

MODULE DESCRIPTOR

MODULE TITLE	DEBATING CASES IN APPLIED ETHICS		
MODULE CODE	MD1113 (L4)	CREDIT VALUE	20 CREDITS
SCHOOL	SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT		

MODULE AIMS

This module seeks to provide an introduction to ethical decision-making in real life situations. Students are introduced to key ethical principles and values and shown how this understanding can be applied to help analyse ethical dilemmas in various areas of life. They reflect on particular real life ethical questions and the issues they raise and debate those issues in a reasoned and logical manner.

Throughout a series of debates, students actively engage in preparing, presenting, and defending their arguments to an audience of fellow students. Working collaboratively with their colleagues, the debates encourage team-working, communication skills, and the appreciation of alternative perspectives.

MODULE CONTENT

The theoretical background for the module is delivered in the first sessions and includes the topics:

- Introduction to ethics and the different branches of moral philosophy.
- The application of broad ethical principles such as justice, avoiding harm, doing good and respect for persons.
- Identification and the influence of personal and cultural values.
- The tools of argumentation; how to recognise good and bad reasoning.
- Presentation skills and the art of debating.

Following this introduction, the focus is placed upon the application of theoretical concepts to a number of contemporary debates and issues such as:

- How do we apportion international aide to different developing countries?
- Can we differentiate between the 'deserving poor' and the 'undeserving' poor?
- How should we each respond to the threat that environmental pollution and climate change poses to future generations?
- Is there a right to parenthood? Should we support anyone who wants to be a parent in this activity? What if they are thought to be 'unfit'? What makes a person 'unfit' as a parent?
- On what basis should we make decisions in healthcare about availability of resources? How do we decide who can have access to treatment and who must lose out?
- Do animals have the same rights as humans? How do we decide which rights different species have?

Scenarios are provided for each case to be debated.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module, a student will be able to:	
1.	Explain why we take a principled approach in applied ethics and discuss major ethical principles.
2.	Reflect upon personal and cultural values and how they influence behaviour and norms.

3.	Formulate reasoned arguments in defence of a particular stance on a complex ethical issue.
4.	Present and debate ideas, both orally and in writing, in an open-minded and rigorous manner.

TEACHING METHODS

The university assumes an average of 200 study hours per 20 credit module which may comprise different learning activities. The initial teaching content for this module is delivered via a blend of lectures, online materials and guided reading. Students are able to bring this learning to seminars at scheduled points during the module.

Following the taught component of the module students will be asked to apply their learning through engagement in a series of debates on particular ethical dilemmas. Scenarios will be provided for each debate and a different topic will be examined each week. Students will work in small groups to prepare their contribution for presentation and debate. Each student is required to contribute to the preparation and delivery of one group topic. Students who are not presenting are expected to form the audience for each presentation and be prepared to discuss and challenge the presenting group on their argument and stance.

Throughout the module students are expected to engage with their peer group and tutors through use of the module discussion boards where there is opportunity for both formal and informal discussion.

Tutors make themselves available to help guide learning and provide support during the module in a variety of ways including email, discussion boards, telephone, seminars and one to one tutorials. Students are required to work collaboratively in preparation for their own debate presentations as well as attending, and actively participating in, the debate sessions of other groups.

As part of the way that you learn in this module you may be enhancing certain employability skills. In particular communication and presentation skills; interpersonal skills through working with peers in groups; ethical awareness and sensitivity through examination of complex moral dilemmas; and reflective skills through examination of the principles and values that affect your own beliefs and judgements.

Your independent learning hours may also help to enhance skills such as time management, self motivation, and problem solving.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

This module is assessed through a contribution in a debate (40%) and a reflective account of own stance and debate (60%).