

SEC SYLLABUS (2024)

ETHICS

SEC 40

SYLLABUS

Introduction

The primary aim of the Ethics programme is that of a moral education; that is, socializing students into the contemporary moral culture of our society, teaching them to think and deal reflectively with moral matters, to understand the moral issues they will encounter in their daily lives as adult members of Maltese society and of the world human community, to exercise practical wisdom in articulating their moral judgement, to understand and tolerate cultures, life-styles, outlooks, and life choices different from their own, to offer solidarity to those in their community and elsewhere who suffer injustice, to commit themselves to the peaceful resolution of moral conflict where this occurs, and to respect and support human rights, social justice, and democratic practice.

While the priority of this general purpose must never be lost by the teachers of the Ethics Syllabus, the existence of an examination at the end of it has pedagogical implications related to the mode of teaching and assessment that cannot be ignored.

In Forms 1 and 2 the students learn to evaluate arguments for their validity or otherwise, and are taught the difference between validity as a property of arguments and the truth as a property of statements that make them up. In Forms 3 to 5 they are introduced to the criteria of:

- (a) the acceptability or otherwise of the statements in an argument as distinct from their truth - this is where they learn that evaluation becomes more subjective, since acceptability is subjective;
- (b) the approach or perspective (of rights, consequences, duty, truth, correspondence with virtue) from which the argument is entered which is also subjective. The students learn to write their own reflective commentaries on articles, opinion columns or blogs, stories, and other texts, taken from the print, social media, on topics and issues related to the themes addressed in the programme.

The subject matter of the programme has three thematic areas:

1. the first focuses on different ethically relevant aspects of respect;
2. the second of care, in both cases of self and others;
3. the third focuses in a general way on the question of the value of life.

Classroom sessions are set aside throughout the programme to teach the students to discuss and evaluate arguments related with the themes in the modules selected and presented by, and with the teacher. The students are invited to reflect further on and respond to these arguments and the topics or issues discussed in the classroom sessions at home, making written arguments on, or counter-arguments to, them or some aspect of them on their own.

Scheme of Assessment

The examination consists of:

- **Paper 1: Coursework** (60% of the total marks; comprising 4 assignments of equal weighting i.e. 15% each)
- **Paper 2: Written Examination paper** (40% of the total marks). There will be two versions of Paper 2 – Paper 2A and Paper 2B.

Paper 1: Coursework (60% of the total marks)

The coursework consists of four assignments which can be rather practical in nature, such as presentations, a research project, a journal, a class debate, writing a blog or a letter/email to the Editor. These assignments will be set and marked by the teacher, who will choose the best method of assessment according to the topic being assessed. They can be set as individual tasks or a task to be done in a group (e.g. a group presentation). It is to be noted that these practical assignments are also the same ones that are required for the school assessment coursework.

It is suggested that:

- the first two coursework assignments are carried out during Form 3;
- The third and fourth coursework assignments are carried out during Form 4.

Each practical assignment is marked out of 100 marks, but will carry 15% of the total mark. The average mark of these four assignments will contribute to 60% of the total marks of the examination. The assignments will be based on modules 1, 2, 4 and 5 separately (i.e. not more than one assignment on each Module), and they will be presented for moderation, together with the mark, in a portfolio (the four combined coursework assignments) by the date established by the MATSEC Board. The portfolio should contain all the written material generated by the assignments, as well as other documentation or evidence to show how the assignment was carried out (e.g. presentation slides, photos of students engaged in debate, etc.). Candidates may be called for a short interview in relation to the project.

Candidates may present work in either Maltese or English.

Criteria for Coursework

Each coursework assignment is marked out of hundred marks (100) and carries 15% of the global mark. A Marking Scheme to be used by teachers/tutors for assessment of the coursework is available in Appendix A. Each assignment should be accompanied by the appropriate Marking Grid available on the MATSEC website duly filled in and signed by the teacher/tutor to substantiate the mark awarded.

