

SUMMER 2022: PHIL-010-02
Introduction to Ethics: Through Contemporary Ethical Issues
Instructor: Sabrina P. Leeds (*they/she*)

Q do philosophers - Google Search

Q do philosophers **believe in god**

Q do philosophers **get paid**

Q do philosophers **still exist**

Q do philosophers **make money**

Q do philosophers **ask questions**

Q do philosophers **overthink**

Class Meetings: MTWR, 1:10pm – 3:05pm
Classroom: Intercultural Center, Room 120
Office Hours: TBD

PHIL-010-02: Introduction to Ethics is a synchronous class that meets in person on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, from 1:10pm – 3:05pm, for the duration of Georgetown’s second summer session, from July 11 – August 12. This is not a lecture-based course, this is a project-based course, meaning I will not be lecturing at you at any point or providing you with recorded lectures. Instead, the class is broken up into 4 teams and each team is given a different set of readings and activities to work through as a team, resulting in a weekly presentation every Thursday. Each weekly presentation includes a discussion question, which will be answered by each student on our Canvas discussion boards by Friday evenings of every week. This course has what’s called a “weekly flow”- meaning that you are expected to do all the weekly readings on your own time on Thursday, Friday, or the weekend, discuss the readings and design a team project on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, present group projects on Thursdays, and engage with the discussion boards on your own time any time before Friday evenings. In addition to weekly team projects and engaging discussion boards, students will also be expected to write a final paper on selected course content and/or outside research.

Course Content

Unlike more traditional ethics courses, this course is a team-based, interactive learning experience focused on contemporary ethical issues concerning: racism, reparations, decolonization, ableism, feminism, social media, technology ethics, etc. I try my hardest to assign highly accessible readings that are relevant to right now, real-life, ongoing ethical issues and resistance movements. There are no text books. All course readings are available on Canvas under your weekly modules. An easy way to think of this course is “Sabrina gives you the scenarios, YOU and your team do the ethics.”

Weekly Flow

Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays	Weekends
Do in-class activity with your group; prepare to present it on Thursday.	Do in-class activity with your group; prepare to present it on Thursday.	Work on presentation with group mates if needed.	Watch 3 team presentations and present your own project. Each presentation should include a discussion question.	Post answers to discussion questions (4) from each presentation by 11:59pm Friday night.	Read weekly readings.
Don't forget to prepare your discussion question!	Don't forget to prepare your discussion question!	Don't forget to prepare your discussion question!	*Post answers to discussion questions (4) from each presentation and start reading weekly readings. (*recommended)		Each team has different reading assignments, so be sure to double-check that you are doing the correct readings for your team.

Assigned Teams: Teamwork Makes the Dream Work.... Or something like that.

Each student is assigned a team at the beginning of the semester, and you will work with this team throughout the term. I recommend exchanging contact information with folks in your team so that you can dialogue with one another about the course assignments and final projects. You will see that each week there is a Canvas module with your weekly reading assignments and a set of discussion boards. Every week, each team has a different set of readings to work through, as well as the occasional All Team readings, so pay close attention to what your team's assignment is. On Mondays, you will come to class in-person and work as a team on a set of prompts/activities I give you to help debrief about the readings, engage in discussion, and do ethics. Wednesdays, your team will attend class online and present your 15-minute weekly project presentation and discussion question. While this course is heavily group work focused, the discussion board assignments, readings, and a significant component of the final project are individual assignments and graded accordingly.

The Meta-Moment: Thinking about ethics ethically. Whether you like group work or not (come on, most people don't!), making ethical decisions and doing ethical deliberation is rarely a solo activity in actual life outside of school. This course is designed as an opportunity for you to practice making collaborative and collective ethical decisions and to deliberate with a team about how collective work is done. The first and second day of the course are dedicated to this meta-conversation and you and your team will come together to discuss best group practices. The decision-making strategies, labor division, communication strategies – all components of living an ethical life – of your team will be documented in a Community Norms sheet you design in the first two days of the course.

Weekly Team Project Presentations

See example template on Canvas. These team projects are presented every week during our class on Thursdays. Each weekly project presentation begins with a brief summary of the team's readings in the context of the unit theme, a discussion of the relevant prompts or activity from Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and a thoughtful discussion question for the class to answer on the corresponding Canvas discussion board.

Weekly Discussion Questions and Discussion Boards

During your weekly project presentation on Thursdays, each team will end their presentation by posing a weekly discussion question to the class. Good discussion questions are open-ended, thought-provoking, related to the text, and make the answerer squirm just a bit as they flex their ethics muscles. Remember, each student in the class has to answer these questions, even if they didn't do the same set of readings as your team, so be sure to include all the relevant background information the students need to robustly answer the question. All 4 teams will come up with a discussion question and present it every week. I will put these discussion questions on the corresponding weekly discussion board on Thursdays after class, and each student in the class is expected to answer all four questions robustly by 11:59pm on Friday nights. Replies to discussion questions should be a minimum of 200 words each for a total of at least 800 words per week. You can receive up to 5% extra credit toward your final grade if you engage in discussion (i.e. reply to the replies) 10 times over the course of the term.

Final Paper

Stay tuned on Canvas for a final paper prompt and rubric. Each student will write a 5-6 page paper addressing selected course content and/or outside research. (Outside research is completely optional, i.e. you will not be penalized for not doing additional, outside research. However, you are welcome to research and write about a topic beyond the course content if you would like to.)

