

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Introduction to Ethics & Value Theory

Course Number and Section:

PHILOSOP

2700F 551

Instructor Name(s): Emerson Doyle

Instructor Email(s): edoyle9@uwo.ca

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. Recent work focuses upon understanding our use of evaluative language in many contexts: What makes something better than something else, or the worst? Is Knowledge valuable for its own sake, or only for what consequences it brings about? Similarly for Beauty, Truth, or Pleasure? What about Money and Popularity? Is there a difference in kind between the uses of 'good' when I say "You're a good person" versus when I say "This ice cream is good"?

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 right action 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:

Understanding of some of the most influential and prominent positions on the topic

Critical skills to evaluate our own attitudes and intuitions toward morality

Confront difficult practical moral questions

Improve writing, critical analysis, argumentative abilities

Textbooks and Course Materials:

All course readings posted on OWL.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Active Learning	Various	10
Argumentative Essay	October 3	20
Readings Analysis	November 7	20
Final Argumentative Essay	December 5	20
Final Exam	Fall examination period	30

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

Tuesday, August 13, 2024