

**(A005516)**

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 3.0** **Study time 90 h**

**Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027**

A (semester 1) Dutch Gent

**Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027**

Mortier, Freddy LW01 lecturer-in-charge

**Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027**

Postgraduate Certificate Practical Humanism	crdts	offering
	3	A

**Teaching languages**

Dutch

**Keywords**

secular humanism, practical ethics, autonomy, empowerment

**Position of the course**

The course Practical humanism was about implementing secular humanist values in the practice of secular humanist counselors. The present course is about the application and elaboration of secular humanist viewpoints to a number of policy domains ridden by ethical dilemma's.

**Contents**

The starting point of the course is an empowerment approach to collective and personal self-determination (grounded in respect for autonomy). Secular humanist values, such as fact-orientedness, secular embedding of the arguments, empathy, protecting human dignity, securing argumentative power and balancing everyone's legitimate interests and perspectives, impose limits to acceptable solutions to the dilemma's. The domains explored are (provisionally): reproductive rights and abortion; end-of-life decisions for specific groups, personal obligations toward nature and the environment; full automatization of decision making ((ro)botisation); inter-faith conflict (genital mutilation as a topic).

**Initial competences**

General Ba-competencies in the SSH

**Final competences**

- 1 • The student is able to distinguish different types of protection and promotion of self-determination in divergent situations
- 2 • The student is able to formulate the main dilemma's in the domains treated
- 3 • The student is able to identify alternatives compatible with secular humanist values and to weigh them against other approaches.
- 4 • The student is able to find professional and academic information on the subject treated and to use that information correctly in an ethics presentation.

**Conditions for credit contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via a credit contract

**Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

**Teaching methods**

(Approved)

**Extra information on the teaching methods**

Two introductory lectures present the empowerment approach to self-determination. They are followed by two series of two (interactive) casus presentations and discussions. Series 1 is about reproductive rights and about the global ethics of food. Series 2 is about (ro)botisation and about interfaith conflict. Each topic is linked to an essay assignment. The student chooses one topic out of each series and submits two provisional versions of the required essays. Four seminars (one on each topic) are dedicated to the submissions. The student finalises one of the essays.

**Study material**

None

**References**

Zie UFORA

**Course content-related study coaching**

Freddy Mortier and yet to designate others

**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**

Assignment

**Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

examination during the second examination period is possible

**Extra information on the examination methods**

The essays are evaluated according to criteria that will be presented orally and on UFORA. Presence at the interactive sessions is required.

**Calculation of the examination mark**

30% of the end score is based on the essay only submitted in a provisional version;  
70% on the paper submitted in both an initial and a final version.

**Facilities for Working Students**

The program is meant for students combining studies with work.