

Syllabus - Summer 2026

June 1 – July 2, 2026

Syllabus information may be subject to change. The most up-to-date syllabus is located within the course in HuskyCT.

Course and Instructor Information

Course Title: Philosophy and Social Ethics (PHIL 1104)

Format: online asynchronous via HuskyCT

Instructor: Megha Arora

Office Hours/Availability: Please e-mail the instructor to make an appointment.

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: none

Email: megha.arora@uconn.edu

Course Materials

No textbooks required for this course. All readings will be either on or accessible via links from HuskyCT.

Course Description

Welcome to Philosophy and Social Ethics (PHIL 1104)! This course introduces major approaches in applied ethics through a writing- and discussion-based format. We begin with virtue ethics, deontology, and utilitarianism, and apply them to issues in technology, environment, bioethics, war, and interpersonal life. Students engage with both classical and contemporary texts to understand how ethical reasoning works in real-world contexts. The course is structured as an ongoing process of development through journal entries, discussions, and reflection papers. Writing is built through revision, allowing students to refine and strengthen their ideas over time. The course emphasizes critical thinking, intellectual engagement, and applying philosophy to contemporary issues. This course meets CA 1.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand key ideas from both classical and non-Western ethical traditions.
2. Explain and compare the three major ethical theories: virtue ethics, deontology, and utilitarianism
3. Apply philosophical ideas to think through complex, real-world problems.
4. Analyze ethical issues in technology, including social media, AI, and the responsibilities of engineers.
5. Reflect on environmental ethics, including our relationship with nature and animals.
6. Understand and evaluate ethical questions in bioethics and medicine.
7. Critically examine ethical issues related to war and global conflicts.
8. Use ethical thinking to reflect on personal and interpersonal life, including relationships and everyday decisions.

Course Outline

Module 0: Course Orientation; Some ancient texts around the world

Module 1: Ethical Concepts–Virtue Ethics, Deontology,

Module 2: Ethical Concepts continued–Utilitarianism

Module 3: Technology Ethics–Social Media and AI;
Responsibility of Engineers

Module 4: Environmental Ethics–Land Ethics &
Environmental Injustice Movement

Module 5: Bio Ethics

Module 6: War Ethics

Module 7: Interpersonal Ethics

Module 8: Final Paper

Course Components and Weightage

1. Participation Tasks–20% (*this includes Journal Entries, Discussion Posts, and Comments only*): Participation consists of regular engagement with the professor and your peers through journal entries, discussion posts, and comments. These tasks are essential to the structure of the course and support your development as a writer and thinker. **There are 22 participation tasks. Your best 20 count toward your participation grade (20%). Each task is graded on a pass/fail basis. A pass requires timely submission and reasonable engagement. Missing more than two tasks will lower your participation grade proportionally.** To receive credit (Pass/1 point), a submission must be completed on time and demonstrate reasonable effort and engagement with the material. Submissions that are missing, incomplete, or show minimal or superficial effort may not receive credit (Fail/zero point). Journal entries help you begin developing your ideas, discussion posts allow you to articulate and

test those ideas, and comments enable you to refine your thinking through engagement with others. Together, these activities form the foundation for your reflection papers. *The instructor reserves the right to evaluate the quality of submissions when determining whether work meets course expectations.*

2. **Reflection Papers (4)--40%:** Reflection papers are short papers developed from your participation tasks. Seven reflection papers are scheduled. **You are required to submit any four**, including the papers for **Module 3 and Module 4 (required)**. Each paper is worth 10% of the final grade. Please note: these papers are not meant to be written from scratch. Instead, they are revised and improved versions of your participation tasks. You are expected to refine your ideas, strengthen your argument, and present a clearer and more developed position.

3. **Final Paper--20%:** The final paper is a cumulative assignment that builds on the work you have done throughout the course. You will develop a clear, structured, and well-supported argument using ideas that have emerged from your journal entries, discussions, and reflection papers. This paper is an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to synthesize course material and present a more sustained and polished piece of writing.

4. **Final Exam--20%:** The final exam is a cumulative assessment of your factual understanding of the course material. It will consist of **20 multiple-choice questions (MCQs)**, with each question worth **1 point**. The exam is designed to test your familiarity with key concepts, arguments, and themes discussed throughout the course. The exam will be open for 24 hours, but it is designed to be completed in approximately 30–45 minutes.

