



O G L E T H O R P E
U N I V E R S I T Y

GO ROME: Summer 2021

PHI-202-01: How Ought We Live? An Introduction to Ethics and the Good Life

Course Description

Descriptive theories explain *how things are* whereas normative or prescriptive theories explain *how things ought to be*. Ethics is about what ought to be, not what is; it is a branch of philosophy that investigates the set of questions that arise when we think about the question “how ought one act, morally speaking?” If you are confronted with a situation and must determine how you ought to act, what principles do you use for determining, assessing, and justifying your actions and behaviors? What, ultimately, does it mean to live a good life and be a good person? In this course, we will examine a set of answers to the latter questions. These ethical theories are concerned with finding principles which allow one to determine whether an action is right, wrong, good, or bad and to provide overarching principles to which one could appeal in resolving difficult moral decisions. After examining these ethical theories, we will apply them to practical and contemporary social issues such as abortion, euthanasia, care crisis in the midst of pandemics, war, and the global environment. Ideally, your own views with respect to these contemporary social issues will be more rationally grounded when you leave this course.

Overall Structure of Course and Methods of Instruction

Our classes will be a mixture of lecture and small and large group discussion. There will be regular reading and writing assignments as well as quizzes. What you get from this course and how well you do in it depends on the time you devote to preparing for class and the thoughtfulness with which you approach the material. To succeed in this course, you not only need to do the assigned written work, you must also actively engage yourself with the material and come to class prepared to participate fully in class discussions.

Course Goals & Learning Objectives

From our studies you will become acquainted with ethical theories that provide standards for determining whether an action is right, wrong, good, or bad. You will also apply these theories to contemporary social issues such as abortion, capital punishment, care crisis in the midst of pandemics, and the global environment. By the end of the semester each of you will be able to

- ✓ Provide an account of at least five ethical theories that provide criteria for determining the rightness, wrongness, goodness, or badness of actions: ethical egoism, utilitarianism, deontology, cultural relativism, and virtue ethics.
- ✓ Apply the traditional ethical theories to contemporary social issues.
- ✓ Demonstrate your own rationally grounded arguments as they relate to ethical theory and contemporary social issues.

LeadAbroad Mission & Values

LeadAbroad is committed to leveraging the international experience for a student’s personal growth and development. Each course is specifically designed to challenge students, expose them to the local culture and help them become more globally minded citizens. During class and throughout the program, our expectation is that students will be gracious guests in the host country, which means

- Being polite to the locals

- Providing a kind salutation when entering a building with a guard or front desk attendant on duty
- Attempting to use the local language for requests, salutations and thanks
- Being patient with different customs and traditions

During the program we will also touch on these five core values of LeadAbroad

- *Breaking through boundaries* abroad and at home
- *Creating trusting relationships* with those from different cultures
- Identifying your *purpose and path* while abroad
- *Serving* others abroad and at home
- *Maximizing your potential* by taking what you learned back home

Classroom Ethos:

- Respect yourself and one another in the classroom. The obvious aim of this course is to provide an opportunity for you to engage in some of the most stimulating and controversial questions and issues that exist within our every increasing globalized world. A classroom environment that is conducive to such learning must be one in which each person is able to freely express his/her thoughts, to ask questions, to make mistakes, to disagree in a non-combative way, and to learn from and with one another. In short, use neither disrespectful speech nor any other form of disrespectful behavior towards one another.
- Cell phones and all other electronic devices (laptops, tablets, music devices, etc.) may NOT be used in the classroom unless specifically requested by the professor.
- Do not leave the room during class unless it is absolutely necessary. Leaving the room while class is in session is disruptive to your learning and to the learning of others.

Methods of Assessment

All grades for Assessment Methods utilize the following grading scale:

A= 93-100; A- =90-92;

B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82;

C+ = 77-79; C= 73-76; C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69; D = 60-66; F= 59 and below

- A) Two Short Reflective Papers: 5% each, Total Percentage of Grade 10%**
- B) Four Quizzes: 15% each, Total Percentage of Grade 60%**
- C) Final Exam: 20%**
- D) Participation and Attendance: 10%**

A) Two Papers

You will write two 3-5page reflective papers for this course. For these papers, you will be given paper prompts that require you to think reflectively about the moral theories that we have discussed. The prompts will require you to reflect on the ways in which what we have discussed is applicable to your own moral development, the Lead Abroad mission and values, and to your daily lives back home. Your grade for the papers will be based on the quality of your insights about the issue being examined and the basics of critical thinking (see rubric below).

*All papers are to be typed, double-spaced.

