

PHIL 1020 – Ethics – Spring 2025

Asynchronous Online Course

Instructor Information:

Karen deVries, Ph.D.
kdevries@uccs.edu

*I typically respond to emails on weekdays,
within 24 hours of receipt.*

In-person office hours, Columbine 4056

Tuesdays, 1:00-2:30pm in Columbine 4056

beginning February 4, 2025

sign up for a 15-min time slot at

<https://calendly.com/kdevries-uccs/15-minute-meeting?>

*We can also arrange virtual or in-person
meetings at other times. Email me.*



Welcome to PHIL 1020, Ethics. I've designed this course to introduce you to philosophical questions about the field of ethics. What is the right thing to do? And how do you even know what's right or wrong?

Throughout the semester, we will be asking questions such as: Is there objective morality? Is morality relative to a particular cultural or religious tradition? What makes actions right or wrong? What is it to be a good person? What ethical obligations do we have towards others? Should we be ethical even when it doesn't always appear to be in our best interest to do so? What is a good life and is it necessarily free of pain and suffering? We will examine how philosophers from diverse traditions have attempted to answer these questions. We will also consider how various ethical frameworks might address contemporary moral issues as capital punishment and poverty. The purpose of this course is not to provide a definitive answer to these questions, but rather to help you understand the reasoning that underlies your own beliefs, as well as those who hold different views.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course, students will:

- Develop an understanding of several major ethical theories developed over the last 2000 years
- Apply ethical theories to contemporary societal problems
- Develop an understanding of differing ethical commitments that frequently undergird disagreements and ideologies

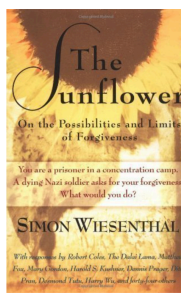
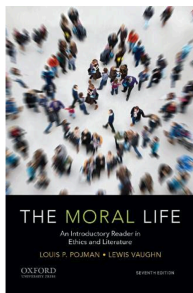
- Improve their ability to support their ethical positions with good reasoning
- Improve their ability to synthesize and critically evaluate complex theoretical arguments
- Develop critical reading, writing, and thinking skills

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course will be delivered online in an asynchronous format through Canvas. Each week, you will have assigned readings. By end of day on Wednesday of each week, I will post a video mini-lecture discussing the readings. By that time, I will also post a discussion question (DQ) prompt that you will need to respond to by 11:59pm on Friday. You will then need to reply to at least two of your classmates responses by 11:59pm the following Monday.

There are 4 open-book quizzes that are marked on the course calendar below. If you keep up with the readings and read carefully, the quizzes are straight-forward. Additionally, to complete this course, you must submit a midterm paper and a final paper.

REQUIRED TEXTS and ACCESS

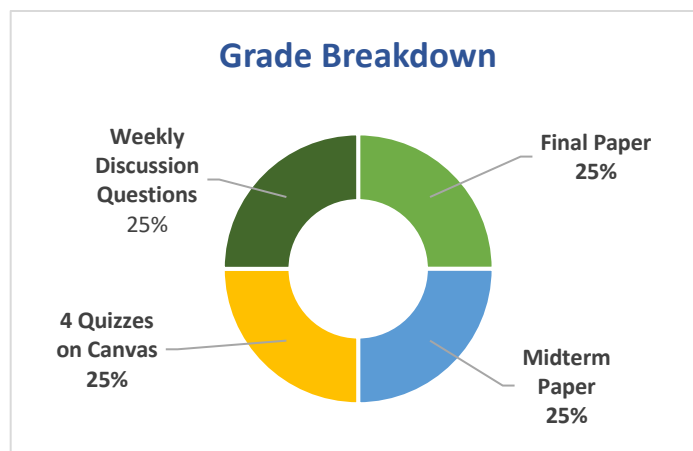


- (1) *The Moral Life: An Introductory Reader in Ethics and Literature*, edited by Louis Pojman and Lewis Vaughn, 7th Edition, Oxford University Press 2018 (“TML” on reading list).
- (2) Simon Wiesenthal. *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness*. Schocken Press, 1998.
- (3) Additional articles will be available on Canvas

For the two required texts, *The Moral Life* and *The Sunflower*, this course uses the UCCS Bookstore’s **Day One e-Textbook Access program** which offers students instant access to online textbooks and to save students as much money as possible. Access your e-textbooks in Canvas.