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to analyze texts related to contemporary ethical issues and identify recurring themes, key concepts, people, and events.
2. Students will be able to propose their own interpretations and narratives about the significance and interrelations of the texts noted in (1).
3. Students will be able to conceptually organize and detail key elements of contemporary ethical issues communities including, but certainly not limited to, theoretical frameworks, such as racism, reparations, decolonization, ableism, feminism, social media, and technology ethics.
4. Students will be able to contextualize the course material in their individual research interests, research programs, and lived experiences, and to convey this in an individualized final paper project.
5. Students will be able to engage in meaningful and constructive dialogue with their colleagues about the materials we visit with in class.
6. Students will be able to master (1-5) while maintaining a respectful and productive learning and teaching environment.

Components of Student Evaluation

Student assessment for this course will include attendance, weekly team projects, weekly team discussion questions, participation in the discussion boards, and a final paper project.

The following scale will be used:

- 10% Attendance
- 20% Participation
- 20% Weekly Team Projects (4)
- 20% Weekly Team Discussion Questions (4)
 - *Extra Credit: Engaging Discussion Points (10/10) – 5% Total Grade Boost*
- 30% Final Paper Project

Resources

The [Academic Resource Center](#) provides students with academic strategies and individualized support needed for academic success and inclusion within the Georgetown community. The center offers the following support services:

- [Disability Support](#)
- [Academic Support](#)
- [Student-Athlete Support](#)

Additional Academic Resources:

- [Scholarly Research and Academic Integrity](#)
- [Honor Council](#)

Personal Resources:

- [Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action \(IDEAA\)](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)
 - *Georgetown requires faculty members, unless otherwise designated as confidential, to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator. If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a professor or teaching assistant in or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in papers), that faculty member or teaching assistant must report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator, will, in turn, reach out to the student to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. [Please note that the student is not required to meet with the Title IX coordinator.]. More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the Sexual Misconduct Website.*
 - **Please note that University policy requires faculty to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct. Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct.**
 - [Title IX Resources](#)
 - [Title IX Contact Information](#)

Accessibility

I am committed to creating a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). Your well-being and success in this course are very important to me, and I will do my best to work with each student individually so that the course and its requirements fit with their abilities. You are invited to come to office hours or talk with me after class to let me know about the ways in which the space, assignments, curriculum, and other key elements of the course are contributing to or impeding inclusion and accessibility. I recognize that there are multiple ways to learn and I encourage you to discuss your learning styles and comprehension requirements with me during my office hours or, if necessary, at another arranged time, during the first few weeks of class. If your name or pronoun needs to be corrected, please let me know early in the semester so that I can make the appropriate changes to my records.

Access is a social justice issue, and individual accommodations are more often than not a second-best effort to address access. Having said that, under university policy, for an accommodation to be *officially* considered, a student must register with the [Georgetown Office of Disability Services](#). I strongly suggest researching the benefits of this office, and I am happy to help you in navigating such structures at this institution.

Academic Integrity

Students at Georgetown University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity. Although most Georgetown students conduct themselves in accordance with these standards, occasionally, there are students who violate the code of conduct. Cheating harms the University community in many ways. For example, honest students are frustrated by the unfairness of cheating that goes undetected and students who cheat can skew the grading curve in a class, resulting in lower grades for students who worked hard and did their own work.

Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are expected to fully adhere to the policies and procedures of [Georgetown's Honor System](#) and to take the Honor Code Pledge.

Plagiarism

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the need to credit, check out [Plagiarism.org](#). All submissions must be your original work. Any submission suspected of plagiarism will be immediately referred to the Honor Council for investigation and possible adjudication. All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. If you have not done so, please read the honor code material located online at the Honor Council website.

Please use me as a resource for help if you are feeling overwhelmed, if things are difficult, or if you feel like don't understand the class material. You can come talk to me during office hours or via appointment. **I understand that these are difficult times, and that philosophy is also difficult. But if you keep me informed, we can work some-thing out together.**

Course Schedule

(See Course Reading Schedule Google Doc for Weekly Reading Assignments!)

WEEK 1 – Social Media & Technology

Team 1: Virtual Reality (VR)

Team 2: Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Team 3: Algorithmic Bias

Team 4: Cognitive Enhancement

Schedule:

- Monday, July 11th – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Tuesday, July 12th – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Wednesday, July 13th – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Thursday, July 14th – Give Weekly Project presentations & ask discussion question.

WEEK 2 – Race, Racism, & Indigeneity

Team 1: Reparations

Team 2: Decolonization

Team 3: Language Reclamation

Team 4: Elite Capture

Schedule:

- Monday, July 18th – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Tuesday, July 19th – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Wednesday, July 20th – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Thursday, July 21st – Give Weekly Project presentations & ask discussion question.

WEEK 3 – Disability & Ableism

Team 1: Disability Models

Team 2: Defining the Body

Team 3: Inclusion and Accommodations

Team 4: COVID-19 Pandemic

Schedule:

- Monday, July 25th – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Tuesday, July 26th – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Wednesday, July 27th – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Thursday, July 28th – Give Weekly Project presentations & ask discussion question.

WEEK 4 – Feminism & Intersectionality

Team 1: Gender Ascriptions

Team 2: Epistemic Injustice

Team 3: Microaggression

Team 4: Gaslighting

Schedule:

- Monday, August 1st – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Tuesday, August 2nd – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Wednesday, August 3rd – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Thursday, August 4th – Give Weekly Project presentations & ask discussion question.

WEEK 5 – Love & Sex

Team 1: Sexuality and Queerness

Team 2: Flirting and Consent

Team 3: Polyamory

Team 4: The Right to Sex

Schedule:

- Monday, August 8th – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Tuesday, August 9th – In class activities, working on weekly project.
- Wednesday, August 10th – Give Weekly Project presentations & ask discussion question.
- Thursday, August 11th – Final paper project presentations & writing workshop.

Final Paper Project Due!