



UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Extended Campus

College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Philosophy

UNC Dual Enrollment at Bennett High School

PHIL 150-683: Moral Issues (3 credits; LAC, gtP*)
Spring 2021

Instructor: Kyle Hirsch
kyle.hirsch@unco.edu
970-480-7404

Office Hours:
By appointment

Catalog Course Description: An introduction to moral reasoning about issues such as drug use, capital punishment, world hunger, animal rights, internet privacy, discrimination and sexual morality.

Guaranteed Transfer Pathways (gtP): The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has approved PHIL 150 for inclusion in the Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways program in the GT-AH3 category. For transferring students, successful completion with a minimum C grade guarantees transfer and application of credit in this GT Pathways category. More information on the GT Pathways program.

Course objectives: PHIL 150 is designed to help students progress toward the learning goals of UNC's Liberal Arts Core, Area 3c:

- Describe at least one of the central differences between the ways in which at least two different cultures and/or historical periods have viewed the world in terms of their art, literature, philosophy, or language itself.
- Demonstrate a solid basic understanding of at least one way in which art, literature, philosophy, or language itself has contributed substantially to shaping their own experience and/or the experiences of their fellow human beings.
- Explain at least one salient difference between the artistic, literary, or philosophical approach or approaches to the world that they've studied in this area of the Core and the approaches to the world characteristics of the study of history and/or of the natural and social sciences.

Students in this course will explore fundamental philosophical concepts and learn to deploy a variety of philosophical methods in order to resolve moral issues that arise in both personal and social life. Although the emphasis of the course is on practical ethical decision-making in real world contexts, students will be exposed to some of the history and theoretical foundations of moral philosophy.

PHIL 150 is also designed to help students achieve the statewide gtPathways competencies and content criteria for AH-3. The table below indicates how the specific learning outcomes of this course relate to those statewide goals:

PHIL 150 course goals	AH-3 competencies and content criteria
1) <i>Analyze and critically evaluate arguments made by historical and contemporary philosophers about a variety of moral issues.</i>	Respond analytically and critically to ways of thinking, by addressing one or more of the following (a) Logic (b) Ethics (c) The different questions dealt with by leading philosophers and/or theologians and their positions on those questions.
2) <i>Distinguish between normative and descriptive claims</i> 3) <i>Describe a range of positions on moral issues explored in the course</i>	1. <u>Explain an Issue</u> a. Use information to describe a problem or issue and/or articulate a question related to the topic
4) <i>Explain the main sources of contemporary moral debates</i> 5) <i>Identify moral concepts embedded in choices and actions</i> 6) <i>Analyze and apply moral concepts.</i>	2. <u>Utilize Context</u> a. Evaluate the relevance of context when presenting a position b. Identify assumptions c. Analyze one’s own and others’ assumptions.
7) <i>Articulate and defend a reasoned position on at least one moral issue</i> 8) <i>Identify relevant objections and counter-arguments to your own and others’ views; explain possible responses to those objections</i>	5. <u>Understand Implications and Make Conclusions</u> a. Establish a conclusion that is tied to the range of information presented b. Reflect on implications and consequences of stated conclusion

Required materials: Readings and other materials are typically made available via Canvas and/or electronic reserves. There are no other materials or fees.

Course Requirements & Grading: More assignment guidelines and rubrics provided on Canvas.

- **Pre- and In-Class Engagement activities** **30% of course grade**
Short, formative assessments due for most class meeting days (discussion questions requiring very short writing assignments and peer dialogue).
- **Position Papers** **70% of course grade**
Three papers totally roughly 1200 words each applying and critically evaluating positions studied in the course. First paper (20%) is weighed slightly less than the next two (25% each). Used as summative assessment of goals 1, 7 & 8.

Final letter grades are determined by the following percentages:

A: 93% or more A-: 90-92% B+: 87-89% B: 83-86% B-: 80-83% C+: 77-79%
C: 73-79% C-: 70-73% D+: 67-69% D: 63-66% D-: 60-62% F: 0-59%

Borderline grades may be rounded up where there is evidence of significant improvement in learning at the end of the term. Late work will not be accepted absent a true verifiable emergency. No work can be accepted after the course has ended unless the student has arranged for an incomplete in advance.

Outline of course content (subject to change at instructor discretion): Full bibliographic information is always provided on the file (or with the link) to each course reading in Canvas. Note that this is one of *many* ways in which the course may be developed. Instructors may choose to focus on a wide variety of moral issues.

