

<b>Academic Year</b>	2021/2022	<b>Semester</b>	Semester 1
<b>Course Coordinator</b>	Dr Melvin Chen (Philo)/Dr Christina Chuang (Philo)/Dr Justin Clark (Hist)		
<b>Course Code</b>	CY0002		
<b>Course Title</b>	Ethics		
<b>Pre-requisites</b>	NIL		
<b>No of AUs</b>	3		
<b>Contact Hours</b>	Lecture – 3 hours per week Consultation – 1-2 hours per week ( <i>optional</i> )		
<b>Proposal Date</b>	January 2021		

<b>Course Aims</b>
<p>This course aims to introduce normative ethics and metaethics to students. In addition, it encourages students to respond critically to articles and videos that make use of the concepts of normative ethics and metaethics and to become ethically reflective and responsible global citizens. Last but not least, this course encourages students to consider the benefits of a civic education, the welfare of the community or commonweal, and the ethical implications of being civic-minded.</p>
<b>Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)</b>
<p>By the end of this course, you (as a student) would be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Critically evaluate situations involving moral relativism, moral nihilism and moral objectivism, which are key positions in metaethics</li> <li>2. Critically evaluate situations involving utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics, which are key positions in normative ethics</li> <li>3. Compare and contrast arguments and concepts as presented in various philosophy articles, videos and other media.</li> <li>4. Critically evaluate your ethical responsibility as a global citizen.</li> <li>5. Discuss critically about the civic habits, responsibilities, and values that are relevant to your membership in a community</li> <li>6. Discuss more about the welfare of the community in an ethics-of-care-related context.</li> </ol>
<b>Course Content</b>
<p><b>Moral Reasoning</b>  What is practical reasoning?  What is moral reasoning?  What are the ethical implications of being civic-minded?  What are the civic habits, responsibilities, and values that are relevant to community membership?  What are moral dilemmas and how do we deal with them?  What are the empirical challenges to moral reasoning?  How might we construct machines and programs to reason morally?</p>

**Moral Relativism**

What is relativism and what reasons might we have to support relativism?  
What is cultural relativism? How can conflicting ethical values best be reconciled in a multicultural society?  
What is moral relativism? How do we distinguish between strong and weak relativism?

**Moral Nihilism**

How is moral nihilism distinct from moral relativism and/or moral universalism?  
What reasons might we have for supporting moral nihilism?  
What are the varieties of moral nihilism?  
Why might one object to moral nihilism?  
How might the moral nihilist go about countering these objections?

**Moral Objectivism**

How do we distinguish between moral objectivism and moral non-objectivism?  
What reasons might we have for supporting moral objectivism?

**Morality & Religion**

Can religion serve as a guide to morality?  
What is divine command theory?  
What is secular morality?  
What is the Euthyphro dilemma?

**Morality & Religion (Part 2)**

What do polytheisms, monotheisms and non-theisms have in common to warrant our calling them 'religion'?  
What are the key forms of Buddhist ethics?  
How do we best reconcile or manage the conflicting ethical demands of religion and secularism in civic society?

**Utilitarianism**

What are the key features of utilitarianism?  
What is classical utilitarianism?  
How might the utilitarianism of Mill differ from the utilitarianism of Bentham?

**Utilitarianism (Part 2)**

What are the challenges to classical utilitarianism?  
How might the utilitarian respond to these challenges?

**Deontology**

What is deontological ethics?  
What are the key types of deontological ethics?

**Deontology (Part 2)**

How do we distinguish between agent- and patient-centred deontological ethics?  
What are the advantages and weaknesses of deontological ethics?  
Can machines constitute moral agents?

**Virtue Ethics**

What is virtue ethics?  
Why might one object to virtue ethics?

How might a virtue ethicist respond to these objections?  
 Are there specific virtues associated with living in society, apart from those that emerge from specific individual relationships? From an ethical standpoint, does 'society' exist?

**Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Course LO Tested</b>	<b>Related Programme LO or Graduate Attributes</b>	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Team/ Individual</b>	<b>Assessment rubrics</b>
1. Essay 1	1, 3,	Cognitive Ability Competence Character	35%	Individual	Appendix 1 (see below)
2. Essay 2	2, 3,	Cognitive Ability Competence Character	35%	Individual	Appendix 1 (see below)
3. Midterm	1, 3	Cognitive Ability Competence Character	20%	Individual	MCQ Format
4. Participation	1, 2, 3, 4	Cognitive Ability Competence Character	10%	Team	Discretionary (based on the quality of each student's contributions to class discussions)
<b>Total</b>			100%		

**Formative feedback**

After Essay 1, formative feedback is provided in detail, in order to allow you to improve your essay-writing skills in time for Essay 2. After the Midterm MCQ, a post-mortem is conducted for the questions that would have turned out to be the trickiest ones (statistically)

At the end of each 'Questions to Ponder' session for a particular seminar, you are also provided with formative feedback about how best these questions might have been answered

Consultation sessions are also available each week for the you to solicit such formative feedback on an individual and voluntary basis

## Learning and Teaching approach

Approach	How does this approach support students in achieving the learning outcomes?
Lecture	It helps to introduce normative ethics and metaethics to students and guide student enquiry in the rhetoric, arguments and concepts employed in these articles
Team Discussion (based on 'Questions to Ponder')	It encourages students to take ownership of how they engage with and respond critically to a number of key positions in metaethics and normative ethics
Film Section	It encourages students to reflect on their roles and responsibilities as global citizens
TBL	It encourages students to critically evaluate both individually and with their teammates philosophical arguments and concepts (as presented in various philosophy articles) and to apply moral arguments and concepts to real-life scenarios or thought-experiments (as presented in videos and other media)

## Reading and References

Jack Crittenden & Peter Levine's 'Civic Education' in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Henry Sidgwick's 'Introduction' in *The Methods of Ethics*

Roger Crisp's 'Reasons' in *Reasons & the Good*

Joshua Greene's 'The Secret Joke of Kant's Soul'

James Rachels' 'The Challenge of Cultural Relativism' in *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*

David Wong's 'Introduction' in *Natural Moralities: A Defense of Pluralistic Relativism*

A. J. Ayer's 'Critique of Ethics & Theology' in *Language, Truth & Logic*

J. L. Mackie's 'The Subjectivity of Values' in *Ethics: Inventing Right & Wrong*

Thomas Nagel's 'The Objective Basis of Morality' in *Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer

Geoffrey Goodwin & John Darley's 'The Psychology of Meta-Ethics: Exploring Objectivism' in *Cognition* Vol. 106 No. 3

Plato's 'Euthyphro'

G. E. M. Anscombe's 'Modern Moral Philosophy' in *Philosophy*, Vol. 33 No. 124

Asanga's *Chapter on Ethics with the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-Pa*, *The Basic Path to Awakening, The Complete Bodhisattva*, trans. Mark Tatz  
Peter Harvey's 'Chapter 3' in *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics. Foundations, Values & Issues*

Jeremy Bentham's 'The Principle of Utility' in *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals & Legislation*

J. S. Mill's 'What Utilitarianism Is,' in *Utilitarianism*

J. J. C. Smart's 'Defending Utilitarianism' in *Utilitarianism: For & Against*

John Harsanyi's 'Morality and the Theory of Rational Behaviour' in *Utilitarianism & Beyond*, ed. Amartya Sen & Bernard Williams

Immanuel Kant's 'On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives' in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason & Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, ed. & trans. Lewis White Beck

Anthony Ellis' 'Deontology, Incommensurability & the Arbitrary' in *Philosophy & Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 52 No. 4

Thomas Scanlon's 'Contractualism & Utilitarianism' in *Utilitarianism & Beyond*, ed. Amartya Sen & Bernard Williams

Christine Korsgaard, 'Fellow creatures: Kantian ethics & our duties to animals,' in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*

Aristotle's 'Book II' in *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross

Julia Annas, 'Being Virtuous & Doing the Right Thing' in *Proceedings & Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* Vol. 78 No. 2

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### **Course Policies and Student Responsibilities**

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#### **(1) General**

You are expected to complete all assigned pre-class readings and activities, attend all seminar classes punctually and undertake all scheduled assignments and tasks by due dates. You are expected to take responsibility to follow up with course notes, assignments and course related announcements for seminar sessions they have missed. You are expected to participate in all seminar discussions and activities.

