

PHI 2630: Ethical Issues and Life Choices
Florida State University

Course Description

From the FSU bulletin: "This course draws on ethical theories to explore the major ethical issues that one faces as one makes decisions about the kinds of activities to engage in and the kind of life to lead. Issues such as those involving life and death (e.g., abortion, euthanasia, animal rights) and social justice (e.g. discrimination, responsibility to future generations) are examined."

This course will be taught as an introduction to critical thinking about ethics that builds from learning the basics of ethical theories to applying those theories to specific ethical issues.

First, we will begin the course with an introduction to basic terminology, virtue ethics, Kantianism, utilitarianism, and contractarianism. To facilitate understanding and prevent this coursework from being overly abstract, we will apply these four theories, as they are introduced, to an issue in the domain of sexual ethics. This semester, those topics include pornography, sexual consent, having children, and same-sex marriage.

With this groundwork in place, we can now explore a wider variety of ethical issues. For each additional issue considered (namely, those outside of sexual ethics), we will read and discuss two philosophers who disagree about the topic. This semester, our additional topics include global poverty, immigration, hate speech, illicit drugs, euthanasia, abortion, and animal rights.