

Liverpool John Moores University

Title: CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL ISSUES
Status: Definitive
Code: **6510MEDCUL** (115089)
Version Start Date: 01-08-2011

Owning School/Faculty: Humanities and Social Science
Teaching School/Faculty: St Helens College

Team	Leader
Clare Horrocks	Y

Academic Level: FHEQ6 **Credit Value:** 12.00 **Total Delivered Hours:** 24.00
Total Learning Hours: 120 **Private Study:** 96

Delivery Options

Course typically offered: Semester 2

Component	Contact Hours
Lecture	12.000
Seminar	9.000
Tutorial	3.000

Grading Basis: 40 %

Assessment Details

Category	Short Description	Description	Weighting (%)	Exam Duration
Essay	AS2	Essay (2000 words) (week14)	70.0	
Presentation	AS1	20 minute Seminar presentation & 1000 word paper (weeks 7-9)	30.0	

Aims

To familiarise students with the logic of moral discourse
To encourage the rigorous analysis of political and moral concepts and their use in systematic and coherent arguments
To examine the ways in selected thinkers have advanced competing moral theories and utilised ethical concepts.
To analyse contemporary moral and political issues from different ethical

perspectives.

Learning Outcomes

After completing the module the student should be able to:

- 1 Comprehend and compare different ethical theories identifying their strengths and weaknesses (e.g. utilitarian and rights-based theories)
- 2 Analyse the contribution made by selected political and moral thinkers (e.g. Bentham, Kant, Mill, Hart, Rawls) and be aware of criticisms of their work
- 3 Recognise the ways in which arguments developed by moral thinkers address issues raised by other theorists dialectically
- 4 Analyse chosen political and/or ethical issues and evaluate normative arguments from a range of relevant perspectives
- 5 Select and research a relevant topic and present and argue a case persuasively in group settings

Learning Outcomes of Assessments

The assessment item list is assessed via the learning outcomes listed:

Essay of 2000 words	1	2	3	4
Presentation of 20 mins	4	5		

Outline Syllabus

The Foundations of Political & Moral Obligations:

Hobbes and Locke

Varieties of Utilitarianism:

Bentham & Mill

Kantian Ethics:

Taking Rights Seriously

Case Study 1: Morality & Punishment

Case Study 2: The Abortion Debate

Distributive Justice:

Rawls & Nozick: the Social Contract today

*Analysing Contemporary Issues *:*

Euthanasia & assisted suicide

Animal rights and "ecologism"

Ethics beyond national frontiers: the debate over globalisation

Creating an 'ethical market' in human organs?

Obscenity, pornography and censorship

The ethics of 'reality' TV

Should all drugs be legalised?

Contemporary warfare, 'terrorism' & torture

*[*Topics chosen for analysis will reflect the interests of class members]*

Learning Activities

Lectures. Seminars involving student presentations where appropriate, and group discussion. Individual tutorials. Group work where appropriate. Individual student research, including use of the internet, and library research. Essay planning and writing.

References

Course Material	Book
Author	Baggini, J.
Publishing Year	2003
Title	Making Sense
Subtitle	Philosophy Behind the Headlines
Edition	
Publisher	Oxford
ISBN	

Course Material	Book
Author	Hoffman, J. & Graham, P.
Publishing Year	2006
Title	Introduction to Political Theory
Subtitle	
Edition	
Publisher	Pearson
ISBN	

Course Material	Book
Author	Kymlicka, W.
Publishing Year	1990
Title	Contemporary Political Philosophy
Subtitle	
Edition	
Publisher	Oxford
ISBN	

Course Material	Book
Author	Sen, A. & Williams, B. eds
Publishing Year	1982
Title	Utilitarianism and Beyond
Subtitle	
Edition	
Publisher	Cambridge University Press
ISBN	

Course Material	Book
Author	Singer, P. (ed.)
Publishing Year	1993
Title	Companion to Ethics
Subtitle	
Edition	
Publisher	Blackwell
ISBN	

Course Material	Book
Author	Singer, P.
Publishing Year	2002
Title	Practical Ethics
Subtitle	
Edition	
Publisher	Cambridge
ISBN	

Course Material	Book
Author	Swift, A.
Publishing Year	2001
Title	Political Philosophy
Subtitle	A Beginners Guide for Students and Politicians
Edition	
Publisher	Polity Press
ISBN	

Course Material	Book
Author	Waldron, J. (ed.)
Publishing Year	1984
Title	Theories of Rights
Subtitle	
Edition	
Publisher	Oxford
ISBN	

Notes

In this module students will examine the logic of ethical discourse. Specifically, varieties of utilitarianism will be explained and evaluated. The concepts of rights, entitlements, duties and obligations will be analysed, and the social and political contexts of moral discourse will be examined. In particular, a number of ethical issues will be addressed – for example, abortion and euthanasia, warfare and "terrorism", animal rights, pornography and censorship, civil disobedience, and media ethics and privacy rights.