Private Candidates:

1. The candidates are to follow the same syllabus as full time school candidates;
2. The candidate is also to identify a person knowledgeable in the subject to act as a tutor who will monitor his/her participation in the coursework;

3. The MATSEC Ethics Examiners' Panel will mark the assignments of private candidates. The Examiners' Panel has the right to liaise with the tutor of the candidate if it is deemed to be required;
4. Private candidates may be called for an interview about their coursework;
5. The candidate must fill in the coursework authenticity form and submit it, signed by him/herself and the tutor, along with the coursework.

Paper 2: Written Examination Paper

The controlled component of the assessment will consist of a paper of two hours' duration which will carry 40% of the final mark. The paper will be set in both Maltese and English. Candidates must choose to answer either in Maltese or in English. There will be two versions of the written paper: Paper 2A and Paper 2B. Candidates are required to indicate on the registration form which paper they wish to sit for. No change in the choice of paper will be allowed after the registration period.

The written paper will contain questions demanding an evaluative approach to the subject matter, covering all Modules. Here the candidates will be expected not only to show their knowledge and understanding of the topics dealt with, but also the ability to evaluate and apply what has been learnt from Ethics, to the daily lives of people. Paper 2A comprises more demanding questions than those in Paper 2B. Questions in Paper 2A will require answers of a more argumentative and analytical nature.

Both Paper 2A and Paper 2B will have two sections: Section A and Section B.

Results

Candidates sitting for Paper A may qualify for a grade within the range 1 to 5 (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5); the results of candidates who do not obtain a Grade 5 shall remain Unclassified (U).

Candidates sitting for Paper B may qualify for a grade not higher than 4 (i.e. grades 4, 5, 6, 7); the results of candidates who do not obtain at least a Grade 7 shall remain Unclassified (U).

Important Conditions

Candidates can only qualify for Grades 1 to 5 if they satisfy the examiners in both papers.

The Syllabus

Module 1: Self and Others

The general theme of respect for self and others requires the students to be returned to the question ‘What makes me “me”? Who is the “I” who makes me “me”?’ The students should be able to take the question of self-identity deeper and to a more abstract and sophisticated level of reasoning and self-reflection required by leading an examined life which is presented to them as an ideal to achieve, and which presents the self as an ethical being. The module deals with the notion of the self – more specifically what it means to be a human self. It begins with the reminder that the human self is always a social self.

This point of departure raises issues of conformity with the conventions of community and the meaning of individual freedom. The tension between freedom and conformity requires a closer look at the notion of community, within which one’s identity is first formed, and a distinction between strong, self-enclosed communities and weaker, open, communities that are tolerant of internal difference and to other communities. In other words, it leads students to discussions of tolerance. The self is represented as both unique and social, and these characterisations of the self are taken into analysis. The fact that the self is in some respect or other, and to different degrees in different moral cultures, self-making is shown to point to the obligation to be self-responsible. This self-responsibility is shown to be connected with self-knowledge and eventually to self-mastery – both important notions are explored further through historic or legendary figures in the different religious and secular tradition, for the latter most appropriately Socrates.

Objectives

- To introduce the students to self-reflective expression on moral matters through writing or otherwise (examples could include: blogs, photography, journal, essays, letters/email to the editor and so on);
- To introduce students to the distinction between belief supported by opinion, and truth or fact supported by evidence (science), and between supported and gratuitous opinion;
- To teach students to write arguments of their own on selected topics or issues;
- To reinforce the idea of the self as an individual and social being – to begin a more detailed exploration of the relationship between the two;
- To explore the tension between demands of the community and individual freedom in the making of the self;
- To enter into a deep analysis of the meaning of community, its relation with truth, and to distinguish different kinds of community; closed and open;
- To explore these different kinds of communities, the amount of uniformity they imply and the issues of difference and tolerance they raise;
- To pursue the discussion of tolerance as a characteristic of open communities;
- To enable a more sophisticated discussion of the question ‘Who am I?’ – to make it a question of self-reflection;

To introduce students to the importance of self-reflection, of living the examined life, and ultimately of self-mastery;

To discuss moral responsibility; what it means and the importance of responsible life-choices;

To discuss influence and the place of role-models in our lives and the difference between good and bad role-models.

Module 2 Respect for Self (Self-respect)

This module is about responsible self-respect, which contrasts with irresponsible self-abuse. Self-respect is linked with a self which, while it is aware of itself, is sensitive to others, while self-abuse is linked with a self which is obsessively self-referential and narcissist. It explores the notion of harm to a much greater depth and does the same with the notion of self-regarding acts. The ultimate aim is to show that extreme narcissism, an unhealthy self-obsession, leads to moral insensitivity towards others and can take the form of various kinds of self-harm. The possibility of unwanted self-harm which can result from self-exposure/disclosure on the social media is amply discussed as part of a broader discussion of the voyeuristic/narcissistic culture of the social media as a whole. The issues of intimacy and personal privacy, and their values are brought into the discussion of the dangers of self-exposure identified in it. The discussion also includes the issue of pornography and, also specifically, cyber-bullying, both dangerous realities of our times.

The module also explores other forms of self-harm that may appear to be more private and self-concerning or socially irrelevant, that may be both physical and mental and, usually, are both at the same time; these include addictions and obsessional forms of behaviour of different sorts. It asks whether the limits of freedom are transgressed by acts of self-harm, and draws the distinction, once more, between a responsible and irresponsible use of one's freedom. Finally, within the general issue of whether it is morally acceptable for us to expose ourselves to harm, it raises the question about different kinds of risk-taking with the intention of distinguishing those kinds that are responsible and legitimate from those that aren't and that shouldn't be practised.

Objectives:

To consolidate the self-reflective expression on moral matters that interest or affect their daily lives or experiences. This could be done through writing or otherwise, for example, blogs, photography, journal, essays, letters/email to the editor and so on;

To exercise students in the evaluation and writing of arguments on selected topics or issues;

To explore the limits of self-regarding actions and to introduce the notion of side-effects as a limitation;

To explore the distinction between a healthy self-regard and a self-regard which is the contrary; obsessive, narcissistic, and morally unhealthy;

To explore the meaning of harm and particularly of self-harm, to introduce and discuss some practices of self-harm from the perspective of freedom and from a moral perspective;

To consider the practices of self-exposure/disclosure on the social media as possible practices of self-harm, and to discuss cyber-bullying in general as a moral issue;

To discuss the distinction between responsible and praiseworthy and irresponsible or capricious risk-taking;

To distinguish between the egoistic or self-seeking, and the altruistic or generous;

To introduce the notion of physical and mental/emotional integrity as a moral duty one owes oneself.

Module 3 Respect for Others

This module links with the discussion of self-respect and making responsible life choices and with the distinction between making positive life-choices and negative, by first exploring the notion of making something of one's life, then analysing the reasons behind what could lead one to waste one's life or make negative life-choices; and what contributes towards living a self-centred, impoverished, and morally blind life. The point is made that moral blindness usually leads to unfairness in one's dealings with others, and therefore also becomes a question of justice, since moral blindness blinds us to justice.

The idea that justice as fairness requires equality of consideration and that all should be regarded equally. However, equality of consideration is shown to be vulnerable to our human instinct to privilege those who are near and dear to us, our relatives and friends, over others. Is this privileging morally right or just, and if so why? This is one of the most complex ethical issues and it can become very difficult, even insoluble, or take the form of a moral dilemma, when it comes to life and death choices. It is shown to lead to the question whether who the other is, and numbers, are relevant considerations for deciding them. Finally, the question whether equality of consideration is relevant when it comes to choosing between humans and animals, and why?

