# New Graduate Course Proposal

## Contact Person
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## College
- JHC of Education, Health Science & Human Service
- Dept/Academic Unit: Educational Foundations and Leadership

## Alpha/Numeric Code
- Subject Area: RESM
- Number: 8380

## Proposed title
- Methods of Normative Theory Construction

## Proposed Effective Term
- 2013
- 40 (Fall)

## Is the course cross-listed with another academic unit?
- Yes

## Approval of other Academic unit (Signature and title)

## Is the course offered at more than one level?
- No

If yes, an undergraduate course proposal form must also be submitted. If the undergraduate course is new, complete the New Undergraduate Course Proposal; if the undergraduate course is existing, submit an Undergraduate Course Modification Proposal.

## Credit hours
- Fixed: _____
- Variable: _____ to _____

## Delivery mode
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Type</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
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## Minimum Credit Hours
- 3

## Maximum Credit Hours
- 3

## Weekly Contact Hours
- 2.5

## Terms Offered
- □ Fall
- □ Spring
- □ Summer

## Years offered
- Alternate Year

May the courses be repeated for credit?
- No

Maximum hours:
- 3

Are students permitted to register for more than one section during a term?
- No

Grading system:
- Normal Grading (A-F, PS/NC, PR, I)

Prerequisites (must be taken before): e.g., C or higher in BIOE 4500 or BIOE 5500 and C or higher in MATH 4200, etc.
The purpose of this research methods course is to explore prominent methods and approaches to normative theory construction. The central goal of the course is to equip doctoral students in field of educational theory and social foundations, among other students whose fields engage in normative theory, the understanding and skill necessary to engage in normative theoretical research. Normative theory refers to systematic moral, political, social, and educational conceptions that rationally account for and justify what ought to be (rather than empirical theory that accounts for what is). In the discipline of normative theorizing a number of methods of and approaches to theory construction have been developed as a means to the development and analysis of normative theory. There are two main general approaches to theory construction in this field: deontological and teleological approaches.
Course Description

The purpose of this research methods course is to explore prominent methods and approaches to normative theory construction. Normative theory refers to systematic moral, political, social, and educational conceptions that rationally account for and justify what ought to be (rather than empirical theory that accounts for what is). A theory of justice, for example, is a normative theory, in that it rationally account for and justifies a conception of standards of right and/or good that social policy and practice should comply with in order to be legitimate. In the discipline of normative theorizing a number of methods of and approaches to theory construction have been developed as a means to the development and analysis of normative theory. These methods and approaches constitute the research tools in the field of educational theory and social foundations, among other fields of inquiry. There are two main general approaches to theory construction in this field: deontological and teleological approaches; the deontological approach includes the Social Contract and Discourse Ethics traditions, while the teleological approach includes Moral Realism (Natural Law), Utilitarianism, Pragmatism, the Capabilities Approach, and Interpretive/Communitarian traditions. Each one of these traditions employs a different method of normative theory construction, centrally including methods of normative justification. The central goal of the course is to equip doctoral students in field of educational theory and social foundations, among other students whose fields engage in normative theory, the understanding and skill necessary to engage in normative theoretical research.

Objectives

(1) Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of the nature of the methods of and approaches to normative theory construction through the direct application of those methods to normative theory development, analysis, and justification;

(2) Students will demonstrate skill in the application of the methods of and approaches to normative theory construction through the development, analysis, and justification of specific normative theories.
Required Texts

Recommended readings are listed under each topic in the Course Outline below

**Pedagogical Approach and Assessment of Learning**

The class is structured by and employs a pedagogy of reflective inquiry. This pedagogy calls upon students to engage in critical reflection and inquiry to formulate and deepen understanding and skill based upon a deep comprehension of the subject matter. To elaborate, the pedagogy includes four dimensions: (1) the acquisition and deepening of background knowledge; (2) the understanding of a broad professional and philosophical vocabulary, including key concepts; (3) deep comprehension; and (4) application, including critical analysis. The following required activities instantiate these pedagogical dimensions:

1. **Readings, Lectures, and Notes**: background knowledge and comprehension will be acquired and deepened through reading the course readings, which constitute an inquiry and dialogue with leading normative theorists. Careful, thoughtful reading of the course materials and attention to lectures and notes is essential to the development of background knowledge and comprehension.