- On the left side of the course home page, locate and click on the **Vital Source** link.
- You will need to access the content via Canvas using the **Chrome browser**. Safari does not yet work with this program’s content
- If you prefer to buy your own copy of the books, you will have until the *opt out* date (listed in the Vital Source content) to discontinue use and not incur the cost.
- For issues and inquiries regarding VitalSource eBooks & Day One Access you can reach a technical specialist 24/6/365 via chat, text, email, and phone <https://support.vitalsource.com/hc/en-us/requests/new> 1-855-200-4146.
- If you have any questions that the technical specialist is unable to answer, contact the bookstore at 719-255-3846.

EVALUATION and ASSIGNMENTS



Grading Scale

A	100-95
A-	94-90
B+	89-87
B	86-84
B-	83-80
C+	79-77
C	76-74
C-	73-70
D	60-69
F	60-0

For your final grade, I round up to the nearest tenth of a percent. If you finish with an 89.5, that is rounded up to an A-, but if you finish with an 89.499999999999, that is still a B+

Absences and Late Work

Late assignments will be accepted without deduction only on *sufficient prior* arrangement with me. Please get in touch with me as soon as practicably possible if you know that you might be late with an assignment. If you have not made arrangements because of the suddenness of the emergency, let me know as soon as possible. **Be sure to include an authorized note** from a professional who is familiar with your situation (e.g. a doctor).

Weekly Discussion Questions (25% of grade)

Each week (by end of day Wednesday) I will post a discussion question (DQ) prompt that you will need to respond to. The DQ has two purposes: first, to give you a formal opportunity to reflect on the readings in a connective or synthetic way and second, to serve as a starting place for class discussions. The discussion questions – and the class as a whole – will require you to read carefully, looking up terms you do not understand, and keeping notes as you read. you will need to respond to by 11:59pm on Friday. You will then need to reply to at least two of your classmates responses by 11:59pm the following Monday.

A note about discussions:

This course has a significant online discussion component. Topics covered are controversial, and thoughtful intelligent people have held opposing views. We will have the opportunity to review several contrasting positions, but, ultimately, you are expected to engage the issues and form your own views. Your learning in this course will depend on your willingness to think critically and formulate your own views so that you can improve your ability to express them clearly and convincingly. *You should expect that your views will be challenged and be willing to challenge the views of others.* At the same time, it will be extremely important to *respect each other* in discussions. It is important to distinguish between the person offering a particular view and the view itself. The latter may be criticized, but not the former.

Quizzes (25% of grade)

Throughout the semester, there are open book and open note quizzes that you will take on Canvas. Each quiz will open several days before it is due, so you can find a time that works best for you. There is no time limit for taking these quizzes. Each quiz will have 10-20ish questions. If you have been keeping up with the lectures and the reading, the quizzes are quite doable. If you have been keeping up with the materials but find yourself struggling with the quizzes, get in touch with me. Test-taking is a skill of its own, and I'm happy to help you get better at it.

Midterm Paper (25% of grade) and Final Paper (25% of grade)

For your midterm paper, I will give you a prompt that will address material from the first half of the semester. For your final paper, I will give you a prompt that will address the last half of the semester. Both of these papers will have a 5-6 page length requirement.

Both papers will require you to have developed and to demonstrate your critical thinking skills about the materials we've covered. They will not require outside research or reading beyond the weekly assignments.

Writing is a skill that not only enables good communication but also helps to organize your thoughts. Thinking and writing are both lifelong disciplines that can always be improved. UCCS's Writing Center has great resources to help you with your papers and with your overall writing skills. The sooner you get in touch with them, the better.

AI/ChatGPT Policy

Anything generated by AI can be considered to have been plagiarized. Given that anything generated by AI has been culled from the web and restated or recreated without attribution (and sometimes even with false attribution), that content can be considered plagiarized.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). To stay within university policies on academic honesty, your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited, using quotation marks or other appropriate indicators of quoted material when appropriate,

Acceptable uses of AI

The use of generative AI tools is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts
- Checking grammar and style

The use of generative AI tools is NOT permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board replies or content that you put into a Teams or Zoom chat
- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete class assignments

PLAGIARISM

Read the UCCS LAS Plagiarism Policy which you can find at <https://las.uccs.edu/plagiarism-policy>. Paraphrasing or quoting another's work without citing the source is a form of academic misconduct. Even inadvertent or unintentional misuse or appropriation of another's work (such as relying heavily on source material that is not expressly acknowledged) is considered plagiarism. All work for this course must be completed by the person submitting it for evaluation.