Weeks 1-2: Moral Reasoning: Thinking Like a Philosopher

- Lewis Vaughn, "Evaluating Moral Arguments"
- David W. Concepción, "How to Read Philosophy"
- Mark Timmons, "A Moral Theory Primer"
- Tom Regan, "How Not to Answer Moral Questions"

Weeks 3-5: Distributive Justice

- John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness"
- Robert Nozick, "The Entitlement Theory of Justice" & "The Tale of the Slave"
- Norman Daniels, "Is There a Right to Health Care and, if so, What Does it Encompass?"
- Haslett, "Is Inheritance Justified?"
- Garret Hardin, "Living on a Lifeboat"
- Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

Weeks 6-8: Discrimination & Inequality

- Kurt Vonnegut, "Harrison Bergeron"
- G.A. Cohen, "Equality of What? On Welfare, Goods, and Capabilities"
- Chris Lebron, "Race, Truth and Our Two Realities"
- Deborah Hellman, "When is Discrimination Wrong" (Sections 1.1 and 1.2)
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations"
- David Brooks, "The Case for Reparations"

Weeks 9-10: Freedom & Paternalism

- J.S. Mill, "On Liberty" (Chs. 1 & 4)
- Douglas Husak, "A Moral Right to Use Drugs"
- Robert LaFollete, "Licensing Parents Revisited"
- Lisa Hill, "Does Compulsory Voting Violate a Right Not to Vote?"

Weeks 11-12: Artificial Intelligence & Roboethics

- Nick Bostrom, "The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence"
- David Levy, "The Ethical Treatment of Artificially Conscious Robots"
- Sven Nyholm & Lily Frank, "From Sex Robots to Love Robots: Is Mutual Love with a Robot Possible?"
- Martin Ford, "Rise of the Robots" (Chs. 1 + 2)

Weeks 13-15: Moral Skepticism and Meaning

- Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck"
- Richard Joyce, "Moral Fictionalism"
- Lawrence Thomas, "Morality and a Meaningful Life"
- James Rachels, "Can Ethics Provide Answers?"
- Susan Wolf, "Happiness and Meaning"

Final Exam: Registrar Scheduled Exam Period

Students with Disabilities- Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact the Bennett High School counseling office to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

UNC's Policies

UNC's policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed. For additional information, please see the [Student Code of Conduct](#) on the Dean of Student's website.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to practice academic honesty in every aspect of this course. Students who engage in academic misconduct are subject to grading consequences with regard to this course and/or university disciplinary procedures through the Dean of Students Office. More information about the academic misconduct process can be found in UNC's Student Code of Conduct (BEAR Code).

Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Statement: The University of Northern Colorado prohibits and will not tolerate sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination of any kind. UNC is legally obligated to investigate sexual misconduct (including, but not limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, and intimate partner violence). If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a faculty member, they have an obligation to report it to UNC's Title IX Coordinator. "Disclosure" may include communication in-person, via email/phone/text message, or through in/out of class assignments. If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact the UNC Counseling Center (970-351-2496) or the Assault Survivors Advocacy Program (970-351-4040). If you would like to learn more about sexual misconduct or report an incident, please visit <http://www.unco.edu/sexual-misconduct/>.

Equity and Inclusion Statement: The University of Northern Colorado embraces the diversity of students, faculty, and staff, honors the inherent dignity of each individual, and welcomes their unique perspectives, behaviors, and worldviews. In this course, people of all races, religions, national origins, sexual orientations, ethnicities, genders and gender identities, cognitive, physical, and behavioral abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, immigrant statuses, military or veteran statuses, size and/or shapes are strongly encouraged to share their rich array of perspectives and experiences. Course content and discussions will heighten your awareness to each other's individual and intersecting identities. The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities serves as resource to anyone seeking support or with questions about equity and inclusion at the University of Northern Colorado.

Dropping or Withdrawing from a UNC Dual Credit Course

Note: Drop and withdrawal dates for the courses at your school can be found on your [dual enrollment page for your high school](#).

Please use the [Dual Enrollment Drop & Withdrawal Form](#).

- You can drop your course up until the designated Drop Deadline. The course will be removed from your transcript and you will receive a full tuition refund.
- After the Drop Deadline and up until the Withdrawal Deadline you can withdraw from your course. The course will remain on your transcript with a grade of "W" (this does not impact your GPA), and there is no tuition refund.
- After the withdrawal deadline you are unable to be removed from the course. The course will remain on your transcript with the grade that you have earned, and there is no tuition refund.
- If you stop attending the course but fail to officially withdraw from the course(s), you will be responsible for full tuition and fees and the course grade will remain on your transcript.