

**Course Syllabus**  
**PHIL 120 – Introduction to Ethics**  
**3 credits**

**Prerequisites:** Proficiency with written English

**Instructor:** Jonathan Watt, Ph.D.

**Facilitator:** Sarah Wilson, M.A., B.S.N., R.N., CCRN

**Contact Info:** Faculty may be contacted through the Portage messaging system

**Course web site address:** [www.portagelearning.com](http://www.portagelearning.com)

**Course meeting times:** Introduction to Ethics is offered continuously

**Course Description:** The goal of the course is to help students understand the principles of classical theoretical philosophical ethics with case studies designed to develop ways of understanding themselves and becoming enabled to apply those outlooks to the care they expect to give in a medical context as health professionals.

**Course Outcomes:** Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Develop a thoughtful and useful framework for understanding classical ethics;
- Become acquainted with several theorists well-known to the field;
- Become more cognizant of current issues relating to ethics in medical care;
- Become more articulate about ways in which the study of ethics can influence how they perceive themselves and society;
- Cultivate a commitment to practice medicine humanely and with integrity.

Each of these student-learning outcomes will be measured as:

Journal Entries

Essay Reflections

Learning Activities

A Final Summary Paper

This essay-based class will require logical, thoughtfully written response essays that will be given feedback from the instructor.

**Course Delivery:** This course is asynchronously delivered online.

It is the policy for all Portage Learning courses that only one exam be completed each day. Research on best practices in learning psychology indicates that time is needed to process material for optimal learning. This means that once an exam has been completed, the next exam will not unlock until the following day. Please plan your time accordingly. If you have a legitimate need for an exception to this policy, please contact your instructor.

**Required Computer Accessories:** It is recommended that students use a desktop or laptop computer, PC or Mac, when taking the course. Some tablet computers are compatible with the course, but not all features are available for all tablet computers. The latest full version of Firefox is required for the optimal operation of the Portage Learning Management System. In addition, you must have the latest full version of Adobe Flash Player installed as a plug-in in order to view any of the videos on the site. We highly recommend using a high speed Internet connection to view the video lectures and labs. You may experience significant difficulties viewing the videos using a dial-up connection.

**Required readings, lectures and assignments:** Portage courses do not use paper textbooks. Students are required to read the online lesson modules written by the course author which contain the standard information covered in a typical course. Be sure to review all of the material within the modules, there are multiple journal entries worth points to complete throughout each module. If you have any questions please contact the instructor via the in course My Messages tab.

**A Word About Evaluation:**

All items assigned for this course require formal writing in which thoughts are expressed in grammatically-correct, clear sentences. The essays that students will be asked to write require students to comprehend the assignments that are included in each module and, quite often, to offer connections between the ideas present in the assignments and a student's own "take" on things.

**Grading Rubric:**

Journal entries	370 pts.
Essays	56 pts.
Learning Activities and Case Study Analysis	74 pts
<u>Final Summary Paper</u>	<u>100 pts</u>
Total	600 pts.

The current course grade and progress is continuously displayed on the student desktop.

Proficiency in written English is a prerequisite for this course. If you have weak written English skills, you may not be able to effectively communicate the ethical concepts in your essay responses, and this may result in point deductions. Written English rules, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, will account for 10% of your grade on each assignment.

**Grading Scale:**

89.5% - 100% (537 - 600 pts)	= A
79.5% - 89.4% (477 – 536 pts)	= B
69.5% - 79.4% (417 – 476 pts)	= C
59.5% - 69.4% (357 – 416 pts)	= D
<59.5% (<357 pts)	= F

**Guidelines for Writing Assignments:**

- Superior Paper (A): Demonstrates the writer’s ability to articulate course material, support his or her written argument with appropriate use of class material and outside resources and apply personal experience and opinion as appropriate. A superior paper is well written, with no grammatical errors.
- Good Paper (B): This paper is well-written, but lacks extensive support and use of outside resources to articulate one’s argument. A good paper will articulate course material and incorporate personal experience and opinion as appropriate.
- Average Paper (C): The writing is adequate in conveying the writer’s ideas, but does not clearly articulate course material or reference external resources.
- Weak Paper (D): The writing of this paper is underdeveloped and inadequate in organization, content, and the use of correct grammar.
- Failing Paper (F): This is a poorly written essay that neglects to adhere to the directions of the writing assignment. The paper completely lacks focus, organization of content, and grammatical competency.
- Plagiarized Paper: This paper reveals evidence that the submitted work is not the writer’s original work, or the submitted information has not been properly documented. The facilitator has the right to refuse to accept this paper, and the student submitting a plagiarized paper will be subject to the Academic Integrity Policy as stated below.