Objectives:

To consolidate the self-reflective expression on moral matters that interest or affect their daily lives or experiences. This could be done through writing or otherwise, for example, blogs, photography, journal, essays, letters/email to the editor and so on;

To further exercise students in the evaluation and writing of arguments on selected topics or issues;

To introduce the notion of making something of oneself, of living a positive fulfilled life as against a negative and empty one;

To continue to explore the meaning of freedom together with that of responsibility in order to co-ordinate the two ideas; freedom with responsibility;

To re-present self-centred egoism described in the previous module as a form of moral blindness;

To explore the idea of justice together with that of equality of consideration, and to equate the absence of the latter with ethical insensitivity;

To introduce the students to and get them to engage with difficult and complex moral situations that will exercise their thinking;

To emphasize the value of moral reasoning as indispensable for responsible moral choice;

To extend the notion of moral responsibility to the animal realm; to the question whether we have the same moral responsibilities towards animals as towards humans.

Module 4: The Ethics of Self-Care

This module is entered into through the extended discussion of harm already taken up in the previous modules, more specifically of self-harm, the general object being to connect the ethics of respect explored in that programme with the ethics of care. The general point followed in this module is that self-respect finds its expression in an ethics of care of oneself, which is itself defined in Aristotelian terms as the practical undertaking to live one's life in a manner that conforms with the virtue of moderation described by the principle of the golden mean.

The module begins by exploring the notion of care in its general sense in some depth, distinguishing in a preliminary way between care for oneself and care for others which will be the subject of Module 5. The notion of care for the self is shown to be inconsistent with that of self-harm. On the other hand, it is frequently tied in with that of happiness, one's happiness being commonly seen as the main reason why one should care for oneself. The notion of happiness is also subject in turn to deep exploration especially in its relation to pleasure. The utilitarian/hedonistic understanding of happiness as the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain is discussed, then, that of happiness defined as eudaemonia, in its Aristotelian sense; namely as an overall state of general well-being conforming with the virtue of moderation. Inevitably the discussion will need to take on the question of the part pleasure and pain respectively play in human life – how they are and can be valued in relation to happiness.

The objective of the discussions is to distinguish between the satisfaction of pleasure, which may be strong and temporarily satisfying but transitory, and the more profound understanding of happiness as defining one's general existence. Also, the discussion should also enable the students to effect a responsible evaluation of the value of pleasure in their lives, to make the point that not all pleasure is good, and that there is pleasure that is harmful for oneself, and therefore should be avoided. Promoting happiness as a eudaemonic state is seen as morally worth pursuing because it includes a responsible attitude towards the pursuit and enjoyment of pleasure and helps us to put pain and suffering, which are our inevitable human lot, in their proper dimension. Finally, the discussion will help students to identify the responsible pursuit of happiness with self-care.

Objectives

To consolidate the self-reflective expression on moral matters that interest or affect their daily lives or experiences. This could be done through writing or otherwise, for example, blogs, photography, journal, essays, letters/email to the editor and so on;

To consolidate the students' skills and abilities to examine arguments and to write arguments of their own on selected topics or issues;

To press home the importance of self-reflection, of living the examined life and exercising self-mastery as a necessary element of responsibility for oneself;

To enable students to pass from reflecting on self-respect and respect for others to reflecting on how this respect is translated into care for the self and for others generally then focussing on the self;

To continue in this way to press home the importance of self-reflection, of living the examined life and exercising self-mastery as a necessary element of care for oneself and others;

To continue to reinforce the idea of the self as an individual and social being and to continue a more detailed exploration of the relationship between the two;

To strengthen the discussion of moral responsibility; what it means and the importance of responsible life-choices;

To explore the notions of care, pleasure, pain, and happiness (understood as well-being) separately and together for a deeper understanding of these notions and their relations with each other;

To promote the Aristotelian view of happiness as *eudaimonia* against competing hedonistic doctrines and to identify caring for oneself with a *eudaemonic* existence.

