

Normative Ethics (A000943)

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 2026-2027

A (semester 2)

Dutch

Gent

lecture

independent work

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Van Ginneken, Clemence

LW01

staff member

Segers, Seppe

LW01

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

[Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences](#)

crdts

offering

5

A

[Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy](#)

5

A

[Elective Set Philosophy and Moral Sciences](#)

5

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Normative ethics

Position of the course

This basic course wants to help students gain basic knowledge of the most important schools in normative ethics.

Contents

A thorough analysis is given of the major theories including utilitarianism and consequentialism, virtue ethics, feminist ethics and Kantianism. These theories are studied on the basis of the writings of philosophers who represent the different schools. The 'meta theme' of this course is about 'centric' assumptions within normative ethics: which perspectives and moral experiences are over- and underrepresented in ethical-normative theorizing?

Initial competences

To have some knowledge about ethics.

Final competences

- 1 To have knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the different normative theories.
- 2 To be able to apply the perspectives on concrete ethical problems.
- 3 To be able to read mainstream articles on ethics in scholarly journals.

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

Group work, Lecture, Independent work, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

- Lectures

- Seminars: interactive discussion of articles.
- Mini symposium: students present in pairs a concise analysis of a theme of their choice from the domain of practical normative ethics from the perspective of the course's meta theme (exclusion/centric thought in ethics); this is modeled as a scientific conference contribution.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Normatieve Ethiek
 Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
 Optional: no
 Language : Dutch
 Available on Ufora : Yes
 Online Available : Yes
 Available in the Library : No
 Available through Student Association : No

Type: Reader

Name: Normatieve Ethiek
 Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
 Optional: no
 Language : English
 Available on Ufora : Yes
 Online Available : Yes
 Available in the Library : No
 Available through Student Association : No

References

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- Williams, B. (2011) Socrates' question, In Williams, B. Ethics and the limits of philosophy, 1-24, London: Routledge (Origineel werk gepubliceerd in 1985)
- Walker, M.U. (2007) Epilogue, In Walker, M.U. Moral understandings, 259-268, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rawls, J. (2000). The Categorical Imperative: The First Formulation, In Herman, B. (Ed.) Lectures on the history of moral philosophy, 162-180, Harvard: Cambridge University Press.
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- Wallace, K.A. (2021). A Kantian Perspective on Individual Responsibility for Sustainability. *Ethics, Policy & Environment* 24, 44-59
- Srinivasan, A. (2017). Feminism and metaethics. In McPherson, T. & Plunkett, D. (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of metaethics*, 595-608, New York: Routledge.
- Walker, M.U. (2007). The subject of moral philosophy, In Walker, M.U. Moral understandings, 3-34, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Walker, M.U. (2007). Where do moral theories come from, In Walker, M.U. Moral understandings, 35-52, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Friedman, M. (2009). Feminist virtue ethics, happiness, and moral luck. *Hypatia* 2, 29-40.
- Alfano, M. (2013). Identifying the hard core of virtue ethics, In Alfano, M. Character as moral fiction, 17-34, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alfano, M. (2013). Rearticulating the situationist challenge, In Alfano, M. Character as moral fiction, 35-61, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Annas, Julia (2015). Virtue and Duty: Negotiating Between Different Ethical Traditions. *Journal of Value Inquiry* 49 (4):605-618.
- Pellegrino, E.D. & Thomasma, D.C. (1993). The ends of medicine and its virtues, In Pellegrino, E.D. & Thomasma, D.C. The virtues in medical practice, 51-61, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shaw, W.H. (1999). Welfare, happiness and the good, In Shaw, W.H. Contemporary ethics : taking account of utilitarianism, 36-67, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Shaw, W.H. (1999). Objections to utilitarianism, In Shaw, W.H. Contemporary ethics

: taking account of utilitarianism, 102-132, Oxford: Blackwell.
 Shaw, W.H. (1999). Refining utilitarianism, In Shaw, W.H. Contemporary ethics : taking account of utilitarianism, 133-170, Oxford: Blackwell.
 Nathanson, S. (2010). A rule-utilitarian defense of noncombatant immunity. In Nathanson, S. Terrorism and the Ethics of War, 191-211, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Optioneel reading:

Brink, D.O. (1989). Introduction, In Brink, D.O. Moral realism and the foundations of ethics, 1-13, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 Williams, B. (2011). Theory and prejudice, In Williams, B. Ethics and the limits of philosophy, 103-132, London: Routledge (Origineel werk gepubliceerd in 1985)
 Herman, B. (1993). Murder and mayhem. In Herman, B. The practice of moral judgment, 113-131, Harvard: Harvard University Press.
 hooks, b. (2015). Black women: shaping feminist theory, In hooks, b. Feminist theory: from margin to center, 1-17, New York: Routledge.
 Held, V. (1990). Feminist transformations of moral theory. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 50, 321-344.
 Alfano, M. (2013). Factitious moral virtue, In Alfano, M. Character as moral fiction, 82-108, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 Anscombe, G.E.M. (1958). Modern moral philosophy. *Philosophy* 33, 1-19
 Hursthouse, R. (1991). Virtue theory and abortion. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 20, 223-246.
 Pellegrino, E.D. & Thomasma, D.C. (1993). Phronesis: medicine's indispensable virtue, In Pellegrino, E.D. & Thomasma, D.C. The virtues in medical practice, 84-91, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 Putman, D. (1997). The intellectual bias of virtue ethics. *Philosophy* 72, :303 - 311.
 Brink, D.O. (1989). Objective utilitarianism, In Brink, D.O. Moral realism and the foundations of ethics, 211-290, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 Brock, D.W. (1973). Recent Work in Utilitarianism. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 10, 241-276.
 Kittay, E. (2008). Ideal theory bioethics and the exclusion of people with severe cognitive disabilities. In Lindemann, H., Verkerk, M. & Walker, M.U. (Eds.), Naturalized bioethics: toward responsible knowing and practice, 218-237. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Course content-related study coaching

The lecturer is available for additional support in case of problems and questions.

Assessment moments

end-of-term 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

Presentation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Written exam with 3 or 4 open questions (80%). Students are supposed to know the content of the course book. The oral presentation counts for 20% of the evaluation.

Calculation of the examination mark

Written exam (80%).

Oral presentation (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 by telephone or during an appointment during or after office hours

4 Possibility of a substitute assignment

For more information contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy: <https://www.ugent.be/lw/nl/student/studiestudentenbegeleiding/trajectbegeleiding.htm>