#### **(2) Absenteeism**

The 'Questions to Ponder' section requires you to be in class to contribute to team work. In-class activities make up a significant portion of your course grade. Absence from class without a valid reason will affect your overall course grade. Valid reasons include falling ill supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU's approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies. There will be no make-up opportunities for in-class activities.

If you miss a seminar session, you must inform your team members and me via email (melvinchen@ntu.edu.sg) prior to the start of the class.

### Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

### Course Instructors

Instructor	Office Location	Phone	Email
Melvin Chen	SHHK 03 91 (USP-PHILO)	65927935	melvinchen@ntu.edu.sg
Christina Chuang	SHHK 03 90 (PHILO)	65923205	cchuang@ntu.edu.sg
Justin Clark	SHHK 05 13 (USP-HIST)	65927803	justin.clark@ntu.edu.sg

### Planned Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Course LO	Readings	Assignments
0	Introduction	1, 2, 3, 4	Jack Crittenden & Peter Levine's 'Civic Education'	Participation
1	Moral Reasoning	1, 3, 4	Henry Sidgwick's 'Introduction' in <i>The Methods of Ethics</i> Roger Crisp's 'Reasons' in <i>Reasons &amp; the Good</i> Joshua Greene's 'The Secret Joke of Kant's Soul'	Participation
2	Moral Relativism	1, 3, 4	James Rachels' 'The Challenge of Cultural Relativism' in <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>	Participation

			David Wong's 'Introduction' in <i>Natural Moralities: A Defense of Pluralistic Relativism</i>	
3	Moral Nihilism	1, 3, 4	A. J. Ayer's 'Critique of Ethics & Theology' in <i>Language, Truth &amp; Logic</i> J. L. Mackie's 'The Subjectivity of Values' in <i>Ethics: Inventing Right &amp; Wrong</i>	Participation
4	Moral Objectivism	1, 3, 4	Thomas Nagel's 'The Objective Basis of Morality' in <i>Ethics</i> , ed. Peter Singer Geoffrey Goodwin & John Darley's 'The Psychology of Meta-Ethics: Exploring Objectivism' in <i>Cognition</i> Vol. 106 No. 3	Participation
5	Morality & Religion	1, 3, 4	Plato's 'Euthyphro' G. E. M. Anscombe's 'Modern Moral Philosophy' in <i>Philosophy</i> , Vol. 33 No. 124	Participation
6	Morality & Religion (Part 2)	1, 3, 4	Asanga's <i>Chapter on Ethics with the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-Pa</i> , The Basic Path to Awakening, <i>The Complete Bodhisattva</i> , trans. Mark Tatz Peter Harvey's 'Chapter 3' in <i>An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics. Foundations, Values &amp; Issues</i>	Midterm, Participation
7	Utilitarianism	2, 3, 4	Jeremy Bentham's 'The Principle of Utility' in <i>An Introduction to the Principles of Morals &amp; Legislation</i> J. S. Mill's 'What	Essay 1, Participation

			Utilitarianism Is,' in <i>Utilitarianism</i>	
8	Utilitarianism (Part 2)	2, 3, 4	J. J. C. Smart's 'Defending Utilitarianism' in <i>Utilitarianism: For &amp; Against</i> John Harsanyi's 'Morality and the Theory of Rational Behaviour' in <i>Utilitarianism &amp; Beyond</i> , ed. Amartya Sen & Bernard Williams	Participation
9	Deontology	2, 3, 4	Immanuel Kant's 'On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives' in Immanuel Kant's <i>Critique of Practical Reason &amp; Other Writings in Moral Philosophy</i> , ed. & trans. Lewis White Beck Anthony Ellis' 'Deontology, Incommensurability & the Arbitrary' in <i>Philosophy &amp; Phenomenological Research</i> , Vol. 52 No. 4	Participation
10	Deontology (Part 2)	2, 3, 4	Thomas Scanlon's 'Contractualism & Utilitarianism' in <i>Utilitarianism &amp; Beyond</i> , ed. Amartya Sen & Bernard Williams Christine Korsgaard, 'Fellow creatures: Kantian ethics & our duties to animals,' in <i>The Tanner Lectures on Human Values</i>	Participation
11	Virtue Ethics	2, 3, 4	Aristotle's 'Book II' in <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , trans. W. D. Ross Julia Annas, 'Being Virtuous & Doing the Right Thing' in <i>Proceedings &amp; Addresses of the American Philosophical Association</i> Vol. 78 No. 2	Participation