Module 5: The Ethics of Care for Others

This module connects with and extends the discussions about care of oneself which cannot be divorced from that of care for the other. The other is here shown to be, in a meaningful way, an extension of oneself just as one's self is an extension of the other. It presents the students with a positive, perfectibilist, representation of self-care (as self-improvement, as making something of oneself and of one's life) as against its minimalist representation as the avoidance of harm, particularly self-harm but also, now, of the other, explored in the previous module. It then makes the point that without knowing how to care for oneself one cannot know how to care for others, while caring for the others (managing one's relationships with them in a morally responsible way through an ethics of care) is an intrinsic part of caring for oneself – thus distancing the ethics of self-care from the outlook of a self-centred egoism.

The module also introduces the notion of self-esteem into the consideration of an ethics of self-care; positive self-esteem being indispensable for both caring for oneself and caring for others. Self-esteem is connected with bullying in several ways; the bullied person's self-esteem is damaged by the experience of being bullied. Contrary from an ethics of care for the other, the relationship is harmful for the bullied and can lead her/him to self-harm, while the

bully in turn demonstrates low self-esteem (because her/his self-esteem requires a victim) and is her/himself also harmed by the bullying, as one is in any damaged relationship. A sense of self-worth is identified with the possession of a high self-esteem, while the higher the self-esteem, the higher the level of respect and care, both for oneself and others.

Finally, the word love is used for that relationship that goes beyond the ordinary sense of care for self and others, though to love does denote to care for. This association with care is what distinguishes loving from merely seeking pleasure in an object (another person, animal or thing). The point is made that pleasure does not depend on nor require a relationship of love, it can be experienced without love, in which case its value is purely one of self-gratification. Thus, the other is treated as an object for that purpose not as a person with his/her own rights and needs. The discussion focuses on sexual pleasure, which is tied with attraction rather than love, though one can also love the person one is attracted to. It moves from here to the discussion of responsible sexual pleasure both from a legal and moral perspective. The discussion is used to make the distinction between legal and moral sanctions on sexual activity.

Objectives:

- To consolidate the self-reflective expression on moral matters that interest or affect their daily lives or experiences. This could be done through writing or otherwise, for example, blogs, photography, journal, essays, letters/email to the editor and so on;
- To emphasise the importance of self-reflection, of living the examined life and exercising self-mastery as a necessary element of responsibility for self and others;
- To enable students to transition from reflecting on self-respect and respect for others to reflecting on how this respect is translated into care for self and for others;
- To introduce the ethics of perfectibility (of self-improvement, of making something of one's life) as a more advanced understanding of care for oneself, to link it with self-esteem, and to tie care for oneself with caring for others;
- To explore the notion of self-esteem in general and to represent positive self-esteem as an indispensable ingredient both of care for oneself and for others;
- To strengthen still further the moral argument against bullying by representing it as the very contrary of our responsibility to care for the other; care for the others being presented as the positive form of respect;
- The presentation of love as the extra-ordinary dimension of the care for others, taking us beyond the latter in the sense of care and the exploration of the relationship of love with sexual pleasure;
- To help the students to understand the difference between the moral and the legal and to appreciate how they are brought together in different societies.

Module 6: The Ethics of Dependence

This module opens by revisiting the relationship between love and sexual gratification. This is defined and understood differently by different moral cultures and communities. It can be

approached from two perspectives, the legal and the moral, which are kept separated in some societies and integrated in others, such that what is deemed immoral is also made illegal. This module marks a further development in the level of moral debate with the teacher, deliberately introducing the different considerations explored in earlier modules into the debate; of rights, consequence, duties and obligations, respect for self and for others and so on, and insisting on their use. Two discussions of this sort are engaged with; on responsible sex and the limits of sexual freedom, which includes discussion of the legal protection of the sexual abuse of minors, in the early part of the Module, and on the obligation to speak for the voiceless, vulnerable other, at the end.

The notion of vulnerability introduced in the first discussion is specifically discussed as a general human condition and linked with dependence – in the sense that it is vulnerability that leads to dependence. Dependence is discussed in its most general sense to include different relations with others induced by vulnerability, beginning with childhood and including different disabilities (temporary or permanent) that people are subsequently vulnerable to throughout their lives. One point made is that dependence is a part of our human condition since no human being is or can be entirely self-sufficient, and that human relationships include relationships of dependence. Another point is that relationships of dependence can change and even be reversed. This can sometimes occur suddenly through misfortune, so that one who cares for another today may find oneself dependent on them in turn tomorrow through a change of circumstance in people's lives – this fact brings into play the principle of reciprocity. Another point is that dependence creates rights for some and responsibilities for others who are morally obliged to care for them.

