

Huron Brief Course Outlines

Fall/Winter 2023-2024

Course Title: Introduction to Ethics & Value Theory

Course Number and Section

PHILOSOPHY

2700F - 550

Instructor Name(s): Emerson Doyle

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

Value Theory is the study of how, why, and to what degree human beings value certain things or ideals over others. Traditionally this study has focused upon an understanding of “The Good” and our access to it (whatever it is) in the most abstract or broadest sense. More recent work focuses upon understanding our use of evaluative language in many contexts.

Ethics, on the other hand, is concerned to study and recommend principles of right action. What should we do in such-and-such a situation? What would be the moral thing to do? Many have argued that such principles should have some objective foundation. Others argue that our attitudes toward how to act rightly are determined mainly by circumstance—our cultures, intuitions, evolution, etc.—so that the principles by which we judge action are not absolute. Presumably in either case, such principles will be somehow related to the values people hold in highest regard.

In this course we will examine these issues by considering some of the premier theories of value and of obligation in the Western philosophical tradition. We will also consider more carefully the relationship between ethics and value theory, as well as exploring applications of our analyses to some of the difficult moral questions facing humanity today.

Learning Outcomes:

Students should finish the course with an understanding of some of the most influential and prominent positions on the questions and topics outlined above.

Become better equipped to confront and critically evaluate our own attitudes or intuitions toward morality in general and on some difficult practical moral questions in particular.

Students will also have the opportunity to improve your writing, critical analysis, and argumentative abilities.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Course readings will be posted on OWL.

Methods of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Active Learning Exercises	In-Class, Various dates	10%

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
First Writing Assignment	October 5th	20%
Second Writing Assignment	November 9th	20%
Third Writing Assignment	December 7th	20%
Final Exam	Exam Period	30%

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.