

# Ethics and Culture

## HUM 103

### Residential Semester

*“For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.”*

– Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

#### **Name of Instructors and email address:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>
Mr. Farid Ahmed	fahmed@bracu.ac.bd
Md.Sayeedul Islam Khan	sayeedul@bracu.ac.bd
Rudmila Mahbub	rudmila@ bracu.ac.bd
Saudia Islam	saudiaislam@bracu.ac.bd
Md. Mostafizur Rahman	mostafizur.rahman@ bracu.ac.bd
Tanjin Afrose	tanjin.afrose@bracu.ac.bd
Adiba Sultana Mim	adiba.sultana@bracu.ac.bd

**Office Hour: 09:00am to 03:30pm**

#### **I. Rationale:**

The main focus of the course is to evaluate and bring out the goodness or badness of voluntary human behavior in the context of local and global cultural milieu. The course includes the evolution of the ideas of morality through ages. Students will be familiarized with the dominating ethical theories of morality in such a way so that they can prepare themselves intellectually and morally to handle the pressing ethical issues of practical life. Ethical theories are taught through case studies which help students to think from different dimensions of a problem to figure out better solutions. In case study, critical analysis, investigate local and global issues of importance will make students aware of the complex understanding of ethical dilemmas. Moreover, to enhance students' communication skill and technical literacy they are expected to express their learning on moral issue through logical arguments in synthesis presentation and drama demonstration.

## **II. Course Aims and Outcomes:**

The core aim of the course is to develop moral ideas of some influential philosophers from the ancient time through modern and up to contemporary period. Particular emphasis is given to the ideas of philosophers like Aristotle, Confucius, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Immanuel Kant, John Rawls and Aldo Leopold.

### **Aims**

The course is divided into the following three parts:

1. Personal Development
2. Normative Ethical Theories and Moral Education
3. The practical issues of morality

In the first part, *The Seven Habits for Highly Effective People* will be discussed in the class to enhance students' leadership skills through personal development and skills so that they can take the right decision when they face dilemmas in their personal life and finally become ethical and functional leaders, which is the ultimate goal of the course. In the second part, classes will begin by introducing ethics and gradually proceed with the evolution of the eastern and western ideas and main theories of morality.

Finally, classes will focus on the practical issues of morality and values in the light of moral theories like gender ethics, media ethics and environmental ethics which will help the students to resolve ethical dilemmas in their personal, professional and social life.

### **Course Objectives:**

The main objectives of the course are to:

- provide a general introduction to ethics, culture and morality
- describe a historical perspective of ethics
- analyze the basic concepts and theories of ethics
- develop the understanding of ethical dilemmas and to formulate defensible solutions to the dilemmas
- examine different moral theories and their applications to a variety of important moral issues through moral education.
- address the contemporary crucial ethical issues in the world
- develop better understanding of the rightness and wrongness of human action.

## Specific Learning Outcomes

The course will examine a broad range of ethical issues based on three thematic stands i.e. personal development, ethical theories and practical implications of those theories. Precisely this course will help the students to

- a. Develop global thinking skill so that students are more confident in:
  - identifying individual responsibilities in a diverse society.
  - acquiring the art of good living in a pluralistic society
  - considering diverse cultural and socio-political contexts
  - shaping their decision making approaches as a part of the significant global entity
- b. Develop critical thinking skill in order to:
  - ask questions about what they read, discuss and what they hear
  - appropriate application of ethical theories to solve contemporary social problems
  - widen students' perspective of how they see and understand ideas and moral issues
  - see coherent relationships among ideas, decision making processes and judgments
- c. Develop communication skill and technical competency so that students are more skilled and confident in:
  - negotiating different opinions during the group work.
  - sharing opinion which is both constructive and logical
  - using electronic medium to create proper visual and graphic effects

## III. Format and Procedures:

- **Attendance for all classes is mandatory.** Students should remember that they will not be allowed to take the midterm and final examinations unless they have at least 90% attendance.  
It is expected that students are punctual and attend the entire class; if they are more than 5 minutes late for a class, they will be marked as an absent. Students arriving late for 3 classes will be registered as absent for one day. Students absent for 4 days will be withdrawn from the course.
- **Reading material:** Students are advised to go through the reading material before each class and participate during the class hours.
- **Students must sign up in one RS activity** and marks will be added in this course.

## Classroom Manner

- Class room behavior should be maintained as per Social Capital. It is the students' duty to maintain discipline in the classroom.
- Disciplinary actions may be taken as per the rules of the Institution in case of any violation. Copying and cheating during examinations are considered offences. Warnings will be given and on the second warning, one may be dismissed from the course.

- Plagiarism is an offence. Plagiarized works will be punished.
- Two quizzes will be taken. There will not be any makeup exam for the quizzes.

**IV. Assumption**

This course assumes that while going through the personal development part of the course students will be more confident and effective regarding daily life activities. Moreover, after learning different prominent ethical theories both from western and eastern continents will enhance their critical thinking ability. Finally, by studying the practical part of the course they will be more aware about contemporary global issues like gender, media, environment etc.

