

Bergen Community College
Division of Arts & Humanities
Department of Philosophy & Religion

Course Syllabus

PHR-110 Introduction to Ethical Theory

Basic Information about Course and Instructor

Semester and year:
Section Number:
Meeting Times and Locations:

Instructor:
Office Location:
Phone:
Departmental Secretary: [optional]
Office Hours:
Email Address:

Course Description

PHR-110 Introduction to Ethical Theory is a study of the basic theories, methods, and problems of ethics. Topics may include the study of the moral theories of Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Kant, Mill, and Rawls; the nature and meaning of moral terms; moral absolutism and relativism; the nature of moral reasoning; conceptions of the good life; free will, determinism, and moral responsibility.

3 lectures, 3 credits

General Education Course – Humanities Elective

Student Learning Objectives: As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, students will be able to

1. identify the basic problems of moral philosophy and the major figures in the history of moral philosophy;
2. critically analyze the basic issues in moral philosophy;
3. summarize in detail, both orally and in writing, the views of moral philosophers as expressed in philosophical texts;
4. use the logical and critical thinking methods of philosophy to analyze and evaluate the ways in which philosophers attempt to solve the problems of moral philosophy; and
5. state and support their own views on moral issues, both orally and in writing, and with logical and critical precision, clarity, and rigor.

In pursuit of the foregoing objectives, the course is based on the reading and discussion of primary source materials by philosophers and other writers on moral theory; the basic principles and methods of

logical reasoning are introduced; the techniques of philosophical research and writing are reviewed; students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions; and students are required to do a substantial amount of expository and critical writing in response to the material presented in the course.

The Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in this course are intended to be aligned with as many of the college's Core Competencies and General Education Goals as possible. They are also correlated with the overall Learning Goals of the Philosophy Program. In addition, student progress in reaching the course's SLOs is to be assessed through a variety of assessment types (tools) and on the basis of a variety of assessment criteria. These alignments and correlations will be [linked here](#) in the near future. [[Back to course listing](#)]

Course Content

This course is intended to introduce students to the major theories in moral philosophy (e.g., utilitarianism, deontology, and social contract theory), to the basic issues arising therefrom, and to the writings and ideas of at least two major moral philosophers. Therefore, the course includes the following (mandatory) components:

1. A discussion, at least in outline form, of the major theories in moral philosophy and the major issues arising therefrom.
2. The study of the work of at least two moral philosophers of historical importance (e.g., Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Butler, Mill, Kant, Ross, Nozick, and Rawls.)

The course may be presented as an historically-ordered study of the writings of major moral philosophers, or as a topically-ordered study of the ways in which ancient and contemporary philosophers have approached the major issues in moral philosophy.

Special Features of the Course (if any) [to be designated by the instructor]

E.g., the use of learning technologies in the course (Internet, PowerPoint, etc.); the inclusion of technological literacy and/or information literacy learning in the course; etc.

Course Texts and/or Other Study Materials

The **required text** for this course is *Morality and the Good life* (4th ed.), ed. Solomon and Martin, McGraw-Hill, 4th ed., 2005 (ISBN 0-07-297895-3).

Writing and Critical Thinking Requirement(s)

Because PHR-110 is a General Education course, it requires students to complete a variety of critical thinking and writing assignments. These assignments may include class discussions and debates requiring the application of critical thinking skills, short in-class essays, out-of-class writing projects (journals, research papers, argument-analysis papers, book reviews, etc.), tests and examinations containing essay components, and so forth. Instructors will respond to and comment on students' writing in detail.

Grading Policy

A student's final grade for the course is based primarily on his or her performance on the required work for the course (writing assignments, examinations, class presentations, etc.) and on his or her overall mastery of the material covered in the course. A student's class participation may also be evaluated, and the grade thereon may be used as a factor in determining the student's final grade for the course; but a class participation grade will count for no more than fifteen percent (15%) of the final grade.

