

Moral Science (A000951)

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 1)	Dutch	Gent	lecture
			independent work

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Bleys, Kjell	LW01	staff member
Segers, Seppe	LW01	lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences	5	A
Bachelor of Science in Political Science	5	A
Elective Set Philosophy and Moral Sciences	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Moral science

Position of the course

This basic course wants to help students gain insight into the specificity of moral science. The course familiarises students with the results and the contribution of auxiliary human sciences to the study of morality. The focus is on the relationship between description and prescription, and how this interaction can be studied philosophically.

Contents

The central line throughout the course is the relationship between facts (descriptive elements) and norms and values (normative elements). What can the (human) sciences contribute to our understanding and development of ethics? At the start, an elementary overview of the (historical) specificity of moral science, along with a discussion of major meta-ethical theories is presented in order to circumscribe and indicate the specificity of this particular approach to ethical reasoning. The contribution of the different auxiliary sciences (psychology, sociology, biology) is explained and presented. Within psychology as a discipline both the developmental moral psychology of Kohlberg and Gilligan as well as the social psychological theories on the role of emotions in moral thinking, the concept of virtue and the fundamental attribution error and the intrinsic motivational force of moral judgements are discussed. The status of moral intuitions and their role in justification and theory development is also analysed.

Initial competences

Final competences

- 1 To have knowledge of the basic theories of meta-ethics.
- 2 To know the perspectives of psychology (social and moral), sociology, and biology on moral thinking and behaviour.
- 3 To be able to analyse and understand relevant texts.
- 4 To be able to communicate and discuss thoughts with and to fellow students.
- 5

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

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

- During the lectures, the reader is commented on and specific issues, such as the relationship between intuitions and ethical theory, are elaborated on.
- Seminar: interactive discussion of academic texts. The seminars are primarily aimed at assisting students in analyzing and comprehensively reading scientific texts that are important to the moral science discipline, in conjunction and complementarily with the syllabus. These seminars are organized as classroom discussions, where moral scientific insights are discussed with fellow students. Every week a seminar is planned to discuss and evaluate the texts together.

Study material

Type: Syllabus

Name: Moraalwetenschap
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: Slides

Name: Moraalwetenschap
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : Dutch
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: Teksten werkcolleges
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

Lectures: syllabus Moraalwetenschap
Literature list seminars: Varied selection (examples of authors relevant to 'sociology' as an 'auxiliary science' for moral science may include: texts by/inspired by Maria Ossowska, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, ...)

Course content-related study coaching

On appointment.

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

Skills test, Participation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Assessment Moments

Periodical (80%)

Continuous assessment (20%)

Assessment Forms

Written exam with open questions. Students are supposed to know the content of the syllabus and of the literature bundle.

The continuous assessments happens on the basis of participation during the seminars.

Calculation of the examination mark

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

1 Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance

2 Feedback can be given during an appointment during or after office hours

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