

## Contemporary Ethics: Anglo-American Tradition (A000695)

**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

independent work

**Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026**

Claes, Tom

LW01

lecturer-in-charge

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

[Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences](#)

**crdts**

**offering**

5

A

[Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy](#)

5

A

**Teaching languages**

Dutch

**Keywords**

Contemporary ethics, Anglo-American tradition

**Position of the course**

This course introduces students to the most important viewpoints, discussions, theories and philosophers in twentieth century Anglo-American ethics. The students will be able to master the basic terminology and argumentation strategies from this field of ethics.

**Contents**

- 1 Introduction: Ethics and Metaethics
- 2 Intuitionism: G.E. Moore, H.A. Prichard, D. Ross
- 3 Early Non-Cognitivism: A.J. Ayer, Ch.L. Stevenson, R.M. Hare
- 4 The Moral Judgement and the Fact-Value Distinction: K. Baier, S. Toulmin, J. Searle, P. Geach, Ph. Foot, I. Murdoch, G.E.M. Anscombe, ...
- 5 The Emergence of Virtue Ethics: Ph. Foot, A. MacIntyre, ...
- 6 The 'Error theory' and Fictionalism: J. Mackie, R. Joyce, ...
- 7 Norm-Expressivism and Quasi-Realism: A. Gibbard, S. Blackburn
- 8 Recent Cognitivism: C. Wright's, J. McDowell, G. Harman, N. Sturgeon, R. Boyd, P. Railton, ...

**Initial competences**

- Basic but good knowledge of the main debates, viewpoints and theories in western ethics.
- To have successfully completed the courses 'Philosophical Ethics: Systematics' 'History of Contemporary Philosophy' and 'Philosophical Methodology I' or to have acquired the necessary competences by other means.

**Final competences**

- 1 Having a basic knowledge of the most important strategies of analytical philosophy.
- 2 Having an insight into the dynamics of the most important 20th century debates of the Anglo-American meta-ethics.
- 3 Having an insight into the main issues and theories of Anglo-American Meta-ethics
- 4 Mastering the basic terms and strategies of the modern Anglo-american meta-ethics and philosophical ethics.

- 5 Reflecting critically on the relation meta-ethics and normative ethics (philosophical ethics).
- 6 Being able to cogently elaborate and report a meta-ethical argument.

#### **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**

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

#### **Teaching methods**

Lecture, Independent work

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

- Lectures and discussion
- Guided independent work: preparing a paper and discussion thereof.

#### **Study material**

Type: Syllabus

Name: Contemporary Ethics: Anglo-American Tradition

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Available on Ufora : Yes

#### **References**

Excerpts from: Hudson, W.D., *Modern Moral Philosophy*. (Second Edition)

Houndmills: MacMillan Education 1983.

Darwall, Stephen, Allan Gibbard, & Peter Railton, "Toward Fin de siècle Ethics:

Some Trends," *Philosophical Review*, 101, pp. 115-189, 1992.

Excerpts from: Fisher, A., *Metaethics: An Introduction*. Durham: Acumen Publishing Ltd., 2011.

A selection of original text fragments will become available via Ufora.

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

By lecturer.

#### **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**

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**

Periodic evaluation: written exam with 4 to 5 open questions.

Non-Periodic evaluation: process and final evaluation of paper (draft & final version of short paper, 4-5p., or approx. 2000 words & anonymous constructive feedback on and from fellow students on first version - the 'referee' report.)

If one does not participate in one or more evaluation components or has less than half for one of the components, one can no longer pass the whole of the course and the final score is reduced to a non-deliberable mark.

If a student does not pass the non-periodical evaluation, a second chance is offered by means of a compensatory activity between the first and second exam period.

#### **Calculation of the examination mark**

Periodical (written exam): 80%; non-periodical evaluation (paper & discussion): 20%.

#### **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