

ITT Technical Institute
HU4646
Contemporary Moral Issues
Onsite Course

SYLLABUS

Credit hours: 3

Contact/Instructional hours: 30 (30 Theory Hours)

Prerequisite(s) and/or Corequisite(s):

Prerequisite: EN3220 Written Analysis or equivalent

Course Description:

This course introduces fundamentals of ethics. Focus is on the identification and analysis of a variety of theoretical moral constructs and their application to individual and personal behavior. Students apply rules of ethics to moral problems faced by individuals in contemporary culture.

Where Does This Course Belong?

Program Information

Program Scope and Core Content Areas

General Education courses include courses in the humanities, composition, mathematics, the sciences, and the social sciences.

Program Goals and Objectives

General Education courses are designed to provide ITT Tech students with a well-rounded education in the context of their technical programs. Each course emphasizes one or more of ITT Tech's General Education Student Learning Outcomes.

1. The student will be able to demonstrate personal responsibilities.
2. The student will be able to analyze information.
3. The student will be able to solve complex problems.
4. The student will be able to communicate effectively in oral, written and visual forms.
5. The student will be able to contribute as a member of a team.
6. The student will be able to pursue lifelong learning opportunities.

Career Impact

General Education courses provide breadth to a core technical program. Courses in General Education are intended to broaden a student's educational experience, and therefore, broaden his/her perspective.

Course Summary

Major Instructional Areas

1. Principles of critical thinking and reasoning
2. Theories of ethical principles
3. Use of belief systems and personal values
4. Objective listening
5. Current controversies and debates

Detailed Topical Outline

1. Understanding Fallacies and Basic Ethical Concepts
 - 1.1. Fallacies
 - 1.2. Ethical principles

- 1.3. Objective reasoning vs. emotions (feelings)
- 1.4. Personal morals
- 1.5. The Principle of Charity
2. Illegal Drugs: Should They Remain Illegal or Be Decriminalized?
 - 2.1. Personal ethical beliefs
 - 2.1.1. Consistency in personal ethical beliefs
 - 2.2. Beneficiaries or victims of drug laws
 - 2.2.1. Intended
 - 2.2.2. Unintended
 - 2.3. Alcohol – illicit drug (yes or no)?
3. Ethics of Medical Research in Impoverished Countries
 - 3.1. Active listening
 - 3.2. Informed consent
 - 3.3. Equipoise in medical research
 - 3.4. Cultural relativism
4. Nonhuman Animal Rights: Neglected or Nonexistent?
 - 4.1. Inherent value of life
 - 4.2. Social Contract (Contractarian) and Utilitarian
 - 4.3. Abolitionist position
 - 4.4. Kant's theory
 - 4.5. Membership in a community of moral agents
5. Pornography: Protect the Public or Private Choice?
 - 5.1. Censorship
 - 5.2. Private choice
 - 5.3. First Amendment rights
 - 5.4. Local community standards
6. Affirmative Action Programs
 - 6.1. Discrimination
 - 6.2. Diversity
 - 6.3. Personal perspectives
7. Capital Punishment
 - 7.1. Legal order vs. moral order
 - 7.2. Self-governing communities
 - 7.3. Cruel and unusual punishment
 - 7.4. Dignity
8. Acts of Terrorism
 - 8.1. "Just-war tradition"
 - 8.2. Principal of Discrimination
 - 8.3. Supreme Emergency
9. Abortion
 - 9.1. "Biological life" vs. "conscious existence"
 - 9.2. U.S. Supreme Court's evaluation
 - 9.3. Contraceptives
 - 9.4. Civil liberties impacted
10. Jury Nullification
 - 10.1. Impact on state and federal law
 - 10.2. Civil liberties affected
 - 10.3. Sixth Amendment
 - 10.4. Verdicts and ethical principles

Course Objectives

1. Describe and apply the key concepts of critical thinking including fallacies and ethical principles.
2. Illustrate the ability to distinguish between the use of reasoning and emotions in ethical decision making.
3. Identify and evaluate moral issues and arguments.
4. Use the ITT Tech Virtual Library to research various topics related to ethics and contemporary moral issues.
5. Demonstrate the “Principle of Charity” by respecting classmates’ ideas and contributions.
6. Make an oral and visual presentation of research findings on a topic related to ethics.