**V. Course Requirements:**

1. Bringing reading material, pen and paper is mandatory in the class
2. For missing each class attendance 0.25 and for each seminar 1 mark will be deducted
3. Going through the content before attending class is must
4. Practice and demonstrate ethical behavior as well as maintaining and promoting generated social capital norms
5. Maintain required consultation and tutorial class hours.

**VI. Grading Procedures:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz ..... 10%</li> <li>• Synthesis Presentation..... 05%</li> <li>• Mid-term Examination..... 20%</li> <li>• Final Examination ..... 25%</li> <li>• Class Attendance.....05%</li> <li>• Seminar on Drug.....01%</li> <li>• Seminar on Diversity.....01%</li> <li>• Stage Drama Attendance .....01%</li> <li>• Activity Participation .....02%</li> <li>• Class participation and Mannerism.....2.5%</li> <li>• Personal Discipline.....2.5%</li> <li>• Drama Presentation.....05%</li> </ul>	80%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viva.....10%</li> <li>• Social Learning Lab Practical(5) and Reflection Presentation(5).....10%</li> </ul>	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## **VII. Academic Integrity**

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the BRAC University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit must be the student's own work.

Students are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lecture with other students. You can give "consulting" help to or receive "consulting" help from such students. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an e-mail, an e-mail attachment file, a diskette, or a hard copy.

If copying occurs, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will automatically receive 'F' (Fail) grade for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended including failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

During examinations, you must do your own work. Talking or discussion is not permitted during the examinations, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any collaborative behavior during the examinations will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

## **VIII. Accommodations for students with disabilities**

Individual tutorial and make-up examinations are generally arranged for disable and seriously sick or injured students. In addition to that other special facility is also taken i.e. arranging examination at medical centre.

## **IX. Inclusivity Statement**

We understand that our students represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspective. This course is committed to provide an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While learning together we suggest all students to:

- a. share their unique experiences, values and beliefs.
- b. be open to the views of others.
- c. honor the uniqueness of everybody.
- d. value each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner.
- e. use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the RS community.

## X. Lecture Schedule

Lecture no.	Dates/ Lecture Topic	Type of class
1	January 09  Ice-breaking and Introduction to Ethics and Culture	Introductory class
2	January 14 The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paradigm Shift</li> <li>• The Maturity Continuum</li> <li>• Habit 1: Be Proactive</li> <li>• Habit 2: Begin With The End In Mind</li> <li>• Habit 3: Put First Things First</li> <li>• Habit 4: Think Win-Win</li> <li>• Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood</li> <li>• Habit 6: Synergize</li> <li>• Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw</li> </ul>	Personal Development Class
3	January 16  Virtue Ethics: Flourishing, Excellence and Good Life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traits of character make one a good person</li> <li>• The function of a human being</li> <li>• The Golden Mean</li> <li>• How virtuous persons act according to the virtues they inherit</li> </ul>	Personal Development Class
4	January 21  Asian Philosophy: Confucious <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Confucious defined ‘Good Life’</li> <li>• Interpret the meanings of several Confucian teachings.</li> </ul>	Personal Development Class

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the Good ruler should be.</li> </ul>	
5	<p>January 23</p> <p>What Is Empathy, and Why Is It Important?</p>	Personal Development Class
6	<p>January 28</p> <p>Basics of Ethics and Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of ethics</li> <li>• The Difference between Ethics and Morality</li> <li>• Etiquette and Manner Vs. Morality</li> <li>• How morality is understood as the moral institution of life</li> <li>• The difference between Customary morality, Religion, and Ethics</li> <li>• Cultural Relativism Vs. Universalism</li> </ul>	Introduction of Ethics
7	<p>January 30</p> <p>Utilitarianism: Basics (Act Utilitarianism)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Origin of Bentham’s Utilitarianism</li> <li>• The definition of happiness in terms of pleasure and pain</li> <li>• Hedonistic Calculus: The way to measure happiness</li> </ul> <p>Utilitarianism: Basics (Rule Utilitarianism)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criticisms of Bentham: Difficulties of calculation(Proof based on bad arguments)</li> <li>• Ideas of John Stuart Mill: The idea of quality happiness</li> </ul>	Theory Class
8	<p>February 04</p> <p>Duty Ethics: Duties and obligation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Concept of Supreme Principle of Morality</li> <li>• The Good Will</li> <li>• Duty and Emotion- Kantian sense of duty</li> <li>• Maxim</li> <li>• Kant’s view of the categorical imperative and hypothetical imperative</li> </ul>	Theory Class
<b>Midterm Examination</b>		

