

COURSE OUTLINE

PHIL-103

Introduction to Ethics

3 Semester Hours

Humanities Core Course

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Description

Upon completion of this course, students will be familiar with most important ethical theories of Western philosophy. Students will have the necessary tools to discuss and evaluate various contemporary moral issues, as well as a moral, ethical stance. Prerequisite: Eligible to enroll in ENGL-121. (3 hours weekly)

Statement on General Education and Liberal Learning

A liberal education prepares students to lead ethical, productive, and creative lives and to understand how the pursuit of lifelong learning and critical thinking fosters good citizenship. General education courses form the core of a liberal education within the higher education curriculum and provide a coherent intellectual experience for all students by introducing the fundamental concepts and methods of inquiry in the areas of mathematics, the physical and natural sciences, the social sciences, the arts and the humanities, and composition. This course is part of the general education core experience at Howard Community College.

Overall Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the students will be able to:

1. Define and distinguish between normative and non-normative ethics.
2. Define applied normative ethics.
3. Compare and contrast ethical relativism and absolutism.
4. Analyze contemporary problems and highlight their ethical dimensions.
5. Identify the historical roots of current ethical theories.
6. Apply philosophical views of human nature to questions of moral responsibility.
7. Analyze the impact of theories of determinism on ethical decision making.
8. Compare and contrast ethical theories which look to outcomes (teleological/utilitarian) and those based on duty or obligation (deontological) with respect to the result of choosing one over the other.
9. Compare and contrast the methods and focuses of ethics with those of other branches of philosophy.
10. Discuss similarities and dissimilarities between Western and non-Western ethical systems.
11. Analyze the role of ethics in shaping and being shaped by other cultural forces (politics, economics, religion and the arts).

Major Topics

- I. Western Ethical Theories
 - A. Teleological or Consequentialist Theories
 1. Philosophical Egoism
 2. Utilitarianism
 - a. Act Utilitarianism

- b. Rule Utilitarianism
 - 3. Situation Ethics
 - B. Deontological or Non-Consequentialist Theories
 - 1. Divine Command
 - 2. Kant's Categorical Imperative
 - 3. Ross's Prima Facie Duties
 - C. Other Western Theories
 - 1. Virtue Ethics
 - 2. Natural Law Theory
 - 3. Ciceronian Ethics
 - 4. Sacredness of Human Life
 - 5. Interest View
 - 6. The Great Chain of Being
 - 7. Ethics of Care
- II. Non-Western Ethical Theories
 - A. Asian Ethical Theories
 - 1. Buddhist Ethics
 - 2. Taoist Ethics
 - 3. Confucian Ethics
 - B. African Traditional Ethical Theories
 - 1. The Human Person and the Community
 - 2. Proverbs and Drum Texts
 - 3. Pragmatism and Creativity
- III. Human Freedom and Human Responsibility
 - A. Determinism
 - 1. Hard
 - 2. Soft
 - 3. Self
 - B. Existentialism
 - C. Excusability

Course Requirements

Grading/exams: Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include:

- At least a third of the course grade will be based on essay exams.
- Course assignments/exams will include at least 1000 words of formal writing.
- Each student will write a reflective paper on the philosophical content in a specific work of fiction.
- Final grades will be based on class participation, objective quizzes, essay examinations, a reflective paper and an analytical paper.

Other Course Information

This course is a Humanities Core course. This course is a Humanities and an Arts and Sciences elective.