

CORE 202
Topics in Ethical Inquiry

1. Catalog Entry

CORE 202
Topics in Ethical Inquiry

Three hours lecture (3).

Prerequisite: CORE 201

Further development in students' skills in technology, reading, writing, oral communication, research, and critical thinking. This course includes a broad introduction to ethical theories and methods of ethical reasoning. Students will strengthen their skills in the recognition, analysis, and evaluation of written and oral arguments. Students will critique texts and create their own sustained line of reasoning regarding an ethical topic.

2. Detailed Description of Content of Course

This course continues the emphasis of the Core sequence on the composing process, the relationship between reading, thinking, writing, and speaking, and on the rhetorical principles that inform successful oral and written communication. Students will become familiar with the major methods of ethical reasoning, including rule-based reasoning, cost-benefit analysis, and reasoning rooted in the examination of character traits. Students will research and evaluate the ethical arguments supporting the viewpoints in a major ethical issue, ultimately creating arguments of their own to support an ethical conviction.

The course will include a major project that requires students to research a topic, understand the major viewpoints that surround it, select one viewpoint, and create a piece of communication designed for ethical reasoning. In the course of the researched argument project, students will continue to hone their skills in research as inquiry, using both scholarly sources to gather information on a topic and then to use that information as evidence to support both oral arguments and extended written arguments. Students will continue to develop their skill in the use of sources, learning to integrate source information and arguments into the extended chain of reasoning they will create in their public projects.

Students will also continue to develop their reading skills by analyzing and critiquing multiple literary or rhetorical texts as expressions of ethical viewpoints and arguments. In the process of such critique, students will learn to evaluate differing views on various ethical issues, to grasp the impact of world-views on claims to truth, and to apply methods of intellectual objectivity.

3. Detailed Description of Conduct of Course

Each section of the course will be designed around a theme chosen by the instructor that will guide the choice of readings, assignment topics, and other classroom activities. Course themes are selected to promote ethical inquiry and develop skills in oral communication, written communication, information literacy and technology literacy.

The University Core A Handbook is a required text. Instructors may choose additional readings in order to develop the theme of the course.

Required projects for course completion:

Textual Analysis Project - 202

In this project, students will apply the skills they have developed through the previous textual analysis projects to a critique of conflicting ethical arguments on a major ethical issue which they will cast in an argument essay, citing and documenting the arguments used.

Group Project and Presentation - 202

In this project, students will work in a small group to examine the significant aspects of a major ethical issue and how different methods of ethical reasoning would approach the issue. Students will collaborate on the research and participate in a group presentation.

Multimedia Project - 202

Students will create a multimedia project related to the course theme. Multimedia projects should model proper use of copyrighted materials.

Reading Logs - 202

Throughout the semester students will critically read and respond to a series of texts according to the instructor's guidelines. Reading logs are intended to provide students with opportunities to engage with the texts, encouraging the application of ethical theories and methods of ethical reasoning.

4. Goals and Objectives of the Course.

This course combines the goals and objectives of the four Core A areas, which are to be fulfilled by the entire Core A sequence. Developmental outcomes for each course have been constructed according to these goals:

Upon completion of University Core A, Radford University students will have achieved competency in four key concept areas: written communications, oral communication, critical thinking, and technology/information literacy.

Goal 1: Radford University students will demonstrate competency in critical reading, standard written English, audience-specific writing, clear and effective prose, and other elements of composition.

Radford University students will be able to:

- effectively use standard written English (including grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure) to construct a thesis-driven essay supported by reasonable arguments
- demonstrate the writing process through invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, proofreading, and presentation
- choose appropriate genres and styles when writing for a variety of different audiences
- describe and evaluate critically a variety of print and other sources, synthesize and document material appropriately, and avoid plagiarism when developing a research paper

Goal 2: Radford University students will be able to communicate orally in clear and coherent language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience.

Radford University students will be able to:

- identify and explain components of and influences on the communication process in interpersonal, small group, and public speaking contexts
- demonstrate effective listening and critical analysis skills in interpersonal, small group, and public speaking contexts
- identify and apply communication strategies appropriate to audiences in interpersonal, small group, and public speaking contexts
- identify and demonstrate communication skills appropriate in interpersonal, small group, and public speaking contexts

Goal 3: Radford University students will learn to distinguish knowledge from opinion, challenge ideas, and develop reasonable strategies for belief formation.

Radford University students will be able to:

- apply the processes of deduction, induction, and other key elements of logical reasoning
- create a well-reasoned argument by evaluating the validity of ideas and information, providing evidence and support, and arguing against competing claims when applicable
- analyze issues, solve problems, and apply reasoning to everyday situations
- evaluate written and verbal arguments by discerning any logical fallacies, distinguishing between documented fact and opinion, examining explicit and implicit assumptions, and assessing the use of evidence to draw inferences and conclusions

Goal 4: Radford University students will be able to acquire, analyze, and synthesize digital and print information and explain how digital information is organized and communicated.

Radford University students will be able to:

- explain contemporary technological trends and issues
- utilize industry standard technologies as appropriate for academic purposes
- identify economic, societal, legal, privacy, and ethical considerations for using and sharing digital and print information
- demonstrate the use of basic research techniques to locate information from a variety of electronic and print sources
- apply appropriate modes of inquiry to evaluate digital and print information in terms of credibility, reliability, and accuracy

5. Assessment Measures

Students will produce formal and informal texts, spoken and written, which will be graded according to a set of rubrics designed with the outcomes in mind. For program assessment, a designated set of assignments will be gathered of the students' work to be assessed at the completion of the Core A sequence.

6. Other Course Information

7. Review and Approval

Date Action	Reviewed by
May 2010	Susan Van Patten