How the course works

This course follows a repeating cycle where each activity builds on the previous one. You will move from reading → journal entry → discussion post → comments → reflection paper.

- Readings introduce key ideas (take notes—they will help your writing).
- Journal entries are informal—use them to explore your thoughts.
- Discussion posts develop your ideas more clearly.
- Comments help you refine your thinking by engaging with others.
- Reflection papers are revised versions of your earlier work (not written from scratch).

When the schedule says “work on feedback”, use that time to improve your ideas and writing.

The course is designed so you build and improve your work over time—you are not expected to be perfect at the start, but to engage consistently and develop stronger arguments.

Course Schedule for Phil 1104 (Summer 2026: 6/1--7/2)

(M=module) (PT= Participation Tasks)	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Wk 1: 6/1-6/5	06/1	06/02	06/03	06/04	06/05
Complete by noon	Read: Module 0 (Welcome)	Read: Module 1 (M1)	M1: Write Discussion Post PT 3	M1: Reflection Paper due	M2: Write Journal Entry PT5
Complete by midnight	M0: Write Discussion Post PT 1	M1: Write Journal Entry PT 2	M1: Write Discussion Comment PT 4	Read: Module 2 Take the course readiness quiz	M2: Write Discussion Post PT6
Week 2: 6/8-6/12	6/8	6/9	6/10	6/11	6/12
Complete by noon	M2: Write Discussion Comment PT 7	M2: Reflection Paper due	M3: Write Journal Entry PT 8	M3: Write Discussion Comment PT 10	M3: Reflection Paper due (Required))
Complete by midnight	M2: Work on feedback from the journal entry to continue writing the paper	Read: Module 3	M3: Write Discussion Post PT 9	M3: Work on feedback from the journal entry to continue writing the paper	Read: Module 4
Week 3: 6/15-6/19	6/15	6/16	6/17	6/18	6/19
Complete by noon	M4: Write Journal Entry PT 11	M4: Write Discussion Comment PT 13	M4: Reflection Paper due (Required) Take the midterm survey	M5: Write Journal Entry PT 14	M5: Write Discussion Comment PT 16
Complete by midnight	M4: Write Discussion Post PT 12	M4: Work on feedback from the journal entry to continue writing the paper	Read: Module 5	M5: Write Discussion Post PT 15	M5: Reflection Paper due
Week 4: 6/22-6/26	6/22	6/23	6/24	6/25	6/26
Complete by noon	Read: Module 6	M6: Write Discussion Post PT 18	M6: Work on feedback from the journal entry to continue writing the paper	Read: Module 7	M7: Write Discussion Post PT 21

Complete by midnight	M6: <i>Write</i> Journal Entry PT 17	M6: <i>Write</i> Discussion Comment PT 19	M6: <i>Reflection</i> Paper due	M7: <i>Write</i> Journal Entry PT 20	M7: <i>Write</i> Discussion Comment PT 22
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Week 5: 6/29-7/03	6/29	6/30	7/01	7/2	7/03
Complete by noon	M7: Work on feedback from the journal entry to continue writing the paper	M8: <i>Read: Module 8</i> , Start working on Final paper	M8: Continued Writing	Final Exam will be online at Noon	Final exam will be closed at Noon
Complete by midnight	M7: <i>Reflection Paper</i> due	M8: Continued Writing	M8: Final paper, submit	Take the final exam	Grades will be in ENJOY!!

Please note that students are expected to meet virtually via Collaborate with the instructor (15 min. time slots) to authenticate themselves. Those meetings will take place either at the end of Week I or the beginning of Week II of the course. A sign-up sheet will be provided.

Due Dates and Late Policy

All course due dates are identified in the above schedule. Deadlines are based on Eastern Time; if you are in a different time zone, please adjust your submission times accordingly. The instructor reserves the right to change dates accordingly as the semester progresses. All changes will be communicated in an appropriate manner.

Late Policy: Late assignments will not be accepted, as they will not meet specifications. Students will instead need to expend a token to have the assignment evaluated.

Feedback and Grades

I will make every effort to provide feedback and assessments of submitted work within 24 hours of its submission. To keep track of your performance in the course, refer to My Grades in HuskyCT.

