





Philosophy (PHIL) 255

Introduction to Philosophy: Ethics and Society (Revision 1)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode:

Individualized study online 

Credits:

3

Areas of study:

Arts or Humanities

Prerequisites:

None

Precluded:

None

Challenge:

PHIL 255 is not available for challenge.

Faculty:

[Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

Overview

Philosophy 255: Introduction to Philosophy: Ethics and Society is a three-credit course that introduces you to philosophy by exploring and analyzing leading ethical theories and the application of those theories to matters of social concern.

There are no prerequisites for this course, but you are expected to have university-level analytical and writing skills.

Outline

PHIL 255 is divided into thirteen units:

- **Unit 1** – Introducing Philosophy
- **Unit 2** – Moral Relativism
- **Unit 3** – Divine Command Theory
- **Unit 4** – Ethical Egoism
- **Unit 5** – Utilitarianism
- **Unit 6** – Kantian Ethics
- **Unit 7** – Virtue Ethics
- **Unit 8** – Sex and the Ethics of Gay Rights
- **Unit 9** – Bullshit and the Ethics of Advertising
- **Unit 10** – Birth and the Ethics of Abortion
- **Unit 11** – Death and the Ethics of Euthanasia
- **Unit 12** – Hunger and the Ethical Response to Extreme Poverty
- **Unit 13** – Technology and Humanity

Learning outcomes

After completing PHIL 255, you should be able to do the following:

- Recognize how core philosophical topics and theories arise from relatable human and social experiences.
- Explain how ethical concepts and principles can be applied

constructively to contemporary issues of social debate.

- Analyze the application of ethical concepts and principles to contemporary issues of social debate.
- Communicate thoughts clearly, cogently, and reasonably in a manner that corresponds to the standards of academic philosophy.

Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for PHIL 255, you must achieve a composite course grade of at least **D (50 percent)** [📄](#).

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1: Two Short Essays	20%
Assignment 2: OER Evaluation	10%
Assignment 3: Two Short Essays	20%
Active Participation	15%
Final Exam	35%
Total	100%

The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the **Exams and grades** [↗](#) section of the Calendar.

To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's **online Calendar** [↗](#).

Materials

Vice & Virtue in Everyday Life: Introductory Readings in Ethics. 9th edition.





Edited by Christina Hoff Sommers and Fred Sommers. Boston:

Wadsworth, 2013.  (Print)

Other Materials

Additional readings and multimedia resources are provided online and embedded in the Study Guide.

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 
- › [Support services](#) 
- › [Introduction Video](#)

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 1, July 14, 2020

Updated July 8, 2024