Attendance Policy

BCC Attendance Policy:

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

Philosophy and Religion Departmental Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually. Attendance will be taken at each class session. It is expected that class will be conducted such that students will benefit in their written work by the lectures and class discussion. If students occasionally arrive late, they should be encouraged to enter quietly, not disturbing the class. If students miss class, they should be encouraged to use the course calendar to stay abreast of material. It is probably a good idea for students to find study partners and to exchange telephone numbers. Make-ups for examinations should be allowed by the instructor if, in the instructor's judgment, the student has presented a good excuse for missing the work. Instructors may penalize work which is late; however, the instructor's policies for make-ups and late work must be clearly specified on the student guide.

Attendance Policy in this Course:

[To be designated by the instructor]

Other College, Divisional, and/or Departmental Policy Statements [optional but recommended]

<p><u>Examples:</u> Statement on plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty. ADA statement. Sexual Harassment statement. Statement on acceptable use of BCC technology. Statement on the purpose and value of faculty office hours.</p>
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Student and Faculty Support Services [optional but recommended]

List support services, e.g., the Writing Center, the Math Lab, the Tutorial Center, Online Writing Lab (OWL), Office of Specialized Services, etc. Include information on the BCC Library.

Example:

Student and Faculty Support Services

The Distance Learning Office – for any problems you may have accessing your online courses	Room C-334	201-612-5581 psimms@bergen.edu
Smarthinking Tutorial Service	On Line at:	www.bergen.edu/library/learning/tutor/smart/index.asp
The Tutoring Center	Room S-118	201-447-7908
The Technology Assisted Learning Lab (Math and English)	Room C-110	201-447-7988
The Writing Center	Room C-110	201-447-7136
The Online Writing Lab (OWL)		www.bergen.edu/owl
The Office of Specialized Services (for Students with Disabilities)	Room S-153	201-612-5270
The Sidney Silverman Library – Reference Desk	Room L-226	201-447-7436

Include the following statement on Logos – The BCC Philosophy Club

Logos – The BCC Philosophy Club

Logos usually meets on Tuesdays during the Activities Period, 12:30-1:25 PM, in Room L-342. I encourage you to join the club. Since you are interested in the study of philosophy, you should find the meetings and other activities of the philosophy club very interesting. For further information, check the Philosophy & Religion bulletin board adjacent to Room L-325A or contact LOGOS Advisor, Dr. Vanda Bozicevic (L-331, 201-493-7528, vbozicevic@bergen.edu). (LOGOS does not hold regular meetings during the summer.)

Include a Course Outline and Calendar [can be combined in a single syllabus section]

The Course Outline and Calendar must include all of the following elements:

- A daily or (at least) weekly schedule of topics to be covered.
- Dates for exams, quizzes, or other means of assessment. (This does not mean that all evaluation of students must be in groups and at the same time. Exams and other means of assessment can be listed as "to be scheduled individually.")
- Due dates for major assignments – e.g., when is a paper due; if the topic has to be approved, when; if an outline or draft is an interim step, when it is due.
- Any required special events must be included in the outline/calendar, e.g., a lecture by a visiting speaker, a dramatic or musical performance, a field trip.
- Designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic (see sample below).
- A note to students stating that the course outline and calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE FOR PHR-102

- I. Introduction: the Nature of Moral Theory
Ethical Egoism, Ethical Relativism, Divine Command Theory, Consequentialism, Deontology.
- II. Virtue Theory
Readings: Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics
- III. Utilitarianism
Readings: Mill's Utilitarianism
- IV. Deontology
Readings: Kant's Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals

Sample Format for Combined Course Outline and Calendar

Note to Students: The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topic/Activity	Learning Objectives	Assignments/Events
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

Note: This section of the departmental syllabus is under revision in order to bring it into conformity with the (relatively new) BCC policy on the layout and content of syllabi for general education courses.