## **Module Topics:**

- Module 1: This module is an introduction to philosophical ethics and contains the instructions and guidelines for the first essay based Journal Reflection.
- Module 2: This module is an introduction to philosophical ethics in relation to biomedicine: Part 1 of 2. We explore what it means to be human and healthy, and how this is related to helping people live well. ANA ethical provisions are examined.
- Module 3: This module is an introduction to philosophical ethics in relation to biomedicine: Part 2 of 2. We explore what it means to be human and healthy, and how this is related to helping people live well. ANA ethical provisions are examined.
- Module 4: This module addresses virtue ethics which consider what constitutes the good life, using some of the classical works of Aristotle and Eudemean Ethics, and aims for an understanding of what is meant by virtue, happiness and wellbeing. Ethical principles outlined by the ANA are explored and connected to the notion of virtue.
- Module 5: This module explores deontology, culture and patient advocacy. Through both a case study and journal reflections, students will be able to express their understanding about how ethical theory relates to patient advocacy.
- Module 6: This module explores Utilitarianism in relation to medical practice, specifically organ donation and mandatory vaccinations.
- Module 7: This module discusses ethical concerns related to death and the dying process, including the role of ethics consults and committees.
- Module 8: This module explores compassionate nursing and burnout related to physical, mental and emotional turmoil that healthcare workers experience. Also discussed are errors in healthcare and the phenomenon of the 'second victims' in healthcare.
- Final Paper: The final paper in this course will serve as an appropriate culmination of what students have explored throughout the course.

**Holidays:**

During the following holidays, all administrative and instructional functions are suspended, including the grading of exams and issuance of transcripts:

*New Year's Day*

*Easter*

*Christmas Break*

*Memorial Day*

*Independence Day*

*Labor Day*

*Thanksgiving weekend*

The schedule of holidays for the current calendar year may be found under the Student Services menu at [www.portagelearning.com](http://www.portagelearning.com)

**Suggested Timed Course Schedule** (to complete the course within a typical college semester)

All Portage courses are offered asynchronously with no required schedule to better fit the normal routine of adult students, but the schedule below is suggested to allow a student to complete the course within a typical college semester. Despite this suggestion, the students may feel free to complete the course at their desired pace and on a schedule determined by them.

**Time Period****Assignments**

Days 1-4

Module 1 Text and Lecture, Journal Question 1 (10 points each, 10 total points)

Days 5-12

Module 2 Journal Questions 1 – 5 (10 points each, 50 total points)

Days 13-21

Module 3 Journal Questions 1 – 6 (10 points each, 60 total points)

Days 22-30

Module 4 Text and Lecture, Journal Entries 1 – 6 (10 points each, 60 total points)

Days 31-38

Module 4 Word Bank Activity (24 points), Short Answer Essays (26 total points)

Days 39-45

Module 5 Text, Journal Entries 1 – 3 (10 points each, 30 total points)

Days 46-55

Module 5 Text and Lecture, Journal Entries 4 – 7 (Varying point values, 60 total points)

Days 56-62	Module 6 Text and Lecture, Journal Entry 1 (10 points), Learning Activity 1 (25 points)
Days 63-70	Module 6 Short Essays 1 – 2 (15 points each, 30 total points)
Days 71-78	Module 7 Text and Lecture, Case Study Analysis (25 points)
Days 79 -88	Module 7 Journal Entries 1 – 6 (10 points each, 60 total points)
Days 89 – 96	Module 8 Text, Journal Entries 1 – 3 (10 points each, 30 total points)
Days 97 – 108	View Lecture, Compose Final Reflection (100 points)

### **Suggested External References:**

If the student desires to consult a reference for additional information, the following texts are recommended as providing complete treatment of the course subject matter.