In the last part a distinction is drawn between permanent or chronic disability which creates a condition of permanent dependence and the temporary disability that can arise from illness or misfortune. The point made is that ideally people should be as self-dependent as possible and should be helped to win back their self-dependence when this is temporarily lost. The discussion is used to introduce the students to the notion of the welfare state based on rights and obligations of mutual solidarity, on the ethics of giving and receiving. The discussion of dependence and solidarity is carried on with reference to the voiceless; to those members of society, the natural environment, irregular migrants, future generations who are unable for different reasons to speak for themselves. The question discussed is whether caring for them includes a moral obligation to speak for them, to give them voice.

Objectives:

To consolidate the self-reflective expression on moral matters that interest or affect their daily lives or experiences. This could be done through writing or otherwise, for example, blogs, photography, journal, essays, letters/email to the editor and so on;

To consolidate the students' skills and abilities to examine arguments and to write arguments of their own on selected topics or issues;

To introduce the students to a deeper level of debate by encouraging them to bring into it the different considerations, of rights, obligations, consequences, etc. explored in earlier modules in a systematic way;

To help them debate the issue of the relationship between love and sexual pleasure and to promote and discuss the notion of responsible sex;

To introduce and discuss the notions of vulnerability and dependence as notions that fall into the debate of care of oneself and others;

To introduce the students to the principle of reciprocity, the ethics of giving and receiving, which arises from the relations of mutual dependence that mark our human condition;

To introduce and discuss the notion of welfare rights as rights of dependence arising from the claims of solidarity and the political form it takes in the welfare state;

To introduce other relations of dependence, to link dependence with lack of voice, and to raise the question whether there is a moral responsibility to speak for the voiceless.

Module 7: The Meaning of Life (and Death)

The introductory discussion in this module is of the claim that life is valuable which is examined in order to present the life and death questions to be explored in a preliminary way. The discussion is also used to reinforce the fact highlighted throughout the whole of the Ethics Programme that different answers to them correspond with the different moral position religious and humanist from which they are approached and that an important influence on the way they are answered is the belief or otherwise in an afterlife. Next different ways of describing a thing's value are identified as intrinsic and as instrumental, to distinguish two ways in which life can be deemed valuable. The first is that its value is intrinsic (that it is valuable in itself and apart from every other consideration), and the second is that its value is instrumental to its being a worthwhile life (one of happiness or flourishing). This Module focuses on the first of these viewpoints, the second will be explored in Module 8. The students are introduced to the general Kantian principle that we should never treat others merely as means, one needs always to treat them as ends.

The important notion of the right to life is introduced for exploration and discussion, and with it to the so-called sanctity of life doctrine which is refined in three stages (All life is sacred. All human life is sacred. All innocent human life is sacred). Every one of these is discussed separately and then together. Meanwhile the issues that feature in debates on the right to life, self-defence, situations of war, capital punishment, non-voluntary euthanasia, assisted suicide, contraception, and abortion, are introduced into the discussion, all to be explained in preparation to being taken to depth in Module 8. Then the discussion proceeds to consider the claim to a right to life in relation to non-human beings, to examine how we need to treat humans and non-humans differently with regards to how we value life, and to discuss how we must treat the lives of non-human, or animal beings. Up to this point the discussion has focused on the first two formulations of the sanctity of life doctrine. Next to be explored is the notion of an innocent human life which features in the third formulation, what it means and what kind of limitations it imposes on the claim to a right to life.