*All papers are due in my Oglethorpe email inbox at the beginning of class time on the date that they are due.

*If you need an extension on a paper you must ask me no less than three days prior to the due date. Papers handed in late (without my permission) will have 5 points deducted from the grade for each day that it is late. Papers that are more than 1 week late will not be accepted.

B) Four Quizzes

You will have four quizzes throughout the duration of the course. The quizzes will assess your knowledge of the normative theories we have discussed. The format of the quizzes will be a mixture of short answer, true and false, and one longer short essay question.

C) Final Exam

The final exam for this class will be cumulative and will cover all of the material that we have read and discussed throughout the entirety of the course. The exam will be like your weekly quizzes and will include short answer questions, true and false, and longer essay questions.

Rubric

Rubric for Critical Reflection Papers.

Each of the following categories are scored on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best.

- **"Mechanics:** Consistently avoids typographical, spelling and grammatical errors."
- **"Connection to Experience:** Makes clear the connection(s) between the experience and the dimension being discussed."
- **"Accuracy:** Makes statements of fact that are accurate and supported with evidence; for academic articulated learning statements, accurately identifies, describes, and applies appropriate academic principle(s)."
- **"Clarity:** Consistently expands on and expresses ideas in alternative ways, provides examples/illustrations."
- **"Relevance:** Describes learning that is relevant to the articulated learning statement category and keeps the discussion specific to the learning being articulated."
- **"Depth:** Addresses the complexity of the problem; answers important question(s) that are raised; avoids over-simplifying when making connections."
- **"Breadth:** Gives meaningful consideration to alternative points of view and interpretations."
- **"Logic:** Demonstrates a line of reasoning that is logical, with conclusions or goals that follow clearly from it."
- **"Significance:** Draws conclusions, sets goals that address a (the) major issue(s) raised by the experience."

Participation and Attendance

A portion of your final grade depends on your attendance and participation in this course. In short, to succeed and get the most from this class, you must come to class and you must come prepared,

ready to participate in discussions, and ready to engage with scheduled activities and assignments in a serious and meaningful way.

Attendance:

LeadAbroad is committed to the academic integrity of our programs. All students participating in a for credit program (LEAD and GO) will be subject to academic and programmatic consequences for missing class. Excused absences are approved only if the student has

- a doctor's note that includes the diagnosis and confirmation that the student needed to be seen immediately or
- a note from the program staff verifying a medical or personal emergency with the student

Unexcused absences will impact a student's final grade in the course. Refer to your course syllabi for specifics regarding how absences will impact your participation and/or final grade.

Academically, if a student misses class there will be a loss in participation points with each absence as well as consequences to the overall grade. For a traditional class (2 hours/4 days a week) -

- 2nd absence 2.5% deduction from overall grade
- 3rd absence additional 2.5% deduction from overall grade
- 4th absence additional 5% deduction from overall grade
- 5th absence student fails the course

Programmatically, if a student misses 15% of their classes (3 courses in a traditional course) a notification will be sent to them and their emergency contact letting them know that they are on probation. More than 4 absences from a traditional class (20% of program) will result in dismissal and an automatic failing grade.

Personal travel is not an excused absence. Students should review their course syllabi and reach out to LeadAbroad to confirm their class schedule before booking any personal travel

Participation

You are expected to be a regular and active participant in lecture, large class discussions, and small group work and activities and to contribute to these areas of the course in meaningful ways. Not all participation is equal: to say something just to say something is not a meaningful contribution.

Here are some expectations to note regarding participation in this course and how your participation is assessed:

- Making a substantive oral contribution during class lecture or large-class discussion at least once a class (e.g., answering questions posed by the instructor, bringing up related and relevant information, linking classroom discussions to assigned readings).
- Staying on task in dyads, small groups, and activities. When given a task or question to discuss, work to make meaningful and course content-driven contributions, ask group-mates questions, and brain-storm additional ideas. Do not shortchange discussions or activities by finishing early.

Five-Week Class Schedule

WEEK ONE: Ethical Theory

Monday:

What is Ethics? Testing our Ethical Intuitions

Tuesday:

Psychological and Ethical Egoism
James Rachels: Egoism and Moral Skepticism

Wednesday:

Cultural Relativism and Moral Isolationism

Thursday:

QUIZ #1

You will spend the remainder of this class working on your first reflective writing assignment. I will give you the prompt and I will remain in the classroom to help guide you in the writing process.

