



Course: **Virtue Ethics in Digital Society**
1120-IN000-ISA-0522

Coordinators:

Period: **Summer Semester 2024/2025**
2025L

Approval date: **06.02.2025**

1. Course allocation

The goal of the course is to present the virtue-ethics approach to good life and to apply it to the relevant problems of contemporary digital society. On the presented account, the good life is understood as human flourishing, that consists in realisation of the full human potential by the action in accordance with intellectual and moral virtues such as wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice. This conceptual framework will be applied to the problems that occur with the advent of social media and AI-based digital technologies, such as LLMs and moral advisory devices. The presentation will include the thought of both the classical (Socrates, Aristotle) and the contemporary (Anscombe, MacIntyre) virtue ethicists, for the purpose of didactic clarity and substantive reasons compared to the other approaches (kantianism, utilitarianism). The ethical problems of digital society will be analysed from the perspective of the classical moral philosophy. This will include hate speech, principle of charity in online communication and the possibility of moral enhancement by AI. Thus, while providing the wide overview of the moral philosophy in general, the course will present relevant applications to the field of digital technology.

2. Conducting classes

The first part of the course will consist of the interactive lectures in which the students' participation is more than welcome. The second part will consist of the introductory presentations and stances in the debates, prepared by the students and presented during classes.

3. Course materials

Anscombe, G. E. M. (1958) Modern Moral Philosophy. *Philosophy* 33, no. 124: 1–19.

Aristotle (1966) *Nicomachean ethics*. Oxford University Press, London, UK

Ferdman, A. (2024). Human flourishing and technology affordances. *Philosophy & Technology*, 37(1), 1–28.

Kant I, Hill TE, Zweig A (2002) *Groundwork for the metaphysics of morals*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK

Lara, F. and Deckers J. (2020). Artificial intelligence as a Socratic assistant for moral enhancement. *Neuroethics*, 13(3), 275–287.

MacIntyre, A. (1984). *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

Mill, J. S. (1998) *Utilitarianism*. Edited by Roger Crisp, Oxford University Press.

Plato (1998) *Gorgias*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY

Waldron J (2014) *The harm in hate speech*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA

4. Class attendance

Two absences allowed without consequences, the third and more should be passed by the discussion of the topic during office hours.

5. Verification of achievement of learning outcomes

1. Introductory presentation to the debate, sent to the lecturer by 3 days before the class at latest, and presented during the class.
2. Stance in the debate backed with argumentation, sent to the lecturer by 3 days before the class at latest, and presented during the class.
3. Active participation in the interactive lectures and debates.

6. Aids acceptable for use during verification of achievement of learning outcomes

PowerPoint presentation.

7. Rules for passing the course and for calculating the final grade

1. Introductory presentation to the debate, sent to the lecturer by 3 days before the class at latest, and presented during the class.
2. Stance in the debate backed with argumentation, sent to the lecturer by 3 days before the class at latest, and presented during the class.
3. Active participation in the interactive lectures and debates.

8. Deadline and procedure for announcing grades

The grades will be announced via USOSweb by June 30, 2025.

9. Rules for retaking classes due to failure to pass a course

Two absences allowed without consequences, the third and more should be passed by the discussion of the topic during office hours.

10. Other