In the discussion of these matters a general discussion of humane and inhumane modes of treating human and non-human beings is made to include a discussion on forms of actions and punishment that include demeaning acts of subjugation, humiliation, the infliction of torture, and mutilation. These are extreme example of how others are treated purely as means, as objects, their rights as persons (as ‘possessors of rights’, foremost amongst which the right to have one’s dignity respected) disregarded and violated, that are discussed with examples taken from different contexts, war, terrorism, work relations (different kinds of slavery), abusive sexual relationships, etc. The differences between how degrading treatment is regarded reflects different cultures, some of which tend to distinguish different ways of treating men and women, and therefore to think of the rights of men and women as distinct and different. In this respect it must be pointed out how gender differences are treated in Maltese society and by Maltese law.

Objectives:

To consolidate the self-reflective expression on moral matters that interest or affect their daily lives or experiences. This could be done through writing or otherwise, for example, blogs, photography, journal, essays, letters/email to the editor and so on;

To extend the students’ skills and abilities to examine arguments and to write their own arguments and reflections on selected topics or issues on narratives or case studies set for them;

To introduce the students to the notion of a right to life and to the issues it raises, to teach them how to reflect on these issues and how to discuss them responsibly;

To introduce the students to the different interpretations of the sanctity of life doctrine, in order to introduce them also to the notions of self-defence and an innocent human life;

To extend the discussion on the right to life to non-human beings, to consider whether it should be extended to such beings and to consider the degree to which non-human life should share the same rights as human;

To explore to greater depth the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value as it applies both to human and non-human life and to introduce the principle that other persons, human beings, must never be used only as means, and always treated as ends;

To reinforce the idea that moral difference is the fruit of cultural and religious difference and must be understood in this way for the sake of tolerance;

To introduce the issues concerning the taking of life human raised in the module for further exploration, reflection, and debate in the next: self-defence, war, capital punishment, non-voluntary euthanasia, assisted suicide, contraception, and abortion;

Module 8: Life and Death Issues

This module opens with an in-depth moral analysis of a case-study that deals with moral dilemmas concerning life and death issues, which will serve as a model for such analyses. This is followed by an in-depth discussion of capital punishment where the human life taken

is presumed guilty – hence outside consideration of the right to life according to the third formulation of the sanctity of life doctrine explored in the final part of Module 7. Then the complex theory of the right to self-defence is explored and discussed in its ramifications and with its distinctions and conditions. This is done through the examination of case-studies or narratives where the right to and/or mode in which self-defence is exercised is controversial and contested. The discussion involves a more basic discussion on the use of violence; the use and extent of use of which is controversial. Evidently the question here is whether violence against human beings is morally justified or legitimate and, if yes, in which situations and to which extent. The different positions - pacifist, realist, and moderate - are explored in the discussion. The discussion is used to cement the case that bullying is cruel and immoral.

Next, a distinction is made between the view that life has intrinsic value; that it is valuable in and of itself which finds expression in the sanctity of life doctrine, and the view that life is valuable only if it is worthwhile, if through it we flourish and are happy, not otherwise. The first was explored in Module 7, Module 8 explores the second, beginning with the notion of a ‘worthwhile life’. The second point of view is linked with the case made for the moral right to die as well as to live, whether through direct (self-inflicted) or assisted suicide, or through non-voluntary euthanasia, which is still very controversial in our society. Questions the debate raises in questions of suicide but also in other situations are: Who owns my life? Do I have the right to do with it what I please, to decide whether or not it is worthwhile? The affirmative answer is made from a liberal viewpoint which recognises individual ‘autonomy’ in making such choices – a concept which needs to be carefully explained. What if I am unable, because of my circumstances (I am in a comatose or vegetative state, or brain-dead) to decide and live on life-support machines, should I be kept alive indefinitely? Who has the right to decide?

The question of when life begins and when it ends (when is one dead?) is regarded by many as crucial to these discussions, for their answers are taken to influence where the recognition of the right to life should begin and end for moral purposes. Put otherwise, the question is about when the individual should be recognised as a moral person; a bearer of moral or human rights including the right to life. This is the way in which the issue of abortion is often presented in Western societies against the feminist claim for a woman’s right over her own body. The last section of this module is about the prevention of life, which includes the issues about contraception.

