# PHIL360 Ethical Theory Fall 2026

Syllabus as of 14 August 2026

- Instructor: Professor Sterrett
- Department: Philosophy
- Office Location: 307 Fiske Hall
- Telephone: email is better (more reliable)
- Email: susan.sterrett@wichita.edu
- Preferred Method of Contact: email
- Student Office Hours: Mondays and Tuesdays 3:30 - 4:30 pm
- Classroom Day/Time: Mondays & Wednesdays 2:00 - 3:15pm
- Prerequisites:
- Teaching Assistant: None.

## How to use this syllabus

This syllabus provides you with information specific to this course, and it also provides information about important university policies. As this is the first time I have taught this course to WSU students, I will be gauging our progress as we go along, and there may be some changes to it. Thus, look at the syllabus more as a course overview subject to change as the semester evolves, rather than as a contract. I will post updates to it on our course website.

## Student Office Hours

My normal student office hours are shown above. You are not required to come to office hours, but, if you like, you may come to my office hours for course related discussions, such as seeking further clarification of material presented in class, and following up on aspects of the class you are interested in. If the hours posted are not convenient for you, just email me and we'll find a time to talk that works for both of us.

## Course Description

*General education humanities course*. Studies selected topics in ethics. Investigates issues such as the meaning and justification of moral judgments, the nature of morality, the relations between normative categories and the concept of justice, and the problem of revolution in moral schemes. Prerequisite(s): one course in philosophy.

*Note:* the list of specific readings and topics in this course is on page 5 below.

## Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

*Upon successful completion of this course, students will:*

1. Be able to describe some of the main lines of thought in works on moral theory by David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and John Stuart Mill.

2. Be able to explain what moral particularism is and the view that it is a reaction against.

3.Be able to describe the views of morality in some indigenous philosophy (e.g., those related by Robin Wall Kimmerer).

4. Explain how different moral philosophies differ from each other, illustrating with an example. Explain in what way some differing moral philosophies can be seen as having a common insight in common.

5. Be able to discuss the nuances of Kant's view concerning the impermissibility of lying, and criticisms others have made of it.

## Required Texts/Readings Textbook

NOTE: *It is important to get the exact version of the book listed, so that everyone is using the same version of the book.* There are many versions available, which differ from each other in ways that matter for our class discussion. For instance, even for works in English, the page numbers between two different publishers or versions might differ. When even one person doesn't have the same version the rest of the class is using, it can significantly impede class discussion to make sure everyone is able to find the section being discussed. For translated works, it's even worse. So, get the versions listed below. I have chosen very affordable yet scholarly versions.

1. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, by David Hume. Hackett Publishing Company, 1983. ISBN: 9780915145454

2. *Ethical Philosophy: Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, and, Metaphysical Principles of Virtue, with, On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns*, by Immanuel Kant. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 9780872203204

3. *Lectures on Ethics*, by Immanuel Kant. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 9780915144266

4. *Utilitarianism* by John Stuart Mill. Hackett Publishing Company. There is more than one version published by Hackett. I want to confirm which version the bookstore actually ordered and made available to students before listing it here.

5. *The Subjection of Women* by John Stuart Mill. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 9780872206052

6. *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. ISBN: 9781668072240

## Other Readings

Other readings will be assigned. These will be indicated on the course slides presented in class and either handed out in class or posted on the course website.

## Class Protocol, Conduct, and Decorum

In this class, attendance is expected unless there is a compelling reason to be exempted. I appreciate knowing ahead of time if you need to be absent from class.

When weather is severe and/or inclement, possibly making it unsafe or too difficult for everyone to attend, I may cancel the in-person class and instead send you a take-home assignment in lieu of class meeting that day. I will notify you by WSU email if that is the case. So, please check your WSU email regularly. (Even when we do not have an in-person class meeting, the room we usually meet in should be free for class participants who happen to be on campus during the class meeting time to go to if they need a place to work on the take home assignment.)

