



## **Course Code: LH-E-??? Moral Philosophy Programme: Fall Semester, 2026.**

**NOTE: One or two readings may be replaced with others closer to the start of term.**

### **Course Information**

Duration: 45 credit hours (14 weeks)  
Location: Jindal Global University Campus, Sonapat  
Prerequisites: None  
Equivalent courses:  
Exclusive courses:

### **Instructor Information**

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### **Course Description**

This course is designed to encourage philosophically informed thinking about questions of morality.

Proposing theories in Normative Ethics --roughly, the critical study of criteria or standards of morally right acts-- has been a familiar exercise in Western intellectual history. It might seem at first that a similar quest for a satisfactory definition of morally right action does not exist outside that discourse. Upon a closer look, however, we find that questions about morality come couched in different verbiage across intellectual traditions. In fact, one such tradition was birthed by Aristotle's Virtue Theory-- a framework that cannot be fully rendered in terms of a theory about what makes an act morally right. Closer home, it can be argued that the view of action-without-desire professed by the author(s) of the *Bhagavadgita* is also not solely concerned with morally right acts; it is equally concerned with various aspects of the wider context in which morally significant acts are performed. In moral philosophy, one is obliged to grapple with the meanings of all the terms indicated above, viz., 'moral rightness' (or 'wrongness'), 'good' (or 'bad'; signifying moral praise and blame, respectively), 'virtue' (and 'vice'; signifying commendable and non-commendable character traits, respectively), and others. Alongside such meta-ethical inquiries into the nature of moral language, one might puzzle over the contents of moral knowledge-claims (such as "Two persons who did the same kind and amount of work should be paid equally"): on what basis are such claims made, if it somehow feels right to say that judgments about morality are relative to the

individual or community? On what grounds do disagreements of moral judgment between persons occur? These questions inevitably lead one to wonder about the reality of moral values.

This course will introduce students to a couple of frameworks of inquiry within Normative Ethics, namely Consequentialism and the older, quite different Virtue theory of Aristotle, and to the study of ethical values in Classical Indian Philosophy. The requirement for this course hinges on the nature of liberal arts education itself: there is no question of holistic development of a human being without a serious engagement with questions of morality. It is not possible to evaluate literature, or socio-political dispensations, or environmental issues, or for that matter, historical narratives, without a fair understanding of the terms in which those ultimately moral evaluations may be registered. It can be further argued that without familiarity with ethical thought, the process of integrating learning with life and character/personality would remain incomplete.

### **Scheme of Evaluation, and Grading Evaluation Break-up**

Quiz 1: 25%

Quiz 2: 35%

Class participation: 10%

Final Exam: 30% (External Evaluation)

#### *Grade Definition:*

O (80% and Above) [8.0]	Outstanding	Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and extraordinary critical and analytical ability
A+ (75%-79%) [7.5]	Excellent	Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and critical and analytical ability
A (70%-74%) [7.0]	Very Good	Sound knowledge of the subject matter, excellent organizational capacity, ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles, critically analyse existing materials and originality in thinking and presentation
(65%-69%) [6.0]	Good	Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems and good critical and analytical skills
B+ (60%-64%) [5.0]	Fair	Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems and reasonable critical and analytical skills.

B (55%-59%) [4.0]	Acceptable	Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of study and reasonable critical and analytical skills
B- (50%-54%) [3.0]	Marginal	Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials and, poor critical and analytical skills
F (50% or Below)	Fail	Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills and marginal use of the relevant materials. Will require repeating the course

### Academic Integrity

#### *Academic Honesty, Cheating, and Plagiarism*

In line with JGU policy, JSLH operates a zero tolerance approach to Plagiarism. The unacknowledged use of material by others within your work is a violation of academic integrity and all reported cases will be investigated before potential disciplinary action. Instructors will address methods of citation and presentation within written work.

#### *Participation/Attendance Policy*

JSLH conducts all classes on a foundation of professionalism. It is expected that students should be present in class and seated within five minutes of the class start time. **Students arriving after a fifteen minute window from the designated start time will be refused entry until the mid-session break.** Please show courtesy to your instructors and co-learners by observing punctuality. Please also note that the seminar room is a place for free expression and critical thinking and this comes with a responsibility on the part of students to respect opinions expressed and actively participate in the work of the classroom discussion.