Learning Materials and References

Required Resources

Textbook Package	New to this Course	Carried over from Previous Course(s)	Required for Subsequent Course(s)
Waller, B. (2006). <i>You decide: Current debates in contemporary moral problems</i> . Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.	■		■

Recommended Resources

ITT Tech Virtual Library (accessed via Student Portal)

Books> Ebrary

- Bedau, H., & Cassell, P. (2004) Chapter 1: Tinkering with death. *Debating the death penalty: should America have capital punishment?* (pp. 1-14). Cary, NC: Oxford University Press.
- Califano, J. (2008). Chapter 7: Collateral wreckage. *High society: How substance abuse ravages America and what to do about it*. (pp. 103-118). New York: Public Affairs.

NOTE: All links are subject to change without prior notice.

Information Search

Use the following keywords to search for additional online resources that may be used for supporting your work on the course assignments:

- Fallacies
- Red Herring
- Strawman
- Slippery Slope
- Ad Hominum
- Ethical Principles
- Kantian
- Social Contract Theory
- Contractarian
- Utilitarian
- Care Ethics

Course Plan

Suggested Learning Approach

In this course, you will be studying individually and within a group of your peers. As you work on the course deliverables, you are encouraged to share ideas with your peers and instructor, work collaboratively on projects and team assignments, raise critical questions, and provide constructive feedback.

Use the following advice to receive maximum learning benefits from your participation in this course:

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do take a proactive learning approach.• Do share your thoughts on critical issues and potential problem solutions.• Do plan your course work in advance.• Do explore a variety of learning resources in addition to the textbook.• Do offer relevant examples from your experience.• Do make an effort to understand different points of view.• Do connect concepts explored in this course to real-life professional situations and your own experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't assume there is only one correct answer to a question.• Don't be afraid to share your perspective on the issues analyzed in the course.• Don't be negative about the points of view that are different from yours.• Don't underestimate the impact of collaboration on your learning.• Don't limit your course experience to reading the textbook.• Don't postpone your work on the course deliverables – work on small assignment components every day.

Course Outline

<p>Unit 1: UNDERSTANDING FALLACIES AND BASIC ETHICAL CONCEPTS</p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiate between different types of fallacies. • Summarize key concepts of basic ethical principles. • Demonstrate the practice of separating reason from emotion. • Identify and describe fallacies and ethical principles found in contemporary readings. • Identify personal moral and ethical ideas. • Define ‘The Principle of Charity.’ 				<p>Out-of-class work: 3.5 hours</p>	
READING ASSIGNMENT	GRADED ACTIVITIES / DELIVERABLES				
	Grading Category	Activity/Deliverable Title	Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waller, Introduction 	Assignment	Unit 1 Assignment 1: The Strawman Fallacy	1.5%		

<p>Unit 2: ILLEGAL DRUGS: SHOULD THEY REMAIN ILLEGAL OR BE DECRIMINALIZED?</p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a personal stance on whether or not illegal drugs should be decriminalized. • Recognize and explain “consistency” in personal ethical beliefs. • Analyze the beneficiaries and the victims, both intended and unintended, who are affected by current drug laws. • Determine if alcohol is an illicit drug, and whether stricter laws should be applied for its sale and use. • Identify the outcomes of prohibition and take a stance on whether it would work in today’s climate. 				<p>Out-of-class work: 5 hours</p>	
READING ASSIGNMENT	GRADED ACTIVITIES / DELIVERABLES				
	Grading Category	Activity/Deliverable Title	Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waller, Chapter 5 • ITT Tech Virtual Library: Books> Ebrary> Califano, <i>High Society: How Substance Abuse Ravages America and What to Do About It</i>, Chapter 7 Collateral Wreckage 	Assignment	Unit 2 Assignment 1: Legalize or Decriminalize?	1.5%		
		Unit 2 Assignment 2: News Articles	1.5%		

<p>Unit 3: THE ETHICS OF MEDICAL RESEARCH IN IMPOVERISHED COUNTRIES</p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and explain informed consent. • Describe a personal stance on whether or not medical research standards should follow the same procedures for both wealthy countries and impoverished countries. • Summarize equipoise as used in medical research. • Apply an understanding of cultural relativism to ethical arguments surrounding medical research. 			<p>Out-of-class work: 6.5 hours</p>
READING ASSIGNMENT	GRADED ACTIVITIES / DELIVERABLES		
	Grading Category	Activity/Deliverable Title	Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waller, Chapter 10 	Assignment	Unit 3 Assignment 1: Debate 10	1.5%
		Unit 3 Assignment 2: News Articles	1.5%
		Unit 3 Assignment 3: Care Ethics Applied to Medical Research	1.5%
	Quiz	Unit 3 Quiz 1	10%