Objectives

To consolidate the self-reflective expression on moral matters that interest or affect their daily lives or experiences. This could be done through writing or otherwise, for example, blogs, photography, journal, essays, letters/email to the editor and so on;

To extend the students’ skills and abilities to examine arguments and to write their own arguments and reflections on selected topics or issues on narratives or case studies set for them;

To specifically discuss the issues raised and discussed in a preliminary way in Module 7, submitting them to more thorough examination and an in-depth discussion;
To explore the question of violence and the different positions taken about its use, distinguishing its aggressive use from its use in self-defence and identifying the moral boundaries of self-defence;

To introduce students to the contrary position to the sanctity of life doctrine; the argument that life itself has no intrinsic value, that it is valuable only if it is a worthwhile life – a notion which is also discussed in the module;

To explore the claim that there is a right to die with reference to acts of suicide whether self-inflicted or assisted, and to look at death in the context of the value of life – whether death also has value (e.g. sacrificing one's life for others);

To introduce students to and to explore the moral issues that concern the prevention of life, namely contraception and abortion;

To reinforce yet again the case against bullying.

Appendix A – Marking Scheme***Knowledge of Content (total 20 marks)***

Uses misinformation; uses information incorrectly and ignores pertinent information.	0-5 marks
Lists facts without judgement or discussion; may be missing key facts; may recognise, but misinterpret certain information.	6-10 marks
Justifies facts relevant to identified issues or dilemmas; notes which information is missing.	11-15 marks
Recognizes and justifies facts in addition to known facts; makes assumptions to address missing information; may use own experience to add appropriate information.	16-20 marks

Understanding of Ethical Issues (total 20 marks)

Recognises basic and obvious ethical issues, but fails to grasp complexity of interrelationships.	1-5 marks
Recognises basic and obvious ethical issues and grasps (incompletely) the complexities of interrelationships among the issues.	6-10 marks
Recognises ethical issues when issues are presented in a complex, multilayered (grey) context OR can grasp cross-relationships among the issues.	11-15 marks
Recognises ethical issues when presented in a complex, multilayered (grey) context and can recognise cross-relationships among the issues.	16-20 marks

Analysis of Ethical Issues (total 20 marks)

No analysis provided; takes a definitive and unambiguous position without justification; any analysis appears to have been done without reference (explicit or implicit) to guidelines, rules or authority.	1-5 marks
Minimal effort at analysis and justification; relevant rules ignored; may miss or misinterpret key point or position; if ethical theory is cited, it is used incorrectly.	6-10 marks
Applies rules or standards with justification, notes possible consequences or conflicts; correctly recognises applicability of ethical concept(s); recognises that concepts must be specified; coherent approach; partial (incomplete) specification of contexts of concepts.	11-15 marks

Correctly applies ethical constructs; may offer more than one alternative resolution; cites analogous cases with appropriate rationale; considers elements of risk for each alternative; explores context of concepts.	16-20 marks
--	-------------

Application of Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts (20 marks)

Applies ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question with support (using examples, in class, in a group, or a fixed-choice setting) but is unable to apply ethical perspectives /concepts independently (to a new example).	1-5 marks
Applies ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question independently (to a new example) and the application is inaccurate.	6-10 marks
Independently (to a new example) applies ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question accurately, but does not consider the specific implications of the application.	11-15 marks
Independently applies ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question accurately and is able to consider full implications of the application.	16-20 marks

Evaluation of Ethical Issues (20 marks)

States a position but cannot state the objections to and assumptions and limitations of the different perspectives/concepts.	1-5 marks
States a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts, but does not respond to them (and ultimately objections, assumptions, and implications are compartmentalised and do not affect student's position).	6-10 marks
States a position and can state the objections to assumptions and implications of, and respond to the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts, but the response is inadequate.	11-15 marks
States a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of and can reasonably defend against the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts, and the defence is adequate and effective.	16-20 marks