Anyone found guilty of plagiarism, cheating, forgery, falsification, or other forms of academic dishonesty will FAIL the course. If you have any questions about using and citing sources, you are expected to ask for clarification. You plagiarize, you fail. Seriously. When in doubt, just ask me. I am here to help!

Informational Resources to Help You Avoid Plagiarism

https://academics.uccs.edu/~srehorst/labs/Modules/Plagiarism_Guidelines.pdf
<http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/definition.html>
<http://tutorials.istudy.psu.edu/academicintegrity/>

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to have access to a working computer and the internet during the course.

Minimal technical skills required include the ability to:

- use Canvas, UCCS's learning management system,
- use emails (and sometimes with attachments) to communicate with instructor,
- create and submit files in .doc, .docx, and .pdf formats
- copy and paste assignment questions, and
- download and install software.

SYLLABUS CHANGES

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus as appropriate. Should this happen, I will inform you as soon as possible.

COURSE CALENDAR

WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION to ETHICS

January
21-24

Watch introductory video from Dr. deVries (posted by end of day Weds)
Review syllabus and expectations.
Respond to DQ #1 by 11:59pm on Friday, January 24th
Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, January 27th

WEEK 2 SELF-INTEREST and RELATIVISM

January
27-31

READING FOR THIS WEEK:

Plato, "The Ring of Gyges" (TML, p. 469-475)
James Rachels, "A Critique of Ethical Egoism" (TML, p. 493-504)
Ruth Benedict, "The Case for Moral Relativism" (TML p. 113-119)
James Rachels, "Why Morality Is Not Relative" (TML, p. 132-144)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday
Respond to DQ #2 by 11:59pm on Friday, January 31st
Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, February 3rd

WEEK 3 SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY and UTILITARIANISM

February
3-7

READING FOR THIS WEEK:

Thomas Hobbes, "On the State of Nature" (TML, p. 39-49)
"Seaman Holmes and the Longboat of William Brown" (TML, p. 186-187)
Jeremy Bentham, "Classical Utilitarianism" (TML, p. 187-192)
John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism Refined" (TML, p. 193-197)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday
Respond to DQ #3 by 11:59pm on Friday, February 7th
Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, February 10th

WEEK 4 UTILITARIANISM cont.

**February
10-14**

READING FOR THIS WEEK:

Bernard Williams, "Against Utilitarianism" (TML, p. 210-221)

Ursula Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (TML, p. 222-227)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday

Respond to DQ #4 by 11:59pm on Friday, February 14th

Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, February 17th

Quiz #1 in Canvas opens at noon on Thursday, February 13th

Quiz #1 due in Canvas by 11:59pm on Tuesday, February 18th

WEEK 5 KANTIAN or DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS

**February
17-21**

READING FOR THIS WEEK:

Immanuel Kant, "The Moral Law" (TML, p. 231-247)

Onora O'Neill, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics," (Canvas)

Kant, "The Retributive Theory of Punishment" (Canvas)

Nelson Potter, "Kant and Capital Punishment Today" (Canvas)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Quiz #1 due in Canvas by 11:59pm on Tuesday, February 18th

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday

Respond to DQ #5 by 11:59pm on Friday, February 21st

Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, February 24th

WEEK 6 VIRTUE ETHICS

**February
24-28**

READING FOR THIS WEEK:

Aristotle, "Virtue Ethics" (TML, p. 301-314)

Velasquez et al., "Ethics and Virtue" (Canvas)

Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints" (TML, p. 331-343)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday

Respond to DQ #6 by 11:59pm on Friday, February 28th

Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, March 3rd

Receive and review midterm prompt by 11:59pm on Friday, February 28th

WEEK 7 FEMINIST ETHICS

**March
3-7**

READING FOR THIS WEEK:

Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Ethics* (TML, p. 415-427)
Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care* (TML, p. 449-463)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday
Respond to DQ #7 by 11:59pm on Friday, March 7th
Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, March 10th

WEEK 8 ETHICS in a GLOBALIZED WORLD

**March
10-14**

READING FOR THIS WEEK:

Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (TML, p. 918-929)
Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons" (TML, p. 860-874)
Garrett Hardin, "Living on a Lifeboat" (TML p. 886-902)
Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Kindness to Strangers" (12pp, Canvas)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday
Respond to DQ #8 by 11:59pm on Friday, March 14th
Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, March 17th

Quiz #2 in Canvas opens by noon on Thursday, March 13th

WEEK 9 MIDTERM WEEK

**March
17-21**

NO READING THIS WEEK. WORK ON YOUR MIDTERM

Quiz #2 due in Canvas by 11:59pm on Tuesday, March 18th
Midterm due in Canvas by 11:59pm on Friday, March 21st

WEEK 10 SPRING BREAK

**March
24-28**

No additional assignments this week. Enjoy your break.

WEEK 11 EXISTENTIALISM

March 31 READING/VIEWING FOR THIS WEEK:

-

April 4

Watch the film, *Groundhog Day*

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (TML, p. 99-110)

excerpt from Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo* (Canvas)

Albert Camus's "Life is Absurd" (TML, 522-528)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday

Respond to DQ #9 by 11:59pm on Friday, April 4th

Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, April 7th

WEEK 12 BUDDHIST ETHICS

April

7-11

READING/VIEWING FOR THIS WEEK:

Siddhartha Gautama, "The Four Noble Truths" (Canvas)

Watch the film, *Fight Club*

Charley Reed's "*Fight Club: An Exploration of Buddhism*" (Canvas)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday

Respond to DQ #10 by 11:59pm on Friday, April 11th

Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, April 14th

WEEK 13 AN ETHICS of the EVENT

April

14-18

READING FOR THIS WEEK:

Levi R. Bryant's "Ethics of the Event" (Canvas)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday

Respond to DQ #11 by 11:59pm on Friday, April 18th

Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, April 21st

Quiz #3 opens in Canvas by noon on Thursday, April 17th

Quiz #3 due in Canvas by 11:59pm on Tuesday, April 22nd

WEEK 14 ETHICS and FORGIVENESS

**April
21-25**

READING FOR THIS WEEK:

Book 1 of *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* (p. 1-99)

Excerpts from Book 2 of *The Sunflower*

Moshe Bejski, pp. 111-117

Dalai Lama, pp. 129-130

Primo Levi, pp. 191-192

Herbert Marcuse, pp. 207-208

Dorothee Soelle, pp. 243-245

Desmond Tutu, pp. 266-268

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Quiz #3 due in Canvas by 11:59pm on Tuesday, April 22nd

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday

Respond to DQ #12 by 11:59pm on Friday, April 25th

Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, April 28th

WEEK 15 ETHICS and MARKETS

**April 28
-
May 2**

READING FOR THIS WEEK:

Michael Sandel's "How Markets Crowd Out Morals" (Canvas)

Michael Sandel's "Markets in Life and Death" (Canvas)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Discussion question and video(s) will be posted by end of day on Wednesday

Respond to DQ #13 by 11:59pm on Friday, May 2nd

Reply to at least two other students DQ by 11:59pm on Monday, May 5th

Quiz #4 in Canvas opens by noon on Thursday, May 1st

Quiz #4 due in Canvas by 11:59pm on Tuesday, May 6th

Receive Final Take-Home Prompt by 11:59pm Friday, May 2nd

WEEK 16 DEAD WEEK

**May
5-9**

Quiz #4 due in Canvas by 11:59pm on Tuesday, May 6th

Work on your final paper.

FINALS WEEK Final Take-Home Exam due to Canvas by 11:59pm on Tuesday, May 13th

ADDITIONAL UCCS POLICIES and RESOURCES

Academic Advising

UCCS Academic advising offers advising for degree programs and an opportunity to ask questions about all things regarding your academic career. See <https://advising.uccs.edu/>.

Excel Centers

The Excel Centers (Communication, Languages, Mathematics, Science, and Writing) provide students with academic support both in-person and remotely. All Excel Centers offer online service appointments. Visit the Excel Support webpage: <https://excel.uccs.edu/excel-support>.

Technology Help

UCCS Help Desk – 719-255-3536. See also <https://oit.uccs.edu/get-help>.