In order that all can give their full attention, I ask that you put electronic devices away, out of sight. This is an in-person, hard copy style of class.

You are expected to be respectful of others, even when you do not agree with what they are saying. Similarly, others will be expected to be respectful of you, even when they do not agree with what you are saying.

I do not expect any problems in this class. The university policy regarding in-class meetings is that in the event that a student demonstrates confrontational, disruptive, or threatening behavior, they may be asked to leave the classroom immediately and will not be allowed to return to the classroom for the remainder of the class period. Consequences of this behavior may also include (and are not limited to): Suspension from class for a minimum of one additional class period and report or referral to the WSU police department, Student Conduct and the WSU Care Team.

## Contact Policy

Email communication is preferred. Feel free to email me any questions or concerns following these guidelines:

- Use the course name in the subject line of the email ("Engineering Ethics")
- Remember to include your name.
- Email me from your WSU email address.
- You should NOT contact me for tech support. There are much better options!!
    - Any technical problems involving your computer should go through the Blackboard Support. You can contact them at 316-978-3909 or fill out a request for help form at their website: https://wichita.edu/BbSupport

## Response Time

*To Email Questions*:

I usually respond to emails as soon as I can, which will almost always be in less than 24 hours.

*Feedback on Assignments:*

I aim to provide feedback on short assignments within a week or ten days at most. For exams, two weeks. Usually it will be sooner.

## Definition of a Credit Hour

***Example for 3 credit hour class***: Success in this 3 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction and preparation/studying or course related activities for a total of 135 hours.

## Grading Scale

WSU uses a +/- grading scale for final grades and to calculate grade point averages. In this class, grades are assigned according to the following chart.

| Points/Percentage | Letter Grade | Grade Points | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | A | 4.00 | A range denotes excellent performance |
| | A- | 3.70 | |
| | B+ | 3.30 | |
| | B | 3.00 | B range denotes good performance |
| | B- | 2.70 | |
| | C+ | 2.30 | |
| | C | 2.00 | C range denotes satisfactory performance |
| | C- | 1.70 | |
| | D+ | 1.30 | |
| | D | 1.00 | D range denotes unsatisfactory performance |
| | D- | 0.70 | |
| | F | 0.00 | |

## Assignments

Class participation includes attendance and participating in the in-class assignments. There will also be three papers. **Each of the three papers is worth 20% of the course grade, and class participation, including in-class assignments, is worth 40% of the course grade**. If your schedule does not permit you to attend our class meetings, then you should not take this class.

## Missed Assignments and Exams

If you need to miss or arrive late to a scheduled exam, please inform me beforehand. If you need an extension to a deadline, please contact me before the due date.

## Extra Credit

There are no plans to make extra credit available.

## Tentative Schedule

| | Date | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines |
|---|---|---|
| Below is the order in which course topics will be discussed and papers will be due. Dates TBD; due dates will be set in consultation with class participants. | | |
| | | |
| 1. | | **Introduction** to Professor and the Course |
| | | |
| 2. | | Hume's "A Dialogue" (available online)<br>excerpts from "The Scientific Background to Modern Philosophy" (will be provided) |
| | | |
| 3. | | Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* |
| | | |
| | | **Paper #1** |
| | | |
| 4. | | Kant's "On the Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns"<br>Kant, "Duties to Others: Truthfulness" from *Lectures on Ethics*<br>Mahon, "The Truth About Kant on Lies" |
| | | |
| 5. | | Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* - excerpts<br>and excerpts from *Lectures on Ethics* |
| | | |
| 6. | | Kant, *Metaphysical Principles of Virtue* - excerpts<br>and excerpts from *Lectures on Ethics* |
| | | |
| | | **Paper #2** |
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| 7. | | Mill, *Utilitarianism* |
| | | |
| 8. | | Mill, *The Subjection of Women* |
| | | |
| | | **Paper #3** |
| | | |
| 9. | | Jonathan Dancy, *Moral Particularism* |
| 10. | | Robin Wall Kimmerer, *The Serviceberry* |
| | | |
| | | **No Final Exam** |