<p>Unit 4: NONHUMAN ANIMAL RIGHTS: NEGLECTED OR NONEXISTENT?</p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define inherent value of life. • Describe how social contract (Contractarian) and Utilitarian theories are used to argue for and/or against animal rights. • Determine if an abolitionist position can be used to debate nonhuman animal rights. • Apply Kant’s theory, that humans possess a uniquely moral will, to arguments about animal rights. • Analyze what is meant by membership in a community of moral agents. • Evaluate to what degree feelings and personal experience shape conclusions reached about membership in a community of moral agents. 			<p>Out-of-class work: 5 hours</p>
READING ASSIGNMENT	GRADED ACTIVITIES / DELIVERABLES		
	Grading Category	Activity/Deliverable Title	Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waller, Chapter 4 	Assignment	Unit 4 Assignment 1: My Opinions about Animal Rights	1.5%
		Unit 4 Assignment 2: News Articles	1.5%

<p>Unit 5: PORNOGRAPHY: PROTECT THE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE CHOICE?</p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give examples of censorship, private choice, First Amendment rights, and obscenity in debates about pornography. • Discuss local community standards on pornography. • Discuss whether or not pornography should be censored. 			<p>Out-of-class work: 5 hours</p>
READING ASSIGNMENT	GRADED ACTIVITIES/DELIVERABLES		

	Grading Category	Activity/Deliverable Title	Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)
• Waller, Chapter 2	Assignment	Unit 5 Assignment 1: News Articles	1.5%
		Unit 5 Assignment 2: The Pornography Standards in My Community	1.5%

Unit 6: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS

Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:

- Defend with ethical principles a personal opinion about whether discrimination is ongoing in our culture or is a thing of the past.
- Analyze the assertion that diversity is required to foster richer settings in business and education.
- Evaluate to what degree feelings and personal experience influence personal perspectives.

Out-of-class work:
7 hours

READING ASSIGNMENT	GRADED ACTIVITIES/DELIVERABLES		
	Grading Category	Activity/Deliverable Title	Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)
• Waller, Chapter 3	Assignment	Unit 6 Assignment 1: News Articles	1.5%
		Unit 6 Assignment 2: My Stance on Affirmative Action	1.5%
	Quiz	Unit 6 Quiz 2	10%

Unit 7: CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR SOME CRIMES OR SHOULD IT BE ABOLISHED?

Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:

- Discuss the ethical principles underlying the arguments in favor of and in opposition to capital punishment.
- Differentiate punishments imposed by legal order versus moral order.
- Analyze the influence of morals on self-governing communities.
- Explain how the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment has affected the death penalty.
- Identify symbolic messages which may be inferred if the death penalty were abolished.
- Explain the assertion that “the dignity of all people applies from birth to a natural death” and its effect on the death penalty.

Out-of-class work:
9 hours

READING ASSIGNMENT	GRADED ACTIVITIES/DELIVERABLES		
	Grading Category	Activity/Deliverable Title	Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)
• Waller, Chapter 12	Assignment	Unit 7 Assignment 1: News Articles	1.5%
		Unit 7 Assignment 2: Just Deserts	1.5%

Unit 8: TERRORISM

Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:

Out-of-class work:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the impact the “just-war” tradition has had on shaping the definition of terrorism. Summarize the role that the principle of discrimination plays in defining a terrorist act. Discuss whether or not civilians are responsible for the actions of their governments during times of war. Analyze the relationship between supreme emergency and the heavy burden of remorse. Discuss whether governments are justified in using terrorism against terrorists. State a personal stance on whether or not terrorism is a politically acceptable form of criminal violence even when it is used against civilians and/or their property. 			5 hours
READING ASSIGNMENT	GRADED ACTIVITIES / DELIVERABLES		
	Grading Category	Activity/Deliverable Title	Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waller, Chapter 16 ITT Tech Virtual Library: National Research Council Staff, <i>Terrorism: Perspectives From the Behavioral and Social Sciences</i>, Chapter 2 	Assignment	Unit 8 Assignment 1: News Articles	1.5%
		Unit 8 Assignment 2: Is Terrorism Ever Acceptable?	1.5%
	Project	Project Part 1: Outline (PORTFOLIO)	5%