WEEK TWO: Ethical Theory**Monday:**

Utilitarianism
John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism

Tuesday:

Utilitarianism (Cont.)
John Stuart Mill: Utilitarianism

Wednesday:

Utilitarianism in Literature and Contemporary Society
You will be put into small groups. Your small group will choose and bring to class either (1) an artefact from contemporary culture that displays an application of the principles of Utilitarianism or (2) a newspaper/social media analysis of a contemporary social issue that assumes or relies on Utilitarian principles. Also, come in ready to explain to the class why you brought in what you brought in AND a critical question about your piece that the members of the class can discuss together.

Thursday:

QUIZ #2

Introduction to Deontology/Moral Absolutism: Immanuel Kant and the Categorical Imperative

WEEK THREE: Ethical Theory and Contemporary Social Issues**Monday:**

Deontology: Immanuel Kant and the Categorical Imperative (continued) and Deontology on Animal Rights and Capital Punishment.

Tuesday:

Introduction to Stoicism and the Seven Stoic Practices of a Good Life

Wednesday:

Introduction to Virtue Ethics

Thursday:

QUIZ #3

You will spend the remainder of this class working on your second reflective writing assignment. I will give you the prompt and I will remain in the classroom to help guide you in the writing process.

WEEK FOUR: Contemporary Social Issues**Monday:**

Euthanasia
James Rachels: Active and Passive Euthanasia

Tuesday:

Abortion and Reproductive Rights
Judith Jarvis Thompson: A Defense of Abortion

Wednesday:

Just War Theory

Thursday:

QUIZ #4

War and Terrorism:

Thomas Nagel: What Is Wrong with Terrorism?

David Luban: The War on Terrorism and the End of Human Rights

WEEK FIVE: Contemporary Social Issues

Monday:

The Crisis of Care: Ethics in the Time of Global Pandemics

Tuesday:

The Crisis of Care: Ethics in the Time of Global Pandemics (continued)

Wednesday:

Review for Final Exam

Open Office Hours

Thursday:

Final Exam

Academic Policies

Honor Code

Persons who come to Oglethorpe University for work and study join a community that is committed to high standards of academic honesty. The honor code contains the responsibilities we accept by becoming members of the community and the procedures we will follow should our commitment to honesty be questioned.

The students, faculty and staff of Oglethorpe University expect each other to act with integrity in the academic endeavor they share. Members of the faculty expect that students complete work honestly and act toward them in ways consistent with that expectation. Students are expected to behave honorably in their academic work and are expected to insist on honest behavior from their peers. Oglethorpe welcomes all who accept our principles of honest behavior. We believe that this code will enrich our years at the University and allow us to practice living in earnest the honorable, self-governed lives required of society's respected leaders.

Our honor code is an academic one. The code proscribes cheating in general terms and also in any of its several specialized sub-forms (including but not limited to plagiarism, lying, stealing and interacting fraudulently or disingenuously with the honor council). The Code defines cheating as "the umbrella under which all academic malfeasance falls. Cheating is any willful activity involving the use of deceit or fraud in order to attempt to secure an unfair academic advantage for oneself or others or to attempt to cause an unfair academic disadvantage to others. Cheating deprives persons of the opportunity for a fair and reasonable assessment of their own work and/or a fair comparative assessment between and among the work produced by members of a group. More broadly, cheating undermines our community's confidence in the honorable state to which we aspire."

The honor code applies to all behavior related to the academic enterprise. Thus, it extends beyond the boundaries of particular courses and classrooms *per se*, and yet it does not extend out of the academic realm into the purely social one.

Examples of cheating include but are not limited to:

- 1.1** The unauthorized possession or use of notes, texts, electronic devices (including, for example, computers and mobile phones), online materials or other such unauthorized materials/devices in fulfillment of course requirements.