12	Conclusion	2, 3, 4	N/A	Essay 2, Participation
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## Appendix 1 – Assessment Criteria for Essays

Grade / Numerical Score	Criteria
A to A+ (80-100)	<p>Clarity and distinct originality of thought, with clear link to major topics of the primary readings</p> <p>Compelling use of persuasive and effective argument in every paragraph to support claims</p> <p>Excellent use of language, with no grammatical errors</p> <p>Consistent demonstration of close reading of primary readings and detailed and in-depth analysis of the relevant theoretical concepts</p> <p>Ability to introduce, review and engage critically with secondary readings (where relevant)</p>
A- (75-79)	<p>Clarity of thought, with clear link to major topics of the primary readings</p> <p>Convincing use of persuasive and effective argument in most paragraphs to support claims</p> <p>Good use of language, with a few grammatical errors</p> <p>Some demonstration of close reading of primary readings and detailed and in-depth analysis of the relevant theoretical concepts</p> <p>Ability to introduce, review and engage critically with secondary readings (where relevant)</p>
B to B+ (65-74)	<p>Some discernible link between thesis and major topics of the primary readings</p> <p>Convincing use of persuasive and effective argument in some paragraphs to support claims</p> <p>Fair use of language, with a number of grammatical errors</p> <p>Close reading of primary readings and detailed and general analysis of the relevant theoretical concepts</p> <p>Ability to introduce and review secondary readings (where relevant)</p>
B- to C+ (55-64)	<p>Almost indiscernible link between thesis and major topics of the primary readings</p> <p>Unconvincing and ineffective use of argument</p> <p>Average use of language, with serious grammatical errors that threaten clarity of expression</p> <p>Summarization of primary readings and description of theoretical concepts</p> <p>Ability to introduce and review secondary readings (where relevant)</p>
C to D (45-54)	<p>Clear absence of link between thesis and major topics of the primary readings</p> <p>Complete absence of argument or the use of incoherent or invalid argument to support claims</p> <p>Poor use of language, with serious grammatical errors that threaten clarity of expression</p> <p>Summarization of primary readings and misinterpretation of theoretical concepts</p> <p>Introduction of irrelevant secondary sources</p>
F (0-44)	Failure to submit essay

**Appendix 2**  
**Assessment Criteria for Class Participation**

Levels	Criteria
Excellent to Exceptional	Important contributions to class discussion; asks insightful questions; precisely answers questions; participates in a meaningful and constructive manner including enabling other students to contribute but does not dominate; demonstrates thoughtful ideas and opinions in a convincing manner.
Good to Very Good	Meaningful contributions to class discussion; ask interesting questions; accurately answer the questions; capacity to articulate and present points of view clearly; participates in a meaningful and constructive manner; evidence of having read and assimilated the class material; Capable to demonstrate ideas and opinions in a convincing manner.
Satisfactory to Average	Some contributions to class discussion; ask some questions; some capacity to articulate and present points of view; some evidence of constructive engagement during discussion; Capable to demonstrate ideas and opinions.
Marginally Unsatisfactory to Unsatisfactory	Minimal contributions to class discussion; ask very little questions; can answer a few questions; limited capacity to articulate and present points of view; limited evidence of constructive engagement during discussion.
Deeply Unsatisfactory	Very minimal or no contributions to class discussion; no questions; could not answer questions; no evidence of an individual viewpoint; failure to read the assigned reading; unexplained or unjustified absences from class activities.