2. **Critical Reviews**: all four of the pedagogical dimensions will be developed through the writing of critical reviews of each of the main traditions of normative theory construction. Each critical review consists of thoughtful responses to the following questions:

   a. What are the main ideas regarding the methodological approach?
   b. What are the key concepts and how are they defined and conceptualized?
   c. What are the main supporting arguments for the methodological approach?
   d. Do you find the methodological and supporting arguments compelling, convincing? Why?
   e. Provide at least one example of the application of the methodological approach—construct an argument or analysis of a specific normative issue from the perspective of the methodological approach under review.

The critical review should be organized by these questions, with a section for each question, a-e.

You are **required to complete seven critical reviews**, one for each topic as follows:

   a. Moral Realism
   b. Utilitarianism
   c. Pragmatism
   d. Capabilities
Each critical review should be approximately 5-7 pages in length. Questions d and e require that you support and defend your opinion.

3. Discussions and Dialogue: all four of the pedagogical dimensions will be developed through discussion and reflective dialogue. Discussion will occur through the formulation and articulation of questions and thoughtful responses to questions formed and articulated by your instructor and classmates.

a. To foster dialogue you will formulate and articulate a discussion question (or questions – at least one question is required, but you are invited to post more) for each of the six topics above. Once you have formulated your question you will present your question in class. These questions can be questions of clarification, however, analytic questions are preferred and encouraged. Attempt to ask questions that probe, analyze, interrogate, and/or infer.

4. Final Project: The final project will consist of an article length paper, approximately 20 pages, which articulates and justifies a choice of normative methodology/approach from the seven perspectives studied in the course and applies that methodology to the construction of a theoretical argument that defends a specific normative proposition. For example, a Rawlsian social contract approach to the question of equal educational opportunity.

References

The following referencing systems can be used:


Other appropriate scholarly apparatus

Grading Policy

Performance in the course will be evaluated in terms of the following: active and thoughtful class participation (10% of the grade), critical reviews (50%) final project (30%), and a oral presentation of one’s final project (10%).
Course Outline

I     Introduction—the nature of normative theory

II    Teleological Approaches

1.    Moral Realism

Required Reading


Further Reading


2.    Utilitarianism

Required Reading


Further Reading


3.    Capabilities—the comparative assessment of justice

Required Reading


Further Reading


4. **Pragmatism**

*Required Reading*


*Further Reading*


5. **Interpretive/Communitarianism**
III Deontological Approaches

6. Social Contract

Required Reading


Further Reading


7. Discourse Ethics

Required Reading


Further Reading


IV Presentations and Conclusion

Statement of Inclusion and Civility

In concert with the University of Toledo's values and expectations, the faculty within the Judith Herb College of Education, Health Science and Human Service upholds the tenets pledged by the University to respect and value personal uniqueness and differences. Specifically, we will actively participate in the initiatives of the University to attract and retain diverse faculty, staff, and students; to challenge stereotypes; and to promote sensitivity toward diversity and foster an environment of inclusion in all curricular and extra-curricular activities.
Hence, all students enrolled in this course will be expected to:

- Promote a collaborative and supportive educational environment in a diverse community
- Treat every individual with kindness, consideration, dignity, and respect regardless of:
  - Gender,
  - Race/ethnicity,
  - Religion,
  - Sexual orientation,
  - Impairment(s)/Disability(ies),
  - Social economic status,
  - Political views, and
  - Other element(s) of diversity

**Academic Accommodations/Accessibility**

“The University of Toledo abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act (equal and timely access) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (non-discrimination on the basis of disability). If you have a disability and are in need of academic accommodations but have not yet registered with the Office of Accessibility (OA) (Rocket Hall 1820; 419.530.4981; officeofaccessibility@utoledo.edu) please contact the office as soon as possible for more information and/or to initiate the process for accessing academic accommodations. I also encourage students with disabilities receiving accommodations through OA to discuss these with me, after class or during my office hours, so that I may be better informed on how to assist you during the semester” (Faculty resources, 2012, “Academic accommodations,” para. 4).

**Academic Honesty**

All acts of plagiarism and cheating are significant acts of academic dishonesty and will result in automatic failure in the course and probable dismissal from the university. Make sure that the work you put your name on is in fact your own work.