### Course Material

Text books, Reference books, Journals, Web Sources

### Course Intended Learning Objectives

<u>Intended Learning Outcomes</u>	<u>Pedagogy/ Teaching and Learning Activities</u>	<u>Assessments/ Activities</u>
The student is expected to learn to comprehend concepts, ideas and arguments.	Students will read texts critically, and participate in classroom discussions.	Classroom discussion
The student is expected to learn how to present concepts, ideas and arguments.	Students will be asked to make impromptu mini-presentations in class.	Informal classroom presentation

The student is expected to begin grasping the nature and mechanics of philosophical writing.	Students will write down their understanding of the issues discussed in a coherent and logically sequenced manner.	Written assignment, i.e., mid-term and end-term exam/ paper
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## Session Plan

Week	Topic	Readings
1	Definitions; Normative Ethics and Metaethics	<p><u>Required:</u> Julia Driver, “God and Human Nature”, Chapter 2 of <i>Ethics: The Fundamentals</i>, Oxford: Blackwell, 2006; pp. 22-39.</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u> Stephen Darwall, “What is Philosophical Ethics?”, and “Metaethics,” Chapters 1 &amp; 2 of <i>Philosophical Ethics</i>, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998; pp. 3-26.</p>
2	More Metaethics: The Naturalistic Fallacy and the Error Theory	<p><u>Required:</u> J. L. Mackie, “The Subjectivity of Values,” Chapter 1 of <i>Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong</i>, Penguin Books; pp. 15-49. (Excerpt, TBA.) G. E. Moore, “The Subject-Matter of Ethics,” Chapter 1, <i>Principia Ethica</i>, Dover Publications, 2004 [1903]. URL: <a href="http://fair-use.org/g-e-moore/principia-ethica/chapter-i">http://fair-use.org/g-e-moore/principia-ethica/chapter-i</a></p> <p><u>Suggested:</u> Darwall, “The Error Theory and Ethical Relativism,” Chapter 7 of <i>Philosophical Ethics</i>, pp. 63-70. Michael Ridge, “Moore’s Moral Non-naturalism,” Sections 1 and 2 only, of <a href="https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-non-naturalism/">https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-non-naturalism/</a></p>
3	Utilitarianism -- 1	<p><u>Required:</u> Darwall, “Mill I and II,” Chapters 12 and 13 of <i>Philosophical Ethics</i>, pp. 109-137.</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u> Roger Crisp, “Welfare and Pleasure,” and “Experience, Desire and the Ideal,” Chapters 2 and 3 of <i>The Routledge Guidebook to Mill on Utilitarianism</i> (RGB to Mill), London: Routledge, 1997. Stephen Nathanson, “Act and Rule Utilitarianism,” <i>Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i>. URL: <a href="https://iep.utm.edu/util-a-r/">https://iep.utm.edu/util-a-r/</a></p>
4	Utilitarianism – 2 Reading Mill	<p><u>Required:</u> John Stuart Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i>, Chapters I and II. URL: <a href="https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/mill1863.pdf">https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/mill1863.pdf</a> <b>1 more required reading, TBD.</b></p>