There will not be class meetings on the following days:

Wednesday, **September 16th** (Professor at conference)
Monday, **October 12th** (Fall Break)
Wednesday, **November 18th** (Professor at conference)
Wednesday, **November 25th** (Thanksgiving Break)

## Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation

Wichita State University is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment for all of our community members. This includes the elimination of sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking within the University community. These incidents may interfere with or limit an individual's ability to benefit from or fully participate in the University's educational programs.

Students are asked to immediately report incidents to the University Police Department, (316) 978-3450 or students may contact the Title IX Coordinator at (316) 978-5177 or submit a report to the Office of Civil Rights, Title IX & ADA Compliance at Office of Civil Rights, Title IX & ADA Compliance (CTAC) Report Form (maxient.com).

Students may also report incidents to an instructor, faculty or staff member, who are required by law to notify the Title IX Coordinator. If a student wishes to keep the information confidential, the student may speak with staff members of the Counseling and Psychological Services (316) 978-3440 or Student Health Services (316) 978-3620.

Sexual assault prevention training is required of all students, faculty and staff. These trainings, in addition to being highly interactive and engaging, are based in research around the best practices for healthy communities. Students will need to complete this training in the fall semester before being able to enroll for the spring. For more information regarding the training, visit the CTAC website at: https://www.wichita.edu/administration/ctac/training.php.

## Students with Disabilities

A disability is something that affects a major life activity. These life activities include but are not limited to, learning, walking, breathing, hearing, and seeing, in addition to many other physical, sensory functions, and psychological disabilities. If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability, which requires accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Accommodations and Testing (OSAT) at https://www.wichita.edu/services/accommodations/index.php to discuss reasonable and appropriate accommodations and eligibility requirements. It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability OSAT will review your concerns and determine, with you, what academic accommodations are necessary and appropriate for you. For example, adaptions of teaching methods, class materials or testing may be made on a case-by-case basis if warranted, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All information and documentation of your disability is confidential and will not be released by OSAT without your written permission.

The Office of Student Accommodations and Testing (OSAT) is located in the Shocker Success Center, room 118, (316) 978-3309 (voice/tty) (316-854-3032 videophone). Students seeking an accommodation must complete the online application at: https://hunter.accessiblelearning.com/Wichita/ApplicationStudent.aspx.

## Prohibition on Discrimination

Wichita State University is committed to being a welcoming campus for all students, staff and faculty. Wichita State University Policy 3.06 / Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation for Employees, Students and Visitors prohibits discrimination on the basis of federal and state protected categories. Retaliation against an individual filing or cooperating in a complaint process is also prohibited.

Students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives are welcome in this course and the diversity that students bring to this course should be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. All materials and activities are presented with the intent to be respectful of all students regardless of gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, or culture. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

Complaints or concerns related to alleged discrimination may be directed to the Office of Civil Rights, Title IX & ADA Compliance (CTAC), Wichita State University, 316-978-3187, ctac@wichita.edu.

## Syllabus Policies and Student Resources

Students should familiarize themselves with the course-related policies and student resources that can be found at: www.wichita.edu/syllabuspolicies These include:

- Important Academic Dates
- Inclement Weather Event and Emergency Event
- Academic Integrity
- Unauthorized Use of Generative AI
- Personal Identity Updates
- Concealed Carry Policy
- Video and Audio Recording
- Shocker Alert System
- Intellectual Property
- CARE Team
- Counseling & Prevention Services
- The Office of the Student Advocate
- Academic Appeals
- Student Health Services
- Heskett Center & Campus Recreation
- First Generation Students
- Tobacco Free Campus
- FERPA
- Student Resolution Guide