

Bergen Community College
Division of Arts & Humanities
Department of Philosophy & Religion

Course Syllabus

PHR-110 Introduction to Ethics

Basic Information about Course and Instructor

Semester and year:
Section Number:
Meeting Times and Locations:

Instructor:
Office Location:
Phone:
Departmental Secretary: [optional]
Office Hours:
Email Address:

Course Description

PHR-110 Introduction to Ethics is a study of the basic theories, methods, and problems of moral philosophy. Topics may include the study of the moral theories of Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Kant, Mill, and Rawls; the relationship of ethics and morality to religious belief; morality and evolution; the nature and meaning of moral terms; moral absolutism and relativism; egoism and altruism; the nature of moral reasoning; conceptions of the good life; free will and moral responsibility.

3 lectures, 3 credits

General Education Course – Humanities Elective

Student Learning Objectives: As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, students will be able to

1. identify the basic problems of moral philosophy and the major figures in the history of moral philosophy;
2. critically analyze the basic issues in moral philosophy;
3. summarize in detail, both orally and in writing, the views of moral philosophers as expressed in philosophical texts;
4. use the logical and critical thinking methods of philosophy to analyze and evaluate the ways in which philosophers attempt to solve the problems of moral philosophy;
5. locate, evaluate, and use effectively information from a variety of relevant sources;
6. state and support in clear, logical, and concise writing your own views on issues in moral philosophy; and
7. participate actively in discussions of ideas and issues addressed in the course (re: SLOs 1-4).

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In pursuit of the foregoing objectives, the course is based on the reading and discussion of primary source materials by philosophers and other writers on moral philosophy; the basic principles and methods of logical reasoning are introduced; the techniques of philosophical research and writing are reviewed and employed in course assignments; students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions; and students are required to do a substantial amount of expository and critical writing in response to the material presented in the course.

Learning Assessment

The Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in this course are intended to be aligned with as many of the college's General Education Goals as possible. They are also correlated with the overall Learning Goals of the Philosophy Program. In addition, student progress in reaching the course's SLOs is to be assessed through various means of assessment, such as the "Suggested Means of Assessment" listed below.

Student Learning Objective	Suggested Means of Assessment
1. identify the basic problems of moral philosophy and the major figures in the history of moral philosophy;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay examinations• Quizzes and objective tests• Writing assignments
2. critically analyze the basic issues in moral philosophy;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay examinations• Quizzes and objective tests• Writing assignments• Graded class presentations
3. summarize in detail, both orally and in writing, the views of moral philosophers as expressed in philosophical texts;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay examinations• Quizzes and objective tests• Writing assignments• Graded class presentations
4. use the logical and critical thinking methods of philosophy to analyze and evaluate the ways in which philosophers attempt to solve the problems of moral philosophy;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay examinations• Quizzes and objective tests• Writing assignments• Graded class presentations
5. locate, evaluate, and use effectively information from a variety of relevant sources;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing assignments*• Graded class presentations
6. state and support in clear, logical, and concise writing your own views on issues in moral philosophy; and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay examinations• Writing assignments
7. participate actively in discussions of ideas and issues addressed in the course(re: SLOs 1-4).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graded class discussions

*Writing assignments for the purpose of assessing student success on SLO 5 will include research and writing projects, possibly including term papers, in which a student identifies an information need, accesses and evaluates appropriate resources, and uses the information effectively and ethically for a specific purpose.

Course Content

This course is intended to introduce students to the major theories in moral philosophy (e.g., utilitarianism, deontology, and social contract theory), to the basic issues arising therefrom, and to the writings and ideas of at least two major moral philosophers. Therefore, the course includes the following (mandatory) components:

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1. A discussion, at least in outline form, of the major theories in moral philosophy and the major issues arising therefrom.
2. The study of the work of at least two moral philosophers of historical importance (e.g., Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Butler, Mill, Kant, Ross, Nozick, and Rawls.)

The course may be presented as an historically-ordered study of the writings of major moral philosophers, or as a topically-ordered study of the ways in which ancient and contemporary philosophers have approached the major issues in moral philosophy.

Special Features of the Course (if any) [to be designated by the instructor]

E.g., the use of learning technologies in the course (Internet, PowerPoint, web enhancement via a parallel course website, etc.); the inclusion of technological literacy learning in the course; etc.

Course Texts and/or Other Study Materials

The **required text** for this course is *Doing Ethics*, ed. Lewis Vaughn (Norton, 3d ed., 2013), ISBN-13: 978-0393137460.

Writing and Critical Thinking Requirement(s)

Because PHR-110 is a General Education course, it requires students to complete a variety of critical thinking and writing assignments. These assignments may include class discussions and debates requiring the application of critical thinking skills, short in-class essays, out-of-class writing projects (journals, research papers, argument-analysis papers, book reviews, etc.), tests and examinations containing essay components, and so forth. Instructors will respond to and comment on students' writing in detail.

Grading Policy

A student's final grade for the course is based primarily on his or her performance on the required work for the course (writing assignments, examinations, class presentations, etc.) and on his or her overall mastery of the material covered in the course. A student's class participation may also be evaluated, and the grade thereon may be used as a factor in determining the student's final grade for the course; but a class participation grade will count for no more than twenty percent (20%) of the final grade. A student's research and writing work will count at least fifty percent (50%) of the final grade.

Attendance Policy

BCC Attendance Policy:

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

Philosophy and Religion Departmental Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually. Attendance will be taken at each class session. It is expected that class will be conducted such that students will benefit in their written work by the lectures and class discussion. If students occasionally arrive late, they should be encouraged to enter

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quietly, not disturbing the class. If students miss class, they should be encouraged to use the course calendar to stay abreast of material. It is probably a good idea for students to find study partners and to exchange telephone numbers. Make-ups for examinations should be allowed by the instructor if, in the instructor's judgment, the student has presented a good excuse for missing the work. Instructors may penalize work which is late; however, the instructor's policies for make-ups and late work must be clearly specified in the course syllabus.

Attendance Policy in this Course:

[To be designated by the instructor]

Other College, Divisional, and/or Departmental Policy Statements [optional but recommended]

<p><u>Examples:</u> Statement on plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty. ADA statement. Sexual Harassment statement. Statement on acceptable use of BCC technology. Statement on the purpose and value of faculty office hours.</p>
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Student and Faculty Support Services [optional but recommended]

List support services, e.g., the Writing Center, the Math Lab, the Tutorial Center, Online Writing Lab (OWL), Office of Specialized Services, etc. Include information on the BCC Library.

Example:

Student and Faculty Support Services

The Distance Learning Office – for any problems you may have accessing your online courses	Room C-334	201-612-5581 psimms@bergen.edu
Smarthinking Tutorial Service	On Line at:	http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/4787.aspx
The Tutoring Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/pages/2192.aspx
The Writing Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/1795.aspx
The Office of Specialized Services (for Students with Disabilities)	Room S-131	201-612-5270 http://www.bergen.edu/oss
BCC Library – Reference Desk	Room L-226	201-447-7436

Special Note on the Tutoring Center

The Henry and Edith Cerullo Learning Assistance Center encompasses the Tutoring Center, the English Language Resource Center, and the Writing Center. The website of the Learning Assistance

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Center is located at www.bergen.edu/pages/2192.asp. Tutoring services are available for this course in the Tutoring Center. I strongly recommend that you make use of those services as we progress through the course. As listed above, the Tutoring Center is located in Room L-125, and its phone number is 201-447-7908.

Include the following statement on Logos – The BCC Philosophy & Religion Club

Logos – The BCC Philosophy & Religion Club

Logos usually meets on Tuesdays during the Activities Period, 12:30-1:25 PM, but sometimes also on different days and at different times. I encourage you to join the club. Since you are interested in the study of philosophy, you should find the meetings and other activities of the Philosophy & Religion club very interesting. For further information, check the Philosophy & Religion bulletin board adjacent to Room L-325A or contact LOGOS Advisor, Professor Jennifer Lyden (L-326, 201-493-3540, jlyden@bergen.edu). (LOGOS does not hold regular meetings during the summer.)

Include a Course Outline and Calendar [can be combined in a single syllabus section]

The Course Outline and Calendar must include all of the following elements:

- A daily or (at least) weekly schedule of topics to be covered.
- Dates for exams, quizzes, or other means of assessment. (This does not mean that all evaluation of students must be in groups and at the same time. Exams and other means of assessment can be listed as "to be scheduled individually.")
- Due dates for major assignments – e.g., when is a paper due; if the topic has to be approved, when; if an outline or draft is an interim step, when it is due.
- Any required special events must be included in the outline/calendar, e.g., a lecture by a visiting speaker, a dramatic or musical performance, a field trip.
- Designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic (see sample below).
- A note to students stating that the course outline and calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE FOR PHR-110

- I. Introduction: the Nature of Moral Theory
Ethical Egoism, Ethical Relativism, Divine Command Theory, Consequentialism, Deontology.
- II. Virtue Theory
Readings: Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics
- III. Utilitarianism
Readings: Mill's Utilitarianism
- IV. Deontology
Readings: Kant's Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals
- V. Issues in Moral Philosophy: e.g., the relationship of ethics and morality to religious belief; morality and evolution; the nature and meaning of moral terms; moral absolutism and relativism; egoism and altruism; the nature of moral reasoning; conceptions of the good life; free will and moral responsibility.

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Sample Format for Course Outline and Calendar

Note to Students: The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topics & Assignments	Learning Objectives
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

See the Sample Course Outline and Calendar below.

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SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

Note to Students: The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topics & Assignments	Learning Objectives
1	9/6	Introductions, and the Place of Ethics in Philosophy and Daily Life	1
2	9/11-13	Ethics and the Examined Life (Ch. 1)*	1-2
3	9/18-20	Challenges to Objectivity and Moral Reasoning (Ch. 2)*	1-2
4	9/25-27	A Primer on Moral Reasoning (Ch. 3) and the Evaluation of Moral Theories (Ch.4)* “Ethics in the Wild” Writing Assignment Due—Sept. 27th	1-7
5	10/2-4	Consequentialism I: Ethical Egoism (Ch.5)*	1-7
6	10/9-11	Consequentialism II: Utilitarianism (Ch. 5)*	1-7
7	10/16-18	Continuation of Consequentialism and MIDTERM EXAM (10/18)	1-7
8	10/23-25	Nonconsequentialism I: Kant’s Ethics (Ch.6)*	1-7
9	10/30-11/1	Continuation of Kant’s Ethics, and Nonconsequentialism II: Natural Law Theory (Ch.6)*	1-7
10	11/6-8	Nonconsequentialism II: Natural Law Theory (Ch.6)*	1-7
11	11/13-15	Virtue Ethics (Ch.7)*	1-7
12	11/20	Virtue Ethics (Ch.7)* (No class on 11/22—Thanksgiving)	1-7
13	11/27-29	Application I: Environmental Ethics Second Essay due Nov. 27th	1-7
14	12/4-6	Application II: Environmental Ethics	1-7
15	12/11-13	Course Review	1-7
16	12/18-20	FINAL EXAM and Final Class	1-7

*In Vaughn, Lewis (ed.) *Doing Ethics* (2nd Edition) W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.