<p>Unit 9: ABORTION</p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the importance of a biological life versus a conscious existence. Explain the arguments regarding when a fetus becomes a living person. Evaluate the U.S. Supreme Court’s consideration of abortion. State a personal stance on the difference between the use of contraceptives and abortion. Which one or both are considered a denial of life? Identify and summarize civil liberties that are impacted by the legal processes involved with abortion. 			<p>Out-of-class work: 10 hours</p>
READING ASSIGNMENT	GRADED ACTIVITIES / DELIVERABLES		
	Grading Category	Activity/Deliverable Title	Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waller, Chapter 8 	Assignment	Unit 9 Assignment 1: News Articles	1.5%
		Unit 9 Assignment 2: My Stance on Abortion	1.5%
	Quiz	Unit 9 Quiz 3	10%

Unit 10: JURY NULLIFICATION

Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:

- Summarize the impact jury nullification has on fair and consistent federal and state laws.
- Identify the purpose of jury nullification.
- Describe the civil liberties affected by authorizing juries to be fact finders and law-making bodies.
- Evaluate whether jury nullification represents inconsistent application of laws and if it denies individuals their Sixth Amendment Rights to a “fair and impartial trial by jury.”
- Determine which basic principles would apply to allow verdicts to be rendered according to conscience.
- Explain whether jurors should be reminded of their rights of nullification.

**Out-of-class
work:**
6.5 hours

READING ASSIGNMENT	GRADED ACTIVITIES / DELIVERABLES		
	Grading Category	Activity/Deliverable Title	Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)
• Waller, Chapter 14	Assignment	Unit 10 Assignment 1: Taking a Stance on Jury Nullification	1.5%
		Unit 10 Assignment 2: The Damage to My Psyche	1.5%

Unit 11: FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

**Out-of-class
work:**
4 hours

READING ASSIGNMENT	GRADED ACTIVITIES / DELIVERABLES		
	Grading Category	Activity/Deliverable Title	Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)
• None	Project	Project Part 2: Research Paper (PORTFOLIO)	20%
	Presentation	Project Presentation	15%

Note: Your instructor may add a few learning activities that will change the grade allocation for each assignment in a category. The overall category percentages will not change.

Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation Criteria

The graded assignments will be evaluated using the following weighted categories:

Category	Weight
Assignment	30%
Project	25%
Presentation	15%
Quiz	30%
TOTAL	100%

Grade Conversion

The final grades will be calculated from the percentages earned in the course, as follows:

Grade	Percentage	Credit
A	90–100%	4.0
B+	85–89%	3.5
B	80–84%	3.0
C+	75–79%	2.5
C	70–74%	2.0
D+	65–69%	1.5
D	60–64%	1.0
F	<60%	0.0

Academic Integrity

All students must comply with the policies that regulate all forms of academic dishonesty, or academic misconduct, including plagiarism, self-plagiarism, fabrication, deception, cheating, and sabotage. For more information on the academic honesty policies, refer to the Student Handbook and the Course Catalog.

Out of Class Work

Unit Number	Title of Activity	Type of Activity	Estimated Time of Activity (minutes)
1	Preparatory Reading	Reading	90
1	The Strawman Fallacy	Assignment	120
2	Preparatory Reading	Reading	90
2	Legalize or Decriminalize	Assignment	120
2	New Articles	Assignment	90
3	Preparatory Reading	Reading	90
3	Quiz 1	Quiz Prep	90
3	New Articles	Assignment	90
3	Care Ethics applied to Medical Research	Assignment	120
4	Preparatory Reading	Reading	90
4	My Opinions About Animal Rights	Assignment	120
4	New Articles	Assignment	90
5	Preparatory Reading	Reading	90
5	New Articles	Assignment	90
5	The Pornography Standards in My community	Assignment	120
6	Preparatory Reading	Reading	90
6	Quiz 2	Quiz Prep	90
6	New Articles	Assignment	90
6	My Stance on Affirmative Action	Assignment	120
7	Preparatory Reading	Reading	90
7	News Articles	Assignment	90
7	Just Deserts	Assignment	120
7	Project Part 1: Outline	Project	240
8	Preparatory Reading	Reading	90
8	News Articles	Assignment	90
8	Is Terrorism Ever Acceptable?	Assignment	120
9	Preparatory Reading	Reading	90
9	Quiz 3	Quiz Prep	90
9	News Articles	Assignment	90
9	My Stance on Abortion	Assignment	90
9	Project Part 2: Research Paper	Project	240
10	Preparatory Reading	Reading	90
10	News Articles	Assignment	90
10	Project Part 3: Presentation	Project	240
11	Project Part 2: Research Paper	Project	120
11	Project Presentation	Project/Presentation	120

(End of Syllabus)