Learning Tokens and how they work: Learning tokens (or just ‘tokens’ for short), each student begins the term with two tokens, and may earn a third by passing the course readiness quiz with a 90% grade or higher. Then, you may expend a token if you ever find that you’ve submitted an assignment that does not meet specifications for that assignment. By expending a token, you are then allowed to submit that assignment a second time. You must also use a token to gain permission to submit an assignment after the due date. To use a token, email the instructor.

Weekly Time Commitment

You should expect to dedicate 25-30 hours a week to this course. This expectation is based on the various course activities, assignments, and assessments and the University of Connecticut’s policy regarding credit hours. More information related to hours per week per credit can be accessed at the [Online Student website](#).

Student Authentication and Verification

The University of Connecticut is required to verify the identity of students who participate in online courses and to establish that students who register in an online course are the same students who participate in and complete the course activities and assessments and receive academic credit. Verification and authentication of student identity in this course will include:

1. Secure access to the learning management system using your unique UConn NetID and password.
2. Meeting synchronously via Collaborate with the instructor at the beginning of the course.
3. Ability to answer questions about submitted work at the request of the instructor.

Professor-Created Videos: The web-based video delivery of each class in this course is for sole use of the students enrolled in this course. Any other use of these class videos or any pictures or derivatives of the class videos without the written consent of the

course's professor is prohibited.

Student-Created Videos. The videos created by students as part of this course are for sole use of the students enrolled in this course. Any other use of these videos or any pictures or derivatives of the videos without the written consent of the video creator is prohibited.

Copyright

My lectures, syllabus, notes, recordings, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression and I've recorded them prior or during my class in order to ensure that I obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in my class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. I will inform you as to whether you are authorized to record my lectures at the beginning of each semester. If you are so authorized to record my lectures, you may not copy this recording or any other material, provide copies of either to anyone else, or make a commercial use of them without prior permission from me.

Student Responsibilities and Resources

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work. Review these important [standards, policies and resources](#), which include:

- The Student Code
 - Academic Integrity
 - Resources on Avoiding Cheating and Plagiarism
- Copyrighted Materials
- Credit Hours and Workload
- Netiquette and Communication
- Adding or Dropping a Course
- Academic Calendar
- Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships
- Sexual Assault Reporting Policy

Students with Disabilities

The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>.

Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards: the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government.” (Retrieved March 24, 2013 from [Blackboard's website](#))

Software/Technical Requirements (with Accessibility and Privacy Information)

The software/technical requirements for this course include:

- HuskyCT/Blackboard ([HuskyCT/ Blackboard Accessibility Statement](#), [HuskyCT/ Blackboard Privacy Policy](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) ([Adobe Reader Accessibility Statement](#), [Adobe Reader Privacy Policy](#))
- Google Apps ([Google Apps Accessibility](#), [Google for Education Privacy Policy](#))
- Microsoft Office (free to UConn students through uconn.onthehub.com) ([Microsoft Accessibility Statement](#), [Microsoft Privacy Statement](#))
- Dedicated access to high-speed internet with a minimum speed of 1.5 Mbps (4 Mbps or higher is recommended).
- WebCam with microphone

For information on managing your privacy at the University of Connecticut, visit the [University's Privacy page](#).

NOTE: This course has NOT been designed for use with mobile devices.

Help

This course is facilitated online using the learning management platform, [HuskyCT](#). The [IT Knowledge Base](#) provides students with support, troubleshooting, and how-to information about HuskyCT. The [IT Knowledge Base](#) includes a video tour of HuskyCT.

For technical help with HuskyCT, you have access to the in-person/live person support options available during regular business hours through the [Help Center](#). You also have [24x7 Course Support](#) outside of business hours, including access to live chat, phone, and support documents.

[Technical and Academic Help](#) provides a guide to frequently asked questions for online students.

Study Groups

Are you interested in forming a study group with other students in the class? There is a [study group application](#) in Nexus that can help you get started. View this [video](#) for more information.

Minimum Technical Skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
- Copy and paste text, graphics, or hyperlinks.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
- Open and access PDF files.
- Use a webcam with a microphone.

Evaluation of the Course

Students will be provided an opportunity to evaluate instruction in this course using the University's standard procedures, which are administered by the [Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness](#) (OIRE).

Additional informal formative surveys may also be administered within the course as an optional evaluation tool.