GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2025-2026

Moral Science: Practical Issues (A000496)

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 2025-2026

A (semester 1)	Dutch	Gent	lecture
			peer teaching
			seminar

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Provoost, Veerle	LW01	lecturer-in-charge
Verghote, Kato	LW01	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026	**crdts**	**offering**
Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Moral research, moral experience, moral experience, judgement, moral attitudes, discourse analysis, systematic review, research proposal, interview guide construction, qualitative research, focus groups, interviews, narrative analysis, grounded theory, interpretative phenomenological analysis, data-analysis, thematic analysis, NVivo, interview training

Position of the course

This advanced course teaches students how to select and use research methods of moral science.

Contents

The content and lessons consist of two assignments:

1 A research proposal for an empirical study on a topic related to moral sciences, starting from a research question formulated by the student. In addition to the preparatory work and various feedback moments, two class sessions are allocated for the actual writing process. Students will work on the assignment using on-campus computers without access to generative AI tools.

2 A qualitative study or an experiment (group work): formulate a research question, prepare the forms for the ethics committee, conduct interviews, transcribe the interviews, analyse the data using NVivo, synthesize and present the results.

Assignment 1 and 2 are preceded by advanced research seminars where the steps to be taken are explained in detail. In the following lessons, practical tips for using specific software will be given. During three lessons of presentations, students will take turns in providing relevant feedback based on the presentations of their peers. Students are guided through all steps of working on these assignments either indivually or in small groups. This may be during online sessions. Results of these assignements will be presented (online) to peers. During and after these presentations students will be asked to participate in the discussion and give feeback to their peers.

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, most of the above can also be offered in online format. There will be ample opportunity for (online) guidance and support, both individual as well as in small groups.

Initial competences

- To have successfully completed the course 'Statistics' or to have acquired the necessary skills by other means.
- To have successfully completed 'Methods and techniques of research in Moral Science: introduction' or to have acquired the necessary skills by other means.
- To have successfully completed the course 'qualitative methods' or to have acquired the necessary skills by other means.

Final competences

1 The student is able to assess the importance and the usefulness of empirical research results for ethical-theoretical research.
2 The student is able to read critically and interpret published research papers about both quantitative and qualitative empirical research.
3 The student is able to construct research questions, explain their relevance and situate the research question within the current empirical science relating to a specific topic.
4 The student understands different kwalitative research methods and is able to apply these methods in an empirical study on a topic relevant to ethics and moral sciences.
5 The student is able to choose the best fitted qualitative empirical research method for a given research question.
6 The student is able to practically design a study for which they apply a particular research method (recruitment, selection, informing participants, etc.).
7 The student is able to identify and assess ethical challenges and risks in research involving participants, and is able to formulate appropriate mitigation strategies in line with ethical standards and best practices to address them in a responsible. Furthermore, the student understands the role and procedures of ethics committees in this regard.
8 The student is able to design a clear and correct interview guide to address a particular research question, method and participant profile.
9 The student is able to design and use elicitation techniques for eliciting abstract moral reasoning and judsement in an interview setting with both professionals and lay people.
10 The student is able to analyse qualitative data in a scientifically correct and comprehensive way, using specific software (NVivo).
11 The student is able to present empirical research results in a clear way, making a good distinction between main and side issues. The student is able to correctly answer questions or address comments about the research they conducted.
12 The student is familiar with (the structure of) reports of empirical studies, published in peer-reviewed journals.
13 Without AI-support, the student is able to formulate a sound (and in scientific language fluently written) research proposal for an empirical moral study that will answer a research question they constructed.
14 The student is able to create own digital versions of analoge or digital research objects, using (audio)visual or audio-recording and transcription.
15 The student is familiar with strategies to store and manage data in a correct and responsible way.
16 The student is familiar with digital methods to collaborate on a project during several phases of a research process.
17 The student is aware of the societal impact, needs and the ethical dimensions of the digital turn and the position of the humanities therein.

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

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

Seminar (8h): introduction to language (writing) support, instructions and practical directions, theoretical deepening about quantitative and qualitative research, guest lecturer who presents his/her (moral) research project.

Seminar/demonstration (6h): interview techniques and approaches for qualitative data analysis; group discussion about the points of attention regarding research ethics for the project (including concrete challenges, risks and concrete measures to mitigate risks).
Exercises (6h): construction of interview guides, analyse (own) data, reflecting on analysis approaches.
Microteaching (12h): presentation of assignments, peer feedback, training of interview techniques, peer feedback
Online discussion groups: peer feedback about research questions, interview guides and analysis.
Guided indepenndent work, for instance in the PC-class for the writing of a research proposal without AI-support (3h). This independent writing follows a two-step process. In between the steps students receive individual feedback.
Field work: gather, transcribe and analyse qualitative data (in-dept semi-structured interviews).
Research project: prepare research question, research method, data-analysis, prepare presentations.
Group work/project (11h): consultation class: possibility to work on group assignments, teachers provide help and feedback.

Study material

Type: Handouts

Name: Collection of methodological papers, examples of studies, slides, online resources and instructions.
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : No
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : intensive
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time
Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally

References

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Course content-related study coaching

Personal guidance by professor or assistant. Moments of individual consultation and follow-up of assignments.

Assessment moments

continuous assessment

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

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

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 in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

- Peer evaluation: evaluate the assignments of peers
- Working papers: evaluation based on periodical and final documents such as questionnaire, research question, databases, presentations
- Report: evaluation based on oral presentation and results of the empirical studies
- Participation: evaluation on the basis of the student's critical reflection and participation in the discussions in the classes, on online discussion forums and related to the presentations of other students

Calculation of the examination mark

Non-periodical: continuous assessment (100%)
- Assignment 1 (research proposal) – 40% of total score

- Assignment 2 (qualitative interview study) – 50% of total score. For this assignment, most components are scored per group, but there will be particular tasks that are assessed per student individually (e.g., the preparation of research questions and the development of the interview guide).
- Participation - 10%

Students need to obtain a minimum of 50% for each of the first two parts to succeed.

Facilities for Working Students

Students should contact the professor or assistant to ask for the possibilities. Attendance during most lessons is required but alternative assignments and/or electronic learning can be used instead.
For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy