

## Economics and Ethics (F000648)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 6.0**

**Study time 180 h**

**Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026**

|                |                |      |               |      |
|----------------|----------------|------|---------------|------|
| A (semester 1) | Dutch, English | Gent | seminar       | 0.0h |
|                |                |      | group work    | 0.0h |
|                |                |      | lecture       |      |
|                |                |      | peer teaching | 0.0h |

**Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026**

|                 |      |                    |
|-----------------|------|--------------------|
| Albrecht, Johan | EB21 | lecturer-in-charge |
| Peferoen, Ludo  | EB25 | co-lecturer        |

**Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026**

|   | crdts | offering |
|---|-------|----------|
| <a href="#">Bachelor of Science in Economics</a>                            | 6     | A        |
| <a href="#">Bachelor of Science in Economics (Double Degree)</a>            | 6     | A        |
| <a href="#">Master of Science in Economics</a>                              | 6     | A        |
| <a href="#">Master of Science in Economics (Double Degree)</a>              | 6     | A        |
| <a href="#">Exchange programme in Economics and Business Administration</a> | 6     | A        |

**Teaching languages**

English, Dutch

**Keywords**

Ethics, economic systems, free market, moral progress, distributive justice, corruption, democracy, rule of law.

**Position of the course**

Economic activities are an important part of life in a society. The current free market economy is a relative newcomer in the organization of economic life, which has historically taken very different forms. This course examines a wide range of ethical questions about the way in which economic life has taken shape in our society. These questions arise at different levels: there are ethical questions about the role of the individual as a participant in economic activities, about the role of companies and other economic actors, and finally about the way in which a society can or should regulate some of the effects of a free market. In order to be able to provide answers to these questions, we first investigate on what basis we can or want to make statements about our ethical expectations. For, at the same time, ethics has also taken different forms over time. The aim is not to provide conclusive answers to all the questions that are raised, but to reflect on them actively and critically, through various forms of participation. Regular and active participation of all students in these activities is therefore essential.

**Contents**

General topics will include:

- 1 Economic systems, their context, their justification
- 2 The multiplicity of ethics
- 3 The moral caliber of the free market
- 4 The idea of moral progress
- 5 Principles versus feelings in ethics
- 6 The origins of ethics
- 7 Distributive justice

8 Forms of corruption  
9 The place of democracy and the rule of law in a free market  
10 The ethics of dealing with ethics in organizations  
Depending on student interests a selection of more particular topics will be studied:

- 1 What if anything is wrong with insider trading?
  - 2 A satisfactory ethics of lying?
  - 3 Self-regulation: the case of advertising, and beyond
  - 4 The role of trade unions
  - 5 Use or abuse of whistleblowing?
  - 6 How to make ethics a topic within an organisation?
  - 7 Privacy of employees
  - 8 Hiring out one's body or selling some of its parts
  - 9 Doing business under authoritarian regimes
  - 10 The idea of a co-operative economy
  - 11 The idea of a social economy
  - 12 The idea of fair trade
  - 13 Does a free market corrode moral character?
  - 14 Fair taxation
  - 15 Responsible investment
  - 16 Must companies pursue good causes?
  - 17 The virtues of virtue ethics
  - 18 Can moral attitudes be represented in economic models of human behavior?
- Students can propose their own topics as well.

### **Initial competences**

The student should be able to grasp particular situations in broader terms in order to reflect on fundamental questions in a structured manner. The student must be willing to share his or her opinions with others and to actively discuss them.

### **Final competences**

- 1 To analyse the ethical character of situations
- 2 To design and evaluate arguments
- 3 To produce a text in a structured manner
- 4 To try to understand someone else's reasoning
- 5 To be courteous in a discussion
- 6 To look up a variety of sources and to be critical of their value
- 7 To work on an assignment in a small group
- 8 To talk and write in English
- 9 To conduct a conversation with AI about a question in ethics

### **Conditions for credit contract**

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

### **Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

### **Teaching methods**

Group work, Seminar, Lecture, Peer teaching

### **Extra information on the teaching methods**

A number of themes are researched by the students themselves and shared with the other students through a participatory activity. Some of this work is individual, some is in groups. Active and constant participation in these forms of work is essential.

### **Study material**

Type: Slides

Name: Slides

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Available on Ufora : Yes

### **References**

### **Course content-related study coaching**

The students discuss their proposal and initial elaboration of their theme with the teacher

**Assessment moments**

end-of-term and continuous assessment

**Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**

Written assessment with open-ended questions

**Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period**

Written assessment with open-ended questions

**Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

Participation, Assignment

**Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

**Extra information on the examination methods**

Regular and active participation in the course activities is necessary to pass the periodic evaluation. Attendance from the first week of lessons, at the latest the second week of lessons, is essential as the work already starts then. Absences for legitimate reasons must be reported in advance by e-mail.

**Calculation of the examination mark**

The final score is determined:

50% by periodic evaluation

50% by non-periodical evaluation