

# PIA2400: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Introduction to Ethics and Public Policy

### Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

### Course Number

2400

### Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

### College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

3

### Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

### Medium of Instruction

English

### Medium of Assessment

English

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

POL2400 Introduction to Ethics and Public Policy,  
GE2138 Introduction to Ethics and Public Policy

### Exclusive Courses

GE2134 Critical and Creative Thinking

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course aims (1) to help students critically examine the three major ethical approaches (utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics) and discover their practical relevance in forming and evaluating various public policies, (2) to acquire and develop critical and analytical thinking skills for making normative judgments about major moral controversies in contemporary public policy, especially polices in relation to contemporary high-tech research and application, and (3) to discover the role of responsible citizens as moral agents in the collective reflection and resolution of moral controversies in public policy by critically applying key ethical concepts (such as utility, pleasure, interests, liberty, rights, virtue) and relevant normative theories in their ethical deliberations.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

	CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Critically examine the three major ethical approaches (utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics) and discover their practical relevance in forming and evaluating various public policies.		x	x	x
2	Acquire and develop critical and analytical thinking skills for making normative judgments about major moral controversies in contemporary public policy, especially policies in relation to contemporary high-tech research and application		x	x	x
3	Discover the role of responsible citizens as moral agents in the collective reflection and resolution of moral controversies in public policy by critically applying key ethical concepts (such as utility, pleasure, interests, liberty, rights, virtue) and relevant normative theories in their ethical deliberations		x	x	x
4	Develop and master communicative skills to constructively and critically engage with other students who may hold different cultural or moral viewpoints regarding the ethical issues of public policy formulation, implementation and evaluation.		x	x	x

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)



	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Quiz	1, 2, 3, 4	20	-	No
2	Presentation	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	No
3	Individual Essay	1, 2, 3, 4	50	-	No

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Examination (%)**

0

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

## 1. Presentation

**Criterion**

Participation and presentation skills in the discussion. Ability to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Very active participation and very good presentation skills. Very good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Outstanding ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Active participation and good presentation skills. Good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Strong ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Limited participation and limited presentation skills. Limited explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Some ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Marginal (D)**

Very limited participation and very limited presentation skills. Very limited explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Very limited ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Failure (F)**

No participation. Little evidence of being able to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Weak ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Assessment Task**

## 2. Individual Essay

**Criterion**

Mastery of the reading. Ability to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Excellent mastery of the reading. Very good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Outstanding ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Satisfactory mastery of the reading. Good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Strong ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Limited mastery of the reading. Adequate explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Some ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions

**Marginal (D)**

Very limited mastery of the reading. Very limited explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Very limited ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Failure (F)**

Little or no mastery of the reading. Little evidence of being able to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Weak ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

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**Assessment Task**

3. Quiz

**Criterion**

Independent critical thinking. Ability to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Outstanding independent critical thinking. Very good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Outstanding ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Good independent critical thinking. Good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Strong ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Limited independent critical thinking. Adequate explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Some ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions

**Marginal (D)**

Very limited independent critical thinking. Very limited explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Very limited ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

**Failure (F)**

Serious lack of independent critical thinking. Little evidence of being able to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Weak ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

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## Part III Other Information

### Keyword Syllabus

Three major approaches to ethics: utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics. Concepts in ethics: utility, pleasure, interests, liberty, rights, virtue, equality, etc. Ethical problems and issues in public policy in relation to high-tech development and application: artificial intelligence, autonomous vehicles, sex robots, male pregnancy, abortion, animal welfare, environmental protection, human relations, sexual morality, and social order.

### Reading List

### Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	John Hospers, <i>Human Conduct: Problems of Ethics</i> (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 3rd edition, 1996).
2	Norman. E. Bowie and Robert L. Simon, <i>The Individual and Political Order</i> , 4th edition (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).
3	Fiala, Andrew G. & MacKinnon, Barbara. <i>Ethics Theory and Contemporary Issues</i> 9th ed (NY: Cengage Learning, 2017).

### Additional Readings

Title	
1	Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy.
2	Ruiping, Fan. <i>Reconstructionist Confucianism</i> (NY: Springer, 2010),
3	Mark Cherry and Ruiping Fan (2021). <i>Sex Robots: Social Impact and the Future of Human Relations</i> , Springer.