

Issues in Contemporary Ethical Theory (A000281)

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

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2023-2024

A (semester 1)	Dutch	Gent	lecture
			seminar
			peer teaching

Lecturers in academic year 2023-2024

Segers, Seppe	LW01	lecturer-in-charge
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Offered in the following programmes in 2023-2024

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject Moral Sciences)	5	A
Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject Philosophy)	5	A
Master of Arts in Moral Sciences	5	A
Master of Arts in Philosophy	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Ethics, Metaethics, Moral Science, Ethical Theory

Position of the course

A number of fundamental theoretical discussions within ethics will be discussed thematically and will be subjected to critical analysis. The specific subjects may differ on a yearly basis.

Contents

Per subject one or more articles of prominent ethicists on the same topic will be discussed. The selected topics are chosen for their relevance and potential for discussion. The following (and/or similar) themes could be debated: moral responsibility, moral luck, moral overridingness, moral rationalism, partiality, exploitation, human dignity, internalism versus externalism, etc. Authors that could be discussed include Thomas Nagel, Bernard Williams, Alan Wertheimer, Galen Strawson, TM Scanlon, Michael Smith, Philippa Foot, Susan Wolf, Simon Keller

Initial competences

Successfully having finished the course Contemporary Ethics: Anglo-American Tradition (AHP00LO0000013), or having gained the competences achieved by this course in another way.

Knowing the core concepts and theoretical frameworks of ethics (B.1.1) Having an orientating insight into the main discussions within (meta)ethics (B.1.4) Showing creativity in ethical-philosophical reflection (B.2.3) Working on different philosophical levels of abstraction (B.2.6) Identifying, analyzing and discerning abstract and concrete ethical problems (B.3.1)

Recognizing and applying academically sound forms of reasoning in order to form an opinion in regard to abstract and concrete ethical problems (B.3.2) Communicating verbally and in writing about a personal opinion regarding ethical issues (B.4.1) Completing assignments independently and in collaboration with others (B.4.2) Appreciating the societal (economic, social, cultural) and existential consequences and relevance of knowledge in the philosophical and ethical domain (B.5.1)

Final competences

1 Being knowledgeable about concrete debates regarding ethical theories.

- 2 Analyzing complex ethical problems and discussions critically.
- 3 Being able to develop a coherent position regarding fundamental issues in theoretical ethics both independently and in groups, based on primary literature.
- 4 Being able to analyze the structure of complex and controversial ethical problems and being able to develop reasoning and evaluation strategies to found opinions on these problems and to evaluate them.
- 5 Being able to present a personal opinion about a central issue in theoretical ethics in a way that meets academic standards, both in regards to the content and the style.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

- Lecture for the introduction of the different topics. These will take place on campus but a live stream will be available as much as possible when the group size exceeds the capacity of the classroom. Then a rotation system will be put into place.
 - Seminars for further discussion and debate regarding the presented topics. Active participation of the students is expected in order to acquire and practice skills.
 - A paper will be prepared and a first draft will be presented to the fellow students (microteaching) and will be opened for discussion. The student will also always get feedback from the teacher. After implementation of the feedback, the final paper is submitted.
- Because of COVID19 the teaching format can change when this is absolutely necessary for COVID19 reasons

Learning materials and price

Bundle of articles (mainly in English) will be made available on Ufora.

References

Examples of papers discussed the previous years are:

- Nietzsche, Friedrich. "De genealogie van de moraal". De Arbeidspers 2005 (1887)
- Leiter, Brian. "The Death of God and the Death of Morality" *The Monist* 2019;102:386-402
- Strawson, Peter F. "Freedom and Resentment", in *Proceedings of the British Academy* 1962; 48:1-25
- Williams, Bernard. "Internal and External Reasons". *Rational Action*. Ross Harrison (ed.). Cambridge University Press, 1979. pp. 101-113.
- Nagel, Thomas. "Moral Luck." *Mortal Questions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979. pp. 24-38.
- Williams, Bernard. *Moral Luck*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Wolf, Susan. "Moral Saints". *The Journal of Philosophy* 1982;79:419-439
- Giubilini, Alberto & Savulescu Julian. "The Artificial Moral Advisor. The "Ideal Observer" Meets Artificial Intelligence" *Philosophy & Technology* 2018;31:169-188.
- Smith M. *The Moral Problem*. Wiley-Blackwell, 1994.
- Urban Walker, Margaret. "Feminism, Ethics and the Question of Theory". *Hypatia* 1992;7:23-38

Course content-related study coaching

Individual appointments with lecturer.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Oral assessment

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

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Peer and/or self assessment, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Details NPE:

A short paper (+-4000 words) will be prepared and a first draft will be presented to the fellow students (microteaching) and will be opened for discussion. For this paper the students will have to read a book that will have to be linked to a self-chosen theme in ethical theory. The student will also always get feedback from the teacher. After implementation of the feedback, the final paper is submitted.

In order to obtain a credit for this course, students need to participate in both the paper and the oral exam.

Calculation of the examination mark

Periodical (exam): 75%

Paper, presentation and peer-review: 25%

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

- 1 Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
- 2 Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
- 3 Feedback can be given during an appointment during office hours

Extra information:

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy