

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 2023-2024

A (semester 2)

Dutch

Gent

lecture

independent work

Lecturers in academic year 2023-2024

Bleys, Kjell

LW01

staff member

Segers, Seppe

LW01

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2023-2024

[Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences](#)

crdts

5

offering

A

[Bachelor of Science in Political Science](#)

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.

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 major meta-ethical theories is presented in order to circumscribe and indicate the specificity of moral 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. From sociology, especially the importance of the moral order and the moral community is stressed. This point is illustrated with the so-called honour moralities.

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

Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Due to COVID19 different didactic methods may be applied if necessary.

- 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 articles. The seminars mainly aim at helping the students to analyse and understand the scientific articles that are part of the course and to help them to argue a personal opinion on specific ethical problems such as the attribution of responsibility. Every week a seminar is planned to discuss and evaluate the texts together.

Learning materials and price

Besides the syllabus, copies of a limited number of English scientific articles are used for discussion and analysis. All material is made available via Minerva. Cost: 10 EUR

References

- Friedrich, J. (2005) Naturalistic fallacy errors in lay interpretations of psychological science: data and reflections on the Rind, Tromovitch and Bauserman (1998) controversy. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 27 (1): 59-70.
- Haidt, J. (2001) The emotional dog and its rational tale: a social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review* 108 (4): 814-834.
- Harman, G. (1999) Moral philosophy meets social psychology: virtue ethics and the fundamental attribution error. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 99 (3): 215-231.
- Musschenga, B. (2004) Empirische ethiek: contextsensitiviteit of contextualiteit? *Ethische Perspectieven* 14: 27-41.
- Singer, P. (2005) Ethics and intuitions. *Journal of Ethics* 9: 331-352.
- Sunstein, C. R. (2005) Moral heuristics. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 28: 531-542.

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

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Assessment Moments

Periodical (100%)

Assessment Forms

Written exam with 4 open questions. Students are supposed to know the content of the syllabus and of the literature bundle.

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>