Butts, J., Rich, K. (2013). *Nursing ethics: across the curriculum and into practice*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Chesnay, M., Anderson, B. (2012). *Caring for the vulnerable: perspectives in nursing theory, practice and research*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Solomon, R., Martin, C., Vaught, W. (2008). *Morality and the Good Life: An Introduction to Ethics through Classical Sources*. McGraw-Hill.

### **Learning Support Services:**

Each student should be sure to take advantage of and use the following learning support services which are provided to increase student academic performance:

**Messaging system** which provides individual instructor/student interaction

**Tech support** which is available by submitting a help ticket through the student dashboard

### **Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities:**

Students with documented learning disabilities may receive accommodations in the form of an extended time limit on exams, when applicable. To receive the accommodations, the student should furnish documentation of the learning disability at the time of registration, if possible.

Scan and e-mail the documentation to [studentservices@portagelearning.com](mailto:studentservices@portagelearning.com). Upon receipt of the learning disability documentation, Portage staff will provide the student with instructions for a variation of the course containing exams with extended time limits. This accommodation does

not alter the content of any assignments/exams, change what the exam is intended to measure or otherwise impact the outcomes of objectives of the course.

### **One-on-one Instruction**

Each student is assigned to his/her own instructor. Personalized questions are addressed via the student dashboard messaging system.

Online learning presents an opportunity for flexibility; however, a discipline to maintain connection to the course is required; therefore, communication is essential to successful learning. Check your messages daily. Instructors are checking messages daily Monday-Friday to be sure to answer any questions that may arise from you. It is important that you do the same so you do not miss any pertinent information from us.

**Code of Conduct:** Students are expected to conduct themselves in a way that supports learning and teaching and promotes an atmosphere of civility and respect in their interactions with others. Verbal and written aggression, abuse, or misconduct is prohibited and may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

This is a classroom; therefore, instructors have the academic freedom to set forth policy for their respective class. Instructors send a welcome e-mail detailing the policy of their class, which students are required to read prior to beginning the course.

**Academic Integrity** is a serious matter. In the educational context, any dishonesty violates freedom and trust, which are essential for effective learning. Dishonesty limits a student's ability to reach his or her potential. Portage places a high value on honest independent work. In a distance learning situation, we depend on the student's desire to succeed in the program he or she is entering. It is in a student's own best interests not to cheat on an exam, as this would compromise the student's preparation for future work. It is required of each student to take exams without consulting course materials or study aids including another person, the lesson pages, printed materials, or the Internet. To this end, your instructor will be alert to any indications that a student may be violating this principle. It will be necessary to show all your work on exams. When the nature of the course does not require numerical or symbolic determination (perhaps instead just requires recitation of learned descriptions), our experienced staff is able to detect the unauthorized consultation of study aids when answering exam questions. A violation of the academic integrity policy may result in a score of zero on the exam and possible expulsion from the course, at the discretion of the instructor with consultation with an administrative-instructional committee.

Review the Student Handbook for more specifics. If you have any questions regarding the academic integrity policy, please consult your instructor **prior** to taking module exam one.

**Grievances:** If for any reason a student has a complaint about the course work or the instructor, the student is advised to first consult the instructor, who will be willing to listen and consider your concern. However, if you don't feel you have received a satisfactory reply, you are encouraged to contact the Academic Dean of Portage Learning for further consideration of your complaint. The formal grievances process must be initiated via written communication. If desired, please file a written grievance to [academics@portagelearning.com](mailto:academics@portagelearning.com) to initiate the process.

**Remediation:**

At Portage Learning we allow a "one-time" only opportunity to re-take an alternate version of **one** module exam on which a student has earned a grade lower than 70%. This option must be exercised before the final exam is started. If an exam is retaken, the original exam grade will be erased and the new exam grade will become a permanent part of the course grade. However, before scheduling and attempting this retest, the student must resolve the questions they have regarding the material by reviewing both the old exam and the lesson module material. Once ready to attempt the retest of the exam they must contact their instructor to request that the exam be reset for the retest. Remember, any module retest must be requested and completed **before** the final exam is opened.