Lingnan University
Department of Philosophy – MA in Practical Philosophy Programme

Course Title: Normative Ethics
Course Code: PHI507
Recommended Study Year:  -
No. of Credits/Term: 3
Mode of Tuition: Lecture and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours: 2 hours lecture per week
1 hour tutorial per week
Category in Major Programme: Value Philosophy
Prerequisite(s): -
Co-requisite(s): -
Exclusion(s): -
Exemption Requirement(s): -

Brief Course Description
The course will introduce ethical issues and theories with a focus on the principles governing character and behaviour. The following questions will be discussed in this course: What is the moral relation between people? How should we understand this relation? What are the limits of agents’ responsibility towards everyone in the world? How far is an agent permitted to take care of his own well-being when he can do a greater good to others? Are there anything that individuals can’t do to the others, no matter what are the circumstances? What would be the grounds of “moral protection” for individuals, if any? How far does the quality of one’s intention count in the (moral) evaluation of one’s action? How far should we take the quality of consequence into consideration in the overall evaluation of actions?

Aims
The course provides an introduction to ethical issues and theories with a focus on the principles governing character and behavior. The course endeavors to deepen students’ knowledge of the sources and methods of ethical reasoning and the reflective processes that are intrinsic to the study of ethics.

Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. describe the nature, methods, and theories of ethics
2. explain and evaluate various theories of ethics
3. think critically about philosophical issues of morality
   construct their moral arguments clearly

Indicative Content
1. What is the moral relation between people? How should we understand this relation? What are the limits of agents’ responsibility towards everyone in the world? How far is an agent permitted to take care of his own well-being when he can do a greater good to others?

2. Are there anything that individuals can’t do to the others, no matter under any circumstance? What would be the grounds of “moral protection” for individuals, if any?

3. How far does the quality of one’s intention count in the (moral) evaluation of one’s action? How far should we take the quality of consequence into consideration in the overall evaluation of actions?
Teaching Method
Lecture and Tutorial

Measurement of Learning Outcomes
1. Students will give oral presentations on assigned readings. They are expected to summarize, paraphrase and respond critically to the arguments in these texts.
2. Students will write a philosophical essay, the topics of which correspond to the contents of the lectures. They are expected to present their interpretations and criticisms effectively.
3. The examination will assess students’ basic knowledge of concepts and theories of Western ethical theories.

Assessment
50% Continuous Assessment
50% Final Examination

Required Readings

Supplementary Readings