09	<p>February 06</p> <p>Justice, Equality and Fairness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept of justice as fairness</li> <li>• The concept the Original Position and the Veil of Ignorance</li> <li>• John Rawls' Principles of Justice</li> </ul>	Theory Class
10	<p>February 11</p> <p>Communitarianism: Obligation to the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communitarianism and the critique of Rawls' Liberalism</li> <li>• Liberal conception and the Communitarian critique of self</li> <li>• Communitarianism: an application of our own rights and rights of others</li> <li>• Obligation and social responsibilities: the social self and value commitments</li> </ul>	Theory Class
11	<p>February 13</p> <p>Drama on Contemporary Moral Issues</p>	Practical Class
12	<p>February 25</p> <p>Media Ethics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The actual, possible or apprehended instances of unethical, unlawful, unfair or inaccurate media coverage and journalistic activity (including instances of bias or misrepresentation) judged against recognized ethical standards and the law</li> <li>• The legal and ethical context and effect of relevant law, guidelines, policies and codes of practice of media on our society</li> </ul>	Theory and Practical Class
13	<p>February 27</p> <p>Gender Ethics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinction between gender and sex</li> <li>• Terminologies related to gender</li> <li>• Application of the ethical theories to gender</li> </ul>	Theory and Practical Class

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four options regarding gender and ethics</li> </ul>	
14	<p>March 04</p> <p>Environmental Ethics and Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental ethics</li> <li>• Different approaches of environment ethics</li> <li>• The application of ethical theories to save the environment</li> </ul> <p>National and global ethical obligation to deal with global warming and other environmental problems.</p>	Theory and Practical Class
15	<p>March 06</p> <p>Ethical Dilemmas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is ethical dilemma</li> <li>• Analyzing and Assessing moral dilemmas with the application of moral reasoning</li> </ul>	Practical Class
16 and 17	<p>March 11 &amp; 13</p> <p>Synthesis learning by the students</p>	Presentation Class
18	<p>March 18</p> <p>Social Learning Lab Reflection (This class would be conducted immediately after the practical session)</p>	Presentation Class
<b>Final Examination</b>		

## **Evaluation:**

Evaluation will be based on the following (refer to Marks Distribution Table and Assessment) criteria:

- **Group /Individual Participation:** In the very first class, faculty, along with the students, will make student profile for each student to evaluate their participation and mannerism in different classroom activities.
- **Class and Seminar Attendance:** 5 marks allocated
- **Quizzes:** Two quizzes will be taken throughout the whole semester. One will be taken before midterm exam and the other will be taken after midterm exam. The pattern of the quiz question will be decided based on the contents of the course. (Quiz will carry 10 marks).
- **Synthesis presentation:** Students in different groups will synthesize their learning through presentation before final exam, based on the syllabus of course.
- **Social Learning Lab:** 10 marks will be allocated for Social Learning Lab, 5 marks for verbal reflection and 5 marks for practical participation.
- **Drama Presentation:** Student will perform a drama on moral issue at the middle of the course and it will be group performance.
- **Viva:** At the end of the course, there will be a formal viva to evaluate the understanding of the theories and different aspects of the course. 10 marks are allocated for it.
- **Midterm examination**
- **Final examination**

## **Course Policy:**

Students must read the reading materials thoroughly before attending any class to make the class learner centered as the teacher will work as a facilitator.

- Regular Attendance is mandatory.
- Students who would be selected for tutorial sessions must have 70% attendance (in tutorial classes) in order to sit for the Final Examination. In class, 90% attendance is mandatory.
- Students will not be allowed to enter 5 minutes after the class starts.

- Dates for quizzes/exams/submission of reflection paper will be announced well in advance.
- Plagiarism – the use of materials produced by others without acknowledging the source – is a serious academic offence. Teachers will provide guidelines for citing different types of sources and the students are required to follow them throughout the course. If a student’s paper is found with plagiarized information, s/he will definitely be penalized with an F grade.

### **Rubrics for answering question**

- Answer to the point precisely, without irrelevant details
- Write in your own words
- Response/logic should be clear with appropriate supporting ideas
- Appropriate ideas with examples, and ONE example from personal experience
- Reflect deeper understanding through comparison/contrast to other texts, experience and knowledge
- Language should be grammatically correct
- Use of transitions
- Address most aspects of the question of the moral principles
- Evaluate with sound reasons and explain with appropriate examples from personal experience and knowledge
- Refers to other texts and generalizations, and uses proper reference to the advocator of the thought
- Use of relevant terminology
- Correct use of language and Spelling

### **Rubrics for Social Learning Lab Reflection Session**

The reflection presentation should be based on these areas:

- Your feelings about the role you played (1 mark)
- Lessons learned (1 mark)
- How is ethics related to your role? (2 marks)
- What ethical changes would you like to bring in your life? (1 mark)

## **Rubrics for giving marks**

**\*\*Active/Spontaneous participation will be taken into account.**

Areas, mentioned below, will be taken in account for evaluating reflection presentation:

- Understanding about social learning lab and its objectives
- Students' feelings and learning
- Presentation Skill (Fluency, body language, accuracy, eye contact)
- Usage of the methods/materials
- Time Management
- Handling questions