		<p><u>Suggested:</u>  Roger Crisp, “The Proof and Sanctions of Utilitarianism,” and “What Utilitarianism is,” Chapters 4 and 5 of RGB to Mill.</p>
5	Consequentialism in General	<p><u>Required:</u>  [Second required reading from Week 4 concluded.]  Julia Driver, “Contemporary Consequentialism,” Chapter 4 of <i>Ethics: The Fundamentals</i>, pp. 61-79.  John Rawls, “Classical Utilitarianism,” in George Sher, <i>Ethics: Essential Readings in Moral Theory</i>, New York: Routledge, 2012; pp. 262-265.</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u>  William Haines, “Consequentialism,”  <a href="https://iep.utm.edu/consequentialism-utilitarianism/">https://iep.utm.edu/consequentialism-utilitarianism/</a>  Roger Crisp, “What Utilitarianism is,” Chapter 5 of RGB to Mill.</p>
6	Quiz and Clean-up	<p><b>QUIZ 1</b>, based on material covered in Weeks 1-5. Utilitarianism and Consequentialism concluded.</p>
7	Aristotle and the Moral Philosophy of Antiquity	<p><u>Required:</u>  Darwall, “Aristotle – I and II,” Chapters 17 and 18 of <i>Philosophical Ethics</i>, pp. 191-216, or as much as possible.</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u>  Clerk Shaw, “Ancient Ethics,” <a href="https://iep.utm.edu/a-ethics/">https://iep.utm.edu/a-ethics/</a>  Julia Driver, “Virtue Ethics,” Chapter 8 of <i>Ethics: The Fundamentals</i>, pp. 136-153.</p>
8	Reading Aristotle - 1	<p><u>Required:</u>  Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>, Excerpts in Sher, <i>Ethics</i>, pp. 433-445.</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u>  Read Chapter II in full, here:  <a href="http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.2.ii.html">http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.2.ii.html</a></p>
9	Reading Aristotle – 2	<p><u>Required:</u>  Alasdair MacIntyre, “Aristotle’s Account of the Virtues,” <i>After Virtue</i>, Second Edition (at least), University of Notre Dame Press; pp. 146-164.</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u>  Julia Annas, “Skilled and Virtuous Action,” from her <i>Intelligent Virtue</i>, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 16-51.</p>
10	Aristotle and Contemporary Virtue Theory	<p><u>Required:</u>  Martha Nussbaum, “Non-relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach,” in Sher, <i>Ethics</i>, pp. 446-459. (Excerpt, TBA closer to Week 8.)</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u></p>

		<p>Alasdair MacIntyre, “Nietzsche or Aristotle,” and “The Virtues in Heroic Societies,” Chapters 9 and 10 of <i>After Virtue</i>.</p> <p>Rosalind Hursthouse and Glen Pettigrove, “Virtue Ethics,” <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i>, 2016. URL: <a href="https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-virtue/#ObjVirtEthi">https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-virtue/#ObjVirtEthi</a></p>
11	Quiz and Criticisms of Virtue Theory	<p><b>QUIZ 2</b>, based on material discussed in Weeks 5-10.</p> <p><u>Required:</u> Kwame Anthony Appiah, “The Case against Character,” <i>Experiments in Ethics</i>, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 33-42.</p>
12	Classical Indian Moral Philosophy -- Introduction	<p><u>Required:</u> Roy W. Perrett, “Value,” Chapter 1 of <i>An Introduction to Indian Philosophy</i>, Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 46-88.</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u> Stuart Gray and Thomas Hughes, “Gandhi’s Devotional Political Thought,” <i>Philosophy East and West</i>, 65:2, 2015; pp. 375-400. (This will be used in class; excerpt, TBA.)</p>
13	Duty, Virtue and Character in the BG	<p><u>Required:</u> Bina Gupta, “Bhagavad Gītā as Duty and Virtue Ethics: Some Reflections,” <i>The Journal of Religious Ethics</i>, 34:3, 2006, pp. 373-395. (Excerpt, TBA.) Bimal Krishna Matilal, “Kṛṣṇa: In Defence of a Devious Divinity,” <i>Ethics and Epics</i>, Oxford University Press, 2002; pp. 91-108.</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u> Bina Gupta, “The Bhagavad Gītā,” Part VII of <i>An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge and Freedom</i>, New York: Routledge, 2021; pp. 321-343.</p>
14	Morality, Perfection(s) and the Other: The Ethics of Early Buddhism	<p><u>Required:</u> Jay L. Garfield, “Ethics: Abandon the Self to Abandon the Ego,” Chapter 7 of <i>Losing Ourselves: Learning to Live without a Self</i>, Princeton University Press, 2022; pp. 108-118. Mark Siderits, “Buddhist Ethics,” Chapter 4 of <i>Buddhism as Philosophy</i>, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2007; pp. 69-84.</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u> Jay L. Garfield, “The Self,” Chapter 4 of <i>Engaging Buddhism: Why it Matters to Philosophy</i>, Oxford University Press, pp. 104-133. Mark Siderits, “Non-Self: Empty Persons,” Chapter 3 of <i>Buddhism as Philosophy</i>, pp. 32-69.</p>

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