PPOL 5330: ETHICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

Wednesdays, 15:00 – 17:50, Room 4504 (lifts 25-26)

Instructor	Course Assistants
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Course Description

This course approaches public policy from the perspective of ethics / moral philosophy. The overriding theme is to explore the moral debate surrounding some pressing policy issues in today's world. The first part of the course introduces the essential moral concepts and theories for reasoning in ethics and public policy. The second part of the course discusses a selection of disputed policy issues through the application of moral concepts and theories. By the end of the course, students will benefit with the knowledge and skills necessary for policy argumentation from a moral perspective.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be better equipped to:

1. Knowledge: (a) Discuss the key concepts and theories in moral philosophy; and (b) analyze and evaluate moral arguments underpinning policy decisions.
2. Skills: (a) Apply concepts and theories in policy argumentation; and (b) construct, criticize and defend arguments.
3. Attitude: Exercise independent and critical judgments in ethics and public policy.

Class Schedule

Class / Date	Topic	Class / Date	Topic
1 / Sep 4	Introduction / Moral Reasoning and Public Policy	7 / Oct 23	Reasoning with Virtues and Vices (2)
2 / Sep 11	Reasoning with Consequences (1)	8 / Oct 30	Mid-term Test
Sep 18	Public Holiday – NO CLASS	9 / Nov 6	Case Study (1): Bioethics
3 / Sep 25	Reasoning with Consequences (2)	10 / Nov 13	Case Study (2): Economic Justice
4 / Oct 2	Reasoning with Obligations (1)	11 / Nov 20	Case Study (3): Animal Ethics
5 / Oct 9	Reasoning with Obligations (2)	12 / Nov 27	Case Study (4): Emerging Technologies
6 / Oct 16	Reasoning with Virtues and Vices (1)		

Note: Class schedule and topics may be adjusted to facilitate students' learning.

Assessment and Grading

Assignment / Weighting		Requirements
Group Project *Alignment with ILOs: 1(a), 2(a) & 3*	20%	***Deliverable 1: Video Case and Demonstration (15%)*** • Each student team will be assigned ONE policy issue with ethical controversies. They will produce a **5-minute** video case which contains a detailed narrative featuring relevant plots and characters. • The teams will demonstrate their video cases in Classes 9 to 12.

Each demonstration should NOT exceed 10 minutes, followed by Q&A and other class activities.

- The submission deadline of the video cases (final version) is **23:59, Nov 30 (Sat)**.

Deliverable 2: 'Behind-the-scenes' Video (5%)

- **All teams will make use of generative AI tools to assist in the preparation**, such as setting out scenarios, simulating character dialogues, and/or enhancing storylines. Each team will produce a **3-minute** 'behind-the-scenes' video to illustrate how generative AI tools have been used throughout the process of video case production.
- The submission deadline of the 'behind-the-scenes' videos is **23:59, Nov 30 (Sat)**.

Mid-term Test *Alignment with ILOs: 1(a), 1(b), 2(a), 2(b) & 3*	35%	• This is an open-book test taking place on **Oct 30 (Wed)**. • There are two parts. In each part, students will answer ONE question in the form of an essay. The time allowed for completion is **30-40 minutes** for each part. **The two parts are timed separately.** • Students must complete the test in person. <u>**Under no circumstances can the test be completed outside the test venue.**</u> In case of medical/family emergencies or unavoidable duties, students must present appropriate evidence to request for 'make-up' arrangements.
Final Essay *Alignment with ILOs: 1(a), 1(b), 2(a), 2(b) & 3*	35%	• Students will write a <u>**2,500-word**</u> essay to analyze ONE of the video cases created by a *peer* team (i.e., NOT the video case created by students' own teams). • The word limit does not include endnotes and appendices. Students are expected to use Harvard citation and referencing style. • The submission deadline of the final essay is **23:59, Dec 8 (Sun)**.
Progress Quizzes *Alignment with ILOs: 1(a), 1(b), 2(b) & 3*	10%	• Students will complete TWO in-class, open-book quizzes, each of which contains several multiple-choice questions and a short question. • The first quiz will take place on **Oct 2** and the second quiz will take place on **Oct 23**.

Remarks:
(1) A maximum of 5 points of **attendance and participation bonus** will be awarded to students who contribute actively to class discussions. Attendance will be taken on an ad hoc basis.
(2) For late submission, no submission or no show, **mark penalty** will apply. For confirmed cases of plagiarism, cheating and abuse of generative AI tools, sanctions will be imposed.
(3) For the group project, each team should submit detailed **division of labor**. The score of each individual student may be adjusted based on the division and quality of labor.
(4) This course will be assessed using **criterion-referencing**. The rubrics for the major assessment tasks are provided at the end of this syllabus, outlining the criteria used for evaluation. Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be released within **two weeks of the due date**.

