

Contemporary Ethical Issues

Updated 2008

Description: Undergraduates have the tools to make ethically determined judgments.

Requirement: Undergraduates complete one course officially designated as a Contemporary Ethical Issues (“E” or “ETH”) course.

Student Learning Outcomes

Undergraduates can:

1. identify ethical issues in a contemporary situation/professional setting;
2. deliberate responsibly on ethical issues using tools/processes/frameworks;
3. form sound ethical judgments.

Course Hallmarks & Explanatory Notes

1. Contemporary ethical issues will be presented and studied in a manner that is fully integrated into the main course content.
2. The disciplinary approach(es) used in the class will give students tools for the development of responsible deliberation and ethical judgment.
3. Students will achieve basic competency in analyzing and deliberating upon contemporary ethical issues to help them make ethically determined judgments.
4. The equivalent of one semester credit-hour or 30% of a 3-credit course will be devoted to contemporary ethical issues.
5. minimum of 8 hours of class time will be spent in discussing contemporary ethical issues.
6. The course will be numbered at the 300- or 400-level.

Explanatory Notes

- The goal of E courses, at least in part, must be to equip students with some degree of proficiency in ethical deliberation. These courses should not be purely descriptive, merely characterizing, for example, the moral beliefs of person or peoples. Nor is it intended that the pedagogy be value-free, using approaches that maintain an “arms-length” relationship with current ethical issues.
- Course materials must be pertinent to the ethical issues under review. While well-selected philosophical and literary texts would serve, so would case studies, judicial opinions, statutes, codes of ethics (and commentaries), film, works of art, performances, as well as a broad range of other readings.
- Different academic approaches and methodologies can be used to give students tools for the development of responsible ethical judgments. Approaches might include small group discussions, formal debate, round-table discussions, Socratic questioning, etc.
- E course may be associated with particular disciplines, professions, and larger enterprises: the ethics of human and animal research, medical ethics, bioethics, biotechnology, business ethics, engineering ethics, ethics in government, and journalistic ethics, for example. Still others might look at ethical issues that emerge at cultural interfaces, such as war, evangelism, colonialism and multi-cultural societies, etc. Contemporary ethical issues must be fully integrated into the main course content and must be tied to activities that develop students’ proficiency in forming sound ethical judgments.

CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL ISSUES RUBRIC

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CATEGORY	Not Meeting-1	Approaching-2	Meeting-3	Exceeding-4
Identifies ethical issue(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not identify the ethical issue(s) or realizes something is not “right” but does not clearly identify the professional and/or contemporary ethical issues at play - Sees issues mostly in “black and white” terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifies some of the professional and/or contemporary ethical issues or identifies what is legal/illegal or acceptable/unacceptable - Recognizes relevant ethical ambiguities/ dilemmas but does not clearly describe them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifies/names the inherent ethical choices and implications involved in the professional and/or contemporary situation - Clearly describes relevant ethical ambiguities/ dilemmas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clearly identifies the inherent ethical choices and implications involved in a professional and/or contemporary situation - Understands the effects of perspective, context, personal views, codes and laws (if applicable) - Specifies the decision-makers and stakeholders - Integrates clear descriptions of relevant ethical ambiguities/ dilemmas into the overall analysis
Deliberates responsibly using ethical tools, processes, and/or frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unclear about the frameworks, principles, and/or code of ethics to be applied - Fails to acknowledge multiple viewpoints or embraces contradictory viewpoints - May discuss ethical issues but unclear on own position and/or the effects of different perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describes the frameworks, principles, and/or code of ethics that can be applied - Comfortable discussing ethical issues from own point of view, but may have difficulty seeing different points of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draws upon frameworks, principles, and/or code of ethics to develop pertinent arguments and/or positions - Debates and/or discusses ethical issues with sensitivity to others’ points of view and different perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draws upon frameworks, principles, and/or code of ethics to develop pertinent arguments and/or positions - Develops and presents alternate arguments/positions - Discusses and/or debates ethical issues with sensitivity to others’ perspectives and the context while also defending own position with logic and fact
Forms sound ethical judgments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not specify a resolution or judgment or decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes a judgment/decision but may not take into account multiple perspectives - Partial or flawed use of a systematic decision-making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes a judgment that considers and is sensitive to multiple perspectives - Evidence of a logical, systematic decision-making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes a reasoned judgment that takes into account an array of arguments and perspectives - Evidence of a logical, systematic decision-making process.
Uses professional code of ethics (IF APPLICABLE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not correctly reference sections of the professional code of ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cites applicable sections, but may not correctly use in decision-making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Correctly cites applicable sections of the professional code and explains how they guide forming a judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Correctly cites applicable sections of the professional code and explains their meaning and/or implications on forming a judgment