For Canvas issues, use the Help link at the bottom of the global navigation in the Canvas course (black nav bar at the far left of the window). You can also call the Canvas Support Hotline at 844-802-9230. Or access Canvas's Support via Live Chat at <https://uccs.edu/lms/>.

Disabilities Services

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, please register with Disability Services and provide them with documentation of your disability. They will work with you to determine what accommodations are appropriate for your situation. To avoid any delay, you should contact Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and disability accommodations cannot be provided until a Faculty Accommodation Letter has been given to me. Please contact Disability Services for more information at Main Hall room 324, 719-255-3354 or dservice@uccs.edu.

Veteran and Military Affairs

If you are a military student with the potential of being called to military service or training during the semester, you are encouraged to contact your UCCS course instructor no later than the first week of class to discuss the class attendance policy. Please see the [Veteran and Military Affairs](#) website for more information.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

Mental health challenges can interfere with academic performance. The source of symptoms might be related to your course work; if so, please speak with me. However, problems with other parts of your life can also contribute to decreased academic performance. If you are unsure if you need assistance, free online mental health screenings can be found [here](#).

If you are experiencing a mental health emergency (*i.e.*, you do not feel physically safe), please immediately contact one of the resources listed below:

- **Call UCCS Public Safety at 719-255-3111, call or text the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988, call 911, or go to the nearest emergency room.**

ADDITIONAL UCCS POLICIES and RESOURCES cont.

For confidential mental health services, visit the Wellness Center located inside the [Gallogly Recreation and Wellness Center](#). The first 3 visits are free. Phone: 719-255-4444. Hours: Monday–Friday, 8am–5pm. You can also contact Telus Health Student Support for free, confidential 24/7 mental health and wellbeing support through the Telus Health app or visit our free mental health and resilience digital platform. Resource information can be found at 24/7 Mental Health Resources | [Gallogly Recreation and Wellness Center](#).

If you are in need of a community resource, [Diversus Health Lighthouse](#) has a Walk-In Crisis Center at 115 S. Parkside Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80910, Hotline: 844-493-8255, Office: 719-572-6100. Other community resources can be found at Resources in the Colorado Springs Community | [Gallogly Recreation and Wellness Center](#).

Other community resources can be found at [Resources in the Colorado Springs Community](#).

Recording Classes

Students are prohibited from making audio or video recording of any class activity conducted in person or online unless (1) I have given you explicit permission or (2) the student has provided the instructor with a Faculty Accommodation Letter from Disability Services. These letters must be presented to the instructor prior to any recording done and recording should be reserved for that individual's educational use only. Students who are permitted to record are prohibited from distributing recordings without consent. Distribution without consent will be forwarded to the Dean of Students for consideration under the student code of conduct. Recording class activity without consent is a violation of instructor and student right to privacy, copyright, and intellectual property.

Student Code of Conduct

UCCS expects all students to conduct themselves as honest, responsible and law-abiding members of the academic community and to respect the rights of other students, members of the faculty and staff and the public to use, enjoy and participate in the University programs and facilities. For additional information, see UCCS's Student Conduct Code at: <https://www.uccs.edu/dos/student-conduct>

Student Educational Records

All records related to this course are confidential and will not be shared with anyone, including parents, without a signed, written release. If you wish to have information from your records shared with others, you must provide written request/authorization to the office/department. Before giving such authorization, you should understand the purpose of the release and to whom and for how long the information is authorized for release.

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Responsible Reporting: Institutional Equity / Title IX Statement

The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), administers the University of Colorado (CU) Sexual Misconduct policy (including Title IX), the UCCS Discrimination and Harassment Policy, and the CU Conflict of Interest in Cases of Amorous Relationships Policy. All UCCS faculty and staff, including student employees, are considered "responsible employees" and *must* report any suspected or known conduct that may be in violation of these policies ("prohibited conduct") directly to the OIE. This reporting requirement exists to support the safety of our campus community, and there is no statute of limitations. Prohibited conduct includes unwanted verbal or physical conduct that is sexual in nature, or based on a protected class (such as, gender, race, veteran status, disability, etc.).

You may review the Applicable Policies and OIE's Resolution Procedures and here:

<https://equity.uccs.edu/>. While reporting prohibited conduct to the OIE is required by UCCS employees, participation in an OIE resolution process though the OIE is voluntary. Confidential reporting, and access to medical and mental health services, are available to students through the UCCS Wellness Center at 719-255-4444.