

25503 - Ethical theories

Syllabus Information

Academic year: 2024/25

Subject: 25503 - Ethical theories

Faculty / School: 103 - Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Degree: 269 - Degree in Philosophy
587 - Degree in Philosophy

ECTS: 6.0

Year: 1

Semester: Second semester

Subject type: Basic Education

Module:

1. General information

The subject aims to introduce students to reflection on the meaning and value of human action. This reflection can serve as a guiding thread for a journey through the history of philosophy, but the focus of this subject is not intended to be merely historical, but rather to underline the topicality of the questions of ethics.

The subject is related to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations Agenda 2030 : Goal 4: Quality Education; Goal 5: Gender Equality; Goal 10: Reducing Inequalities; Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities; Goal 12: Responsible Production and Consumption; Goal 13: Action for Climate Action; Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

2. Learning results

To understand the most important concepts and theories of the history of philosophy, relating them to others of the same or different periods.

To construct and critique formal and informal arguments, recognizing their strength or weakness and any relevant fallacies.

To interpret philosophical texts, placing them within their cultural context and intellectual traditions.

To analyse the structure of complex and controversial problems, detecting, formulating and proposing alternative approaches to philosophical problems in various fields of society, science and culture

To value human actions ethically and politically in the various public and private spheres in which they take place, knowing their fundamental dimensions and conditions

To document by diverse means, knowing how to look for the most important data in the original sources and in the commentaries coming from philosophy, science and other branches of culture, or from experience itself

To review new or unfamiliar ideas with an open mind and a willingness to change one's own ideas when they appear to be wrong or detrimental.

To engage with the concerns of everyday life, examining problems characteristic of practical reason (issues of political and ethical debate) while remaining sensitive to the diversity of opinions.

To write articles, comments and reports on problems and various activities, as well as to express them orally, making their own reasoned judgments and proposing alternatives

To work autonomously and organize the work by making methodological decisions.

3. Syllabus

[1]. Introduction.

1. The problems of Ethics. Ancient ethics and modern ethics.
2. A classification of ethical theories.

[2]. Preliminary discussion of some theories: religious ethics, amoralism, subjectivism, relativism.

[3]. Attempts at a rational foundation of morality.

1. Contractualism: Th. Hobbes.
2. Rationalism: I. Kant.

[4]. Two rivals of Kantian ethics.

1. Ethics of compassion: A. Schopenhauer.
2. Utilitarianism: J. Bentham and J. S. Mill.

[5]. Excursus: ethics and animals. P. Singer, T. Regan, F. de Waal.

[6]. Contemporary ethics.

1. An overview of 20th century ethics.
2. Contemporary Kantian ethics: the discourse ethics of J. Habermas and K.-O. Apel.

4. Academic activities

The subject is based on the acquisition of contents taught in the theoretical classes, but also on the work of reading, commentary and analysis of texts carried out autonomously by the students. Occasionally, seminar or text commentary sessions will be held in class with presentations by the students.

5. Assessment system

First call: global assessment test (exam) on the date set in the official calendar. The exam will have three parts: (1) questions on lecture content and subject reading texts (65% of the grade). (2) Questions and/or comments on a required reading book set by the teacher at the beginning of the term (20% of the grade). (3) One or more text commentary tests. (15% of the grade) Students who have handed in all the text commentaries during the term will be exempted from this part of the exam. In order to pass the subject it is essential to pass each of the three parts of the exam independently. **CRITERIA FOR THE TEST ASSESSMENT:** The knowledge of the topics of the subject, the capacity of written expression (without spelling mistakes) and linguistic maturity, the ability to synthesize and explain the information in an orderly manner, the capacity of critical reflection on the topics will be valued

Second call: global assessment test identical to the previous one.

6. Sustainable Development Goals

- 4 - Quality Education
- 5 - Gender Equality
- 10 - Reduction of Inequalities