

Philosophical, Religious, and Ethical Inquiry

Student Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate an understanding of philosophical, religious, or ethical concepts, traditions, or practices and their corresponding methods of inquiry.

The Value of Philosophical, Religious, and Ethical Inquiry

Philosophical, religious, and ethical inquiry are related fields of analysis that invite students to explore and engage critically with the concepts, problems, traditions, and practices that constitute those fields of inquiry. These fields provide students with the tools to understand and evaluate philosophical, religious, and ethical claims, to ask pointed questions about the world, and to

discover how to attend to the philosophical, religious, and/or ethical convictions or assumptions that inform diverse peoples and traditions. Beyond this, these fields all build students' analytical and communicative skills and cultivate an ability to engage in respectful dialogue.

Supporting Skills

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of significant concepts, methods, or theories from a particular philosophical, religious, or ethical domain.
2. Students will analyze, or apply to a given problem domain, the appropriate concept, method, theory, or argument from philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.
3. Students will evaluate significant concepts, methods, theories, or arguments within philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.

Course Content Criteria

1. Courses in this category familiarize students with concepts, methods, theories, and/or arguments within philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.
2. Courses in this category challenge students to engage and analyze these concepts, methods, theories, or arguments.
3. Courses in this category use primary and/or secondary sources from the domains of philosophy, religious studies, and/or ethics.
4. Courses in this category have philosophy, religious studies, and/or ethics as a central focus.
5. Courses in this category may not be used to satisfy the Civics and Individual Ethics proficiency.
6. Courses in this category include an assessment assignment that requires students to demonstrate each of the skills in the Philosophical, Religious, and Ethical Inquiry Assessment Rubric (below). This assessment assignment should be one of the following: an objective exam, an essay question on an exam, an essay, or a research paper.

Glossary

1. **Ethical domain:** Courses that fall under the domain of ethical inquiry will cover initial and/or advanced perspectives on what is good, moral, appropriate, just, or right and/or what is bad, immoral, inappropriate, unjust, or wrong in order to increase ethical awareness; and/or will provide students with the necessary theoretical foundation to effectively engage in ethical reasoning and decision-making in a wide variety of situations at the individual, societal, and cultural levels.
2. **Philosophical domain:** Courses that fall under the domain of philosophical inquiry will address traditional or emerging philosophical questions, often fundamental, concerning the nature of reality (metaphysics), our knowledge of it (epistemology), values (theoretical and applied ethics, aesthetics, social and political philosophy), and related topics (language, logic, philosophy of science, philosophy of mind). Philosophical methods of inquiry in these courses place a strong emphasis on presenting, interpreting, and critically evaluating arguments for and against various answers to philosophical questions.
3. **Primary source:** A work that makes an original contribution to the domain of philosophy, religion, or ethics. In philosophy, this could be a book, chapter, article, or essay by a philosopher, living or dead. In religious studies, this could be a foundational religious text like the Bible or the Qu'ran, or commentaries on a foundational text, or a cultural practice or event that is studied through the framework of religious studies. In ethics, this could be a book, chapter, article, or essay making an argument concerning ethics.
4. **Problem domain:** A matter for debate within the fields of philosophy, religious studies, or ethics, or a scenario (hypothetical or actual) that enables insightful consideration of issues or ideas in those fields.
5. **Secondary source:** A work that is an exposition, analysis, or criticism of a primary source. In philosophy, this could be a work that summarizes and explains the philosophical views and arguments of a major philosophical figure or the major views and arguments within an area of philosophical debate. In religious studies, this could be a historical analysis of a primary source, a critical analysis of a religious performance, or a theoretical engagement with a cultural event or practice. In ethics, this could be a white paper or case study, or a discussion or exposition of the major ethical views and arguments.
6. **Religious domain:** Courses that fall under the domain of Religious Studies address traditions commonly referred to by the designation "religion" (such as Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, etc.) including their contents, sects, or subsects. As appropriate to a particular course, this may include practices, beliefs, or texts which may not be commonly referred to as "religious" but are designated as such for the purposes of the course and approached with appropriate methods utilized in Religious Studies in a liberal arts context.

Philosophical, Religious, and Ethical Inquiry Assessment Rubric

Supporting Skills	Exemplary 5	Accomplished 4	Developing 3	Beginning 2	Absent 1
Demonstrate an understanding of significant concepts, methods, or theories from a particular philosophical, religious, or ethical domain.	Shows substantial familiarity with concepts, methods, or theories from a particular philosophical, religious, or ethical domain, with a high degree of accuracy.	Shows considerable familiarity with concepts, methods, or theories from a particular philosophical, religious, or ethical domain, with few inaccuracies.	Shows basic familiarity with concepts, methods, or theories from a particular philosophical, religious, or ethical domain, with some inaccuracies.	Shows a low-level of familiarity with some concepts, methods, or theories from a particular philosophical, religious, or ethical domain, with significant inaccuracies.	Is unable to demonstrate familiarity with concepts, methods, or theories from a particular philosophical, religious, or ethical domain.
Analyze, or apply to a given problem domain, the appropriate concept, method, theory, or argument from philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.	Analyzes or applies, with a high degree of accuracy and nuance, the appropriate concept, method, theory, or argument from philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.	Analyzes or applies, with significant accuracy, the appropriate concept, method, theory, or argument from philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.	Analyzes or applies, with some inaccuracy, the appropriate concept, method, theory, or argument from philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.	Analyzes or applies, with significant inaccuracy, the appropriate concept, method, theory, or argument from philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.	Is unable to analyze or apply the appropriate concept, method, theory, or argument from philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.
Evaluate significant concepts, methods, theories, or arguments within philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.	Convincingly evaluates with a high degree of detail and nuance the strengths and weaknesses of significant concepts, methods, theories, or arguments within philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.	Convincingly evaluates with significant detail the strengths and weaknesses of significant concepts, methods, theories, or arguments within philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.	Evaluates, although not entirely convincingly, the strengths and weaknesses of significant concepts, methods, theories, or arguments within philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.	Evaluates, although not convincingly, the strengths and weaknesses of significant concepts, methods, theories, or arguments within philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.	Is unable to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of significant concepts, methods, theories, or arguments within philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.