- 1.2 Copying another person's work or participation in such an effort.
- 1.3 An attempt or participation in an attempt to fulfill the requirements of a course with work other than one's original work for that course.
- 1.4 Forging or deliberately misrepresenting data or results.
- 1.5 Obtaining or offering either for profit or free of charge materials one might submit (or has submitted) for academic credit. This includes uploading course materials to online sites devoted, in whole or in part, to aiding and abetting cheating under the guise of providing "study aids." There is no prohibition concerning uploading exemplars of one's work to one's personal website or to departmental, divisional, University or professional society websites for purposes of publicity, praise, examination or review by potential employers, graduate school admissions committees, etc.
- 1.6 Violating the specific directions concerning the operation of the honor code in relation to a particular assignment.
- 1.7 Making unauthorized copies of graded work for future distribution.
- 1.8 Claiming credit for a group project to which one did not contribute.
- 1.9 Plagiarism, which includes representing someone else's words, ideas, data or original research as one's own and in general failing to footnote or otherwise acknowledge the source of such work. One has the responsibility of avoiding plagiarism by taking adequate notes on reference materials (including material taken off the internet or other electronic sources) used in the preparation of reports, papers and other coursework.
- 1.10 Lying, such as: Lying about the reason for an absence to avoid a punitive attendance penalty or to receive an extension on an exam or on a paper's due date; fraudulently obtaining Petrel Points by leaving an event soon after registering one's attendance and without offering to surrender the associated Petrel Point, or by claiming fictitious attendance for oneself or another; forging or willfully being untruthful on documents related to the academic enterprise, such as on an application for an independent study or on a registration form.
- 1.11 Stealing, such as: Stealing another's work so that he/she may not submit it or so that work can be illicitly shared; stealing reserve or other materials from the library; stealing devices and materials (such as computers, calculators, textbooks, notebooks and software) used in whole or in part to support the academic enterprise.
- 1.12 Fraudulent interaction on the part of students with the honor council, such as: Willfully refusing to testify after having been duly summoned; failing to appear to testify (barring a *bona fide* last-minute emergency) after having been duly summoned; testifying untruthfully.

Students pledge that they have completed assignments honestly by attaching the following statement to each piece of work submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a course taken for academic credit:

"I pledge that I have acted honorably." (Followed by the student's signature)

The honor code is in force for every student who is enrolled (either full- or part-time) in any of the academic programs of Oglethorpe University at any given time. All cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the provisions established in this code. The honor council has sole jurisdiction in matters of suspected academic dishonesty. Alternative ways of dealing with cases of suspected academic fraud are prohibited. In cases of alleged academic dishonesty on the part of students, the honor council is the final arbiter.

The full Honor Code is Section 11 of the current University Bulletin.

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all LeadAbroad programs promote non-discrimination of disabled individuals and provide reasonable academic accommodations when appropriate. An academic accommodation is a modification that enables students to participate in a program of study by incorporating adjustments to ensure their rights, access, and privileges are equal to those without disabilities. Some examples of academic accommodations may include extended time on tests and quizzes, testing in a distraction free environment, the ability to tape-record lectures, or note-taking assistance in the classroom.

Any participant who needs academic accommodations in a program of study must contact LeadAbroad at least 90 days prior to the program start date. Please note, LeadAbroad cannot guarantee that late requests will be honored. To initiate the accommodation process, please contact the director of international programming at info@LeadAbroad.com

In order to be approved for accommodations, students will be asked to complete the disabilities form in their student portal and provide documentation that supports registration with the disability services office at their home institution. Once documentation has been received, Oglethorpe's Disability Services and LeadAbroad will work together to identify accommodation possibilities. Please keep in mind that LeadAbroad will not approve any accommodations that alter the fundamental nature of our curricula. If an accommodation request cannot be fulfilled, LeadAbroad will work with the student to identify other program opportunities.

Once approved, the student will receive a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) prior to his or her program start date. From there, it is the student's responsibility to self-advocate by delivering the LOA directly to his or her instructors. LeadAbroad instructors are accustomed to accommodating students in the classroom. By delivering the LOA personally, this will alert the student's instructor to initiate a conversation about his or her classroom needs. Finally, the instructor will be responsible for implementing any classroom accommodations, such as recruiting another student in the class to take notes or proctoring an exam for a student that requires extended time.

A student is responsible for providing documentation that supports his or her request for academic adjustments. LeadAbroad requires that the documentation demonstrates the student's current enrollment in a disability services program at his or her home institution, specifies a list of the student's approved accommodations, and has been signed by the school's disability services professional. Please note, the documentation does not need to specify the student's diagnosis given that this type of paperwork has already been supplied to his or her current disability services professional.

Participants should be aware that some LeadAbroad programs involve voluntary activities that require moderate exercise, such as hiking and biking; these activities are voluntary. In addition, some of the site locations may not be compliant with ADA standards of accessibility given their geographic location and different governing systems. Last, accommodations cannot be applied retroactively, accommodations begin in the classroom once the LOA is received by the instructor.

If any program participant feels that he or she is being treated unfairly in any way, please notify the supervising faculty member or LeadAbroad office immediately at info@LeadAbroad.com.

Title IX

LeadAbroad faculty and staff are not confidential resources. In accordance with Title IX, any report of sexual misconduct that has occurred during a student's time at a university will be reported back to Oglethorpe University and a student's home university in order to ensure that the student has access to all resources and support needed.