

Course Expectation Resource Sheet - PHI 115

“What can students expect if they choose this course?”

Course: PHI 115 - Ethics and Contemporary Issues

Department: Political Science and Philosophy

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisite: 12 credit hours

Catalog Description: This course examines ethical principles and theories in relation to contemporary moral issues (e.g. euthanasia, capital punishment, economic justice, environmental issues, world hunger). Through a consideration of ideals of justice and human dignity, as well as concepts of rights and responsibilities, it also explores the moral requirements for community and justified political order.

Catalog: 2025-2026 **Last Updated:** 2/24/2026

Gen Ed Course: Yes

Gen Ed Area: PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Gen Ed Requirement: Public Issues (GEC 116)

CORE-42 Course: Yes

CORE-42 Area: Social & Behavioral Sciences

MOTR Code - MOTR Title: PHIL 102 -
Introduction to Ethics

Is credit also available through:

Advanced Placement (AP)?: No

College Level Exam Program (CLEP)?: No

International Baccalaureate (IB)?: No

(click link for more information and required scores)

Responses and Advice from Department Representatives

*Please refer to your individual class syllabus for details and communicate regularly
with your teacher for specific questions and concerns.*

Last Updated: 8/18/2026

The following responses apply to: Both online and seated courses.

What expectations do you have for students in this course?

Expectations for students include basic cognitive skills associated with reading and writing at a collegiate level, as well as basic study habits including keeping up with and engaging the material presented in class.

What types of study skills do you expect students to use in this course?

Study skills that are crucial for success in this class include listening, note-taking, and repeated review of the material.

What study techniques seem to work best for students who do well in this course?

What certainly does not work well are techniques like skimming, cramming, and the like. To succeed in this course, there must be active engagement with the material. Successful techniques include the consistent review of material, group study, etc.

What behaviors or habits seem to cause students to struggle in this course? What types of struggles do you see most often? What recommendations do you give to students who struggle in this course? What other advice do you offer to students for success in this course?

Lack of attendance and lack of active engagement while in class (especially a lack of note-taking) often causes students to struggle. If one is not present or, even if one is, if one is not engaged with the material, then poor performance is much more likely. In addition to these, poor communication with the instructor when unforeseen circumstances arise can also result in suboptimal performance. We are here to help you succeed and communication is essential for this. Students often either do not communicate at all with the instructor or communicate too late in the semester. In addition, struggling students often also do not take advantage of office hours (even if via Zoom) and thus lose opportunities to improve their comprehension of the material and their performance in the course. To succeed you must attend, engage, and communicate.

How do you describe the course to students when they ask “What is this class about?” (without using the catalog description)?

The class is designed to increase students’ agency in asking and answering questions involving ethical issues by both providing an overview of the theoretical landscape and also digging into various real-world issues and applying theory to practice.

Beyond meeting a General Education requirement, what benefits can students realize from choosing this course?

Ethical questions confront us every day, whether in our personal or professional capacities or simply as citizens of a modern democratic nation-state. Having a greater philosophical awareness of the theoretical and practical aspects of ethics will give students greater agency in both understanding ethical issues and making decisions regarding solutions. In short, the class helps students become more self-aware persons and citizens, consistent with Missouri State’s Public Affairs mission.

Other than your major/minor/certificate students, what groups of students could find this course relevant to their degree program or career path?

Given the universal scope of ethical questions, challenges, and the need to make informed judgements about them, all students at Missouri State will find this course relevant to their degree path.

*Prepared by the Reynolds College Center for Student Success
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