



# Ethical Theory and Issues

## Unit of Study Outline

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### 1. Unit of study information

This course will introduce contemporary issues in American social, political and economic aspects. All those topics regard to our daily life. Also, this course includes many great works demonstrate moral philosophy and ethical ideas. Included will be problems raised by the conflicting needs and desires of individuals and communities in the context of such issues as abortion; and distributive justice. Contemporary considerations and emphasis will be placed on applied ethical approaches to life's problems. The primary purpose to set up this course is to assist students establish their own ethical standard at the bottom of their hearts through a way of critical thinking.

### 2. Pre-requisite units and assumed knowledge

Basic English skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

### 3. Learning aims and outcomes

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Use ethical theories and background to support decisions they make in daily life.
- Develop skill of argumentation though real life examples

### 4. Weighting of final grade

Participation: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Final: 30%

Group Presentation 30%

## 5. Grading

A	100-95	A-	94-90	B+	89-87
B	86-83	B-	82-80	C+	79-77
C	76-73	C-	72-70	D+	69-67
D	66-63	D-	62-60	F	59 or lower

## 6. Policies

### Attendance Policy

Attendance in class is mandatory for all students enrolled in the course. Any excused absence must be discussed directly with the teacher. Being late to class within 15 minutes will be recorded as 1 LATE and being late over 15 minutes will be recorded as 1 ABSENCE. 3 LATES equal to 1 ABSENCE. 20% absences of the total teaching hours will cause an F (a failing grade) directly. However, students are still welcome to continue to attend class. F students have no right to drop this course anymore. Each unexcused absence will result in the lowering of the attendance grade by 1 point. Each excused absence will result in the lowering of the attendance grade by 0.5 point.

### Participation Policy

Students should participate in their chosen classes actively and effectively. The Participation Grade is related to the Attendance Grade. Students' final attendance grade is the maximum of their participation grade.

Participation grade will be based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to taking part in class discussions and activities, completing assignments, being able to answer questions correctly, obeying class rules, and being prepared for class, frequent visiting your instructors and chatting in English during their office hours is highly recommended.

### Policy on Assignments and Quizzes

Students should finish their assignments completely and punctually. Assignment should be submitted on the date appointed by the instructor. If a student cannot hand in the assignment on time, the reasonable excuse will be needed. Late assignments will receive a maximum grade of 80. An assignment that is late for 3 days will be corrected but receive 0.

You are recommended print all your assignment in the uniform format with the heading of Student's Pledge of no cheating. Written assignment or printed ones without the uniform heading of pledge will receive a maximum grade of 80.

It is mandatory to have weekend assignment every week. Any weekend assignment should be submitted on first class of next week.

It is mandatory to have holiday assignment on the public holidays. Any holiday assignment should be submitted on the first day on returning to school.

Students are required to do a multitude of presentations during the course.

### **Plagiarism**

Any form of cheating is NEVER tolerated. Any student ONCE caught cheating on a quiz, assignment or examination will receive a 0 for that particular work of the whole semester. At the beginning of the semester the definition of plagiarism will be carefully explained. When any thoughts or writings of another person are used, the sources must be clearly identified (using quotes, bibliography and giving reference).

### **Classroom Policies**

1. No eating, cellular phones, electronic dictionaries, smoking, chatting or drowsing in class.
2. Please speak in English rather than Chinese in class.
3. Students are not allowed to attend class without textbooks.
4. Stand up when answering questions.
5. Respect classmates' ideas, opinions, and questions of your classmates.
6. You are welcome to visit the instructor's office in his/her office hours.
7. Take good care of the laboratory facilities. Do not splash water on the desktop.
8. When each class is over, hang the earphone on the hanger. Put the trash into the trash-bin.
9. All your classroom involvement, performance and after-class communications with instructor will affect your participation score.
10. All communications with the teacher must be in English, both inside and outside class time.

## **7. Texts and other recourses**

Mackinnon, Barbara (2009) Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issue, 6th ed., Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

## 8. Teaching methods

Lecture and group discussion with presentation of groups

## 9. Week by week topic and study guide

<b>Week 1</b>	Chapter 1	Ethics and Ethical Reasoning
		Why Study Ethics?/What Is Ethics?
		Ethics and Religion
		Ethical Reasoning and Arguments
<b>Week 2</b>	Chapter 2	Ethical Relativism
		What is Ethical Relativism?
		Moral Realism
		Moral Pluralism
	Chapter 3	Egoism
		Psychological Egoism
		Ethical Egoism
<b>Week 3</b>	Chapter 4	Utilitarianism
		The Principle of Utility
		Quantity and Quality of Pleasure
		Evaluating Utilitarianism
		“Proof” of the Theory
<b>Week 4</b>	Chapter 5	Kant’s Moral Theory
		What Gives an Act Moral Worth?
		The Categorical Imperative
		Evaluating Kant’s Moral Theory
		Perfect and Imperfect Duties
<b>Week 5</b>	Chapter 6	Natural Law and Natural Rights
		Natural Law Theory
		Historical Origins: Aristotle
	Chapter 7	Virtue Ethics
		Virtues and Everyday Life
		What Is Virtue?
		Masculine and Feminine Virtues
		Evaluating Virtue Ethics
<b>Week 6</b>	Chapter 8	Euthanasia
		Brain Death, Coma, and Persistent Vegetative State
		Meaning and Types of Euthanasia
		Morality and the Law
		Making Moral Judgments about Euthanasia

		Infant Euthanasia
<b>Week 7</b>	Chapter 9	Abortion
		Stages of Fetal Development
		Methods of Abortion
		Abortion and The Law
		Abortion: The Moral Question
		Arguments
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Mid-term Exam I</b>	
<b>Week 9</b>	Chapter 10	Sexual Morality
		What Is and What Is Not Sexual?
		Relevant Factual Matters
		Sexual Morality and Ethical Theories
		Homosexuality
<b>Week 10</b>	Chapter 11	Pornography
		Liberty-Limiting Principles
		Feminism and Pornography
	Chapter 12	Equality and Discrimination
		Civil Rights Laws
		Racism and Sexism
		The Principle of Equality
		Affirmative Action and Preferential Treatment
<b>Week 11</b>	Chapter 13	Economic Justice
		Income Inequality
		Process Distributive Justice
		End State Distributive Justice
		Equal Opportunity
		Political and Economic Theories
<b>Week 12</b>	Chapter 14	Legal Punishment
		The nature of Legal Punishment
		The Deterrence Argument
		The Retributivist Argument
		Punishment and Responsibility
		The Death Penalty
<b>Week 13</b>	Chapter 15	Environmental Ethics
		The Environment and Value
		Anthropocentrism
		Ecocentrism
		Deep Ecology
		Ecofeminism
		Sustainable Development
<b>Week 14</b>	Chapter 16	Animal Rights
		Sentience

		Animal Rights and Experimentation
		Endangered Species
	Chapter 17	Stem Cell Research, Cloning, and Genetic Engineering
		Stem Cell Research
		Human Cloning
		Genetic Engineering
		Genetically Modified Plants and Animals
		Genetic Screening
<b>Week 15</b>	Chapter 18	Violence, Terrorism, and War
		Violence
		Terrorism
		Pacifism
		Just War Theory
		Weapons of Mass Destruction
		War Crimes and Universal Human Rights
<b>Week 16</b>	Chapter 19	Global Issues and Globalization
		Rich and Poor Nations
		Globalization
<b>Week 17</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	