Important Dates

Date / Time	Task	Date / Time	Task
Sep 20 / 23:59	Group Project – grouping confirmation	Nov 6, 13, 20 & 27 / in class	Group Project – video case demonstrations
Oct 2 / in class	Progress Quiz 1	Nov 30 / 23:59	Group Project – video case AND 'behind-the-scenes' video
Oct 23 / in class	Progress Quiz 2	Dec 8 / 23:59	Final Essay
Oct 30 / in class	Mid-term Test		

Final Grade Descriptors

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on Subject Grading Description
A+, A, A-	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates excellent attainment of knowledge, skills and attitude in relation to ethics and moral reasoning in policy argumentation.
B+, B	Good Performance	Demonstrates good attainment of knowledge, skills and attitude in relation to ethics and moral reasoning in policy argumentation.
B-, C+, C	Marginal Performance	Demonstrates adequate attainment of knowledge, skills and attitude in relation to ethics and moral reasoning in policy argumentation.
F	Failure	Demonstrates insufficient attainment of knowledge, skills and attitude in relation to ethics and moral reasoning in policy argumentation.

Course AI Policy

The use of generative AI tools is permitted. However, students should understand that generative AI tools should only be used as *tools* and should NOT be a substitute for students' own work. Students must certify that the work submitted in their assignments is their own original work, except where they have acknowledged the use of external sources or assistance, including generative AI tools.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Feedback on assignments will include comments and suggestions for further improvement. Students who have further questions about the feedback, including scores, should consult the Course Coordinator OR Teaching Assistant within five working days after the feedback is received.

Resubmission Policy

Students who are unable to submit any of the assessed tasks should contact the Instructor or Teaching Assistant within five working days after the respective deadlines to discuss arrangements for resubmission.

Required Texts and Materials

- Barbara MacKinnon and Andrew Fiala (2018) *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues* (9th edition), Boston, MA: Cengage Learning [NB: Essential text for the entire course].
- Russ Shafer-Landau (2020) *A Concise Introduction to Ethics*, New York: Oxford University Press [NB: Useful text for Classes 1 to 7].

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Additional Resources

Useful Online Resources
- Annabelle Lever and Andrei Poama (2019) *The Routledge Handbook of Ethics and Public Policy*, London: Routledge.
- Gordon Graham (2011) *Theories of Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy with a Selection of Classic Readings*, New York/London: Routledge.
- Jonathan Boston, Andrew Bradstock and David Eng (eds) (2010) *Public Policy: Why Ethics Matters*, Acton, ACT: ANUE Press.
- *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, http://plato.stanford.edu/

Other Learning Resources
- Anthony Weston (2018) *A 21st Century Ethical Toolbox* (4th edition), New York: Oxford University Press.
- David Morrow (2018) *Moral Reasoning: A Text and Reader on Ethics and Contemporary Moral Issues*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jonathan Wolff (2020) *Ethics and Public Policy: A Philosophical Inquiry* (2nd edition), London: Routledge.
- Julian Baggini and Peter S. Fosl (2007) *The Ethics Toolkit: A Compendium of Ethical Concepts and Methods*, Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Mark Timmons (2017) *Disputed Moral Issues: A Reader* (4th edition), New York: Oxford University Press.
- Richard Burnor and Yvonne Raley (2018) *Ethical Choices: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy with Cases* (2nd edition), New York: Oxford University Press.

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Grading Rubric for Group Project (Video Case)

Excellent Performance	Good Performance	Marginal Performance	Failure
The video case has a specific topic. It contains relevant ethical claims and arguments from the perspectives of different stakeholders. It does NOT present any analysis of the ethical arguments or make any ethical judgments. The case clearly demonstrates controversies and trade-offs. The storyline is easy to read and understand. The visual and audio materials used are appropriate.	The video case demonstrates the attainment of only some of the desired attributes (as for excellent performance) while some attributes are not yet attained. For the attributes attained, there is room for enhancement.	The video case demonstrates only minimal attainment of the desired attributes (as for excellent performance). For the attributes attained, there is significant room for enhancement.	The video case is inadequate, demonstrating very limited attainment of the desired attributes.

Grading Rubric for Mid-term Test and Progress Quizzes

Excellent Performance	Good Performance	Marginal Performance	Failure
The questions are answered accurately and/or justified with reasonable explanations. There is a logical and coherent elaboration with good use of language.	Only some of the questions are answered accurately and/or justified. The explanations are generally reasonable, but they are not substantiated well and/or there lacks sufficient clarity. There is room for enhancement in terms of logic, coherence, and/or use of language.	Only a very few questions are answered accurately. The explanations are unclear or do not make sense. There is significant room for enhancement in terms of logic, coherence, and/or use of language.	Most of the questions are answered inaccurately or the answers are not relevant to the questions. The answers are unsatisfactory in terms of logic, coherence, and/or use of language.

Grading Rubric for Final Essay

Excellent Performance	Good Performance	Marginal Performance	Failure
The essay has a sensible interpretation of the topic. There is a logical argument substantiated by appropriate examples and/or evidence. There is application of relevant ethical concepts and theories. The essay is well-structured and coherent. There is good use of language. The presentation is clear.	The essay demonstrates the attainment of only some of the desired attributes (as for excellent performance) while some attributes are not yet attained. For the attributes attained, there is room for enhancement.	The essay demonstrates only minimal attainment of the desired attributes (as for excellent performance). For the attributes attained, there is significant room for enhancement.	The essay is inadequate, demonstrating very limited attainment of the desired attributes.