Students are required to attend and participate in all timetabled sessions for this course. Students are also expected to manage their directed learning and independent study in support of the course.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

The study of philosophy cultivates skills that are employable across a range of sectors. These include the abilities to:

- Work independently, creatively, and to deadlines.
- Conduct research and explore relevant existing knowledge.
- Analyse, contextualise, and interpret complex ideas and materials.
- Synthesise and evaluate information against a backdrop of uncertainty.

- Solve problems through logical reasoning.
- Present findings and opinions in a clear, structured manner, whether orally or in writing.
- Engage in collaborative and constructive discussion.

ASSESSMENT

FORMATIVE

Students will be formatively assessed during the course by means of set assignments. These do not count towards the end of year results, but will provide students with developmental feedback, both written and oral.

SUMMATIVE

Assessment will be in one form:

| AE: | Assessment Activity | Weighting (%) | Online submission | Duration | Length |
|-----|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------|------------|
| 1 | Written assignment | 100% | Yes | N/A | 5000 words |

The written assignment will be assessed in accordance with the assessment aims set out in the Programme Specification.

FEEDBACK

Students will receive feedback in a variety of ways, written and oral, within one-to-one tutorials, in discussion phases of lectures, and on formatively and summatively assessed assignments. Students will also attend the formal meeting, Collections, in which they will receive constructive and developmental feedback on their performance.

Feedback is provided on summative assessment and is made available to the student either via email, the VLE or another appropriate method.

INDICATIVE READING

Note: Comprehensive and current reading lists for courses are produced annually in the Course Syllabus or other documentation provided to students; the indicative reading list provided below is used as part of the approval/modification process only.

PRIMARY

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. Rowe. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Hume, D., *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. T. Beauchamp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Kant, I., *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. M. Gregor/J. Timmermann. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Mill, J.S., *Utilitarianism*, ed. R. Crisp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Plato, *Republic*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004.

SECONDARY

Baier, A., *A Progress of Sentiments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Everson, S. (ed.), *Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Fine, G. (ed.), *Plato 2*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Schneewind, J., *The Invention of Autonomy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Wolff, J., *An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*. New York: Norton, 2018.

Wood, A., *Kant*. Oxford: Wiley, 2004.

INDICATIVE TOPICS

- Greek Ethics
 - Plato's *Republic*
 - Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*
 - Christian Ethics
 - Early Modern Ethics
 - Hume's *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*
 - Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
 - Mill's *Utilitarianism*
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| Approved by: Academic Board | | | | | |
| Location: Academic Handbook/Programme specifications and Handbooks/ Postgraduate Programme Specifications/MA Philosophy Programme Specification/Philosophy Course Descriptors | | | | | |
| Version number | Date approved | Date published | Owner | Proposed next review date | Modification (As per AQF4) & category number |
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| 1.0 | June 2020 | June 2020 | Brian Ball | April 2025 | |