

**ECON 375—MORAL ISSUES OF CAPITALISM**  
**Western Kentucky University**  
**Syllabus**

Instructor: Jacob P. Byl      Term: Summer 2022  
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Office Hours: via Zoom at <https://wku.zoom.us/j/91335512771>  
by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is designed to help students think about moral issues that come up in economic systems. We will work through those issues in an analytical way, drawing tools from a range of fields to craft moral arguments—conclusions supported by premises—dealing with issues that come up in the modern economy. We will look at topics in the realms of healthcare, jobs, the environment, and inequality.

**PRE-REQUISITES:** ECON 150, ECON 202, or ECON 203. Special permission by the instructor may also be given for students with appropriate backgrounds and training.

**MATERIALS:** We will be using the textbook *Doing Ethics: Moral Reasoning, Theory, and Contemporary Issues*, 6th ed. by Lewis Vaughn. All other articles for this course will be posted on Blackboard.

**OTHER MATERIALS:** Recorded lectures, assignments, discussion boards, and other course materials will be posted on Blackboard, which will play an especially large role given the online format of the course. I encourage you to check the Blackboard site regularly. You may also want to change your default settings to receive email notifications whenever there is an update to the course.

**GRADING:** Final grades for the course will be based on: participation in discussion boards (20%) weekly assignments (40%) and a final paper (40%). Grades are set on a standard 100-point scale with:

A: 90% to 100%; B: 80% to 89%; C: 70% to 79%; D: 60% to 69%; F: below 60%.

**FINAL PAPER:** The final paper for this course will be on a topic of your choosing, with a list of suggested topics posted on Blackboard. I encourage you to pick a topic that you are really interested in—if it's not on the suggested topics list, email me and I will confirm that it has an appropriate scope for this writing task. A more detailed description of the requirements will be posted on Blackboard, but in general this is a chance for you to show that you can apply what we've learned in the course in a 5 to 8 page paper. The final paper will be due **Friday, June 10**.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** This course is designed to satisfy the following learning objectives:

1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.

**CHEATING:** Cheating is not tolerated at Western Kentucky University and will be penalized in accordance with the policies of the University and the Department of Economics.

**ADA ACCOMMODATIONS:** In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at [sarc.connect@wku.edu](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

**TITLE IX/ DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT:** WKU is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's [Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy](#) (#0.2070) and [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 270-745-3159.

**WKU COUNSELING AND TESTING CENTER:** The university experience should be challenging, but not overwhelming. To this end, the WKU Counseling Center provides a variety of services to help strengthen students' capacity to tolerate distress, form healthy relationships, and seek healthy expressions of their ideals and values. If you would like to speak with someone, you may contact WKU's [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 270-745-3159 or use their Here To Help service at <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/heretohelpemail.php>. If you need immediate help, please visit the Counseling Center in 409 Potter Hall or call the 24-hour emergency help line at 270-843-4357.

Additional information on ADA accommodation, Title IX, and other topics is available at [www.wku.edu/syllabusinfo/](http://www.wku.edu/syllabusinfo/)

## **COURSE OUTLINE by WEEK:**

### **1. Foundations**

Chapter 1: Ethics and Morality

Chapter 2: Objectivism and Relativism

Chapter 3: Moral Arguments

Chapter 4: Moral Theories

### **2. Healthcare**

Chapter 11: Delivering Healthcare

Readings on Blackboard

### **3. Jobs**

Chapter 15: Sexual Morality

Chapter 17: Drugs, Guns, and Personal Liberty

Chapter 20: Ethics of Immigration

Readings on Blackboard

### **4. The Environment**

Chapter 13: Environmental Ethics

Readings on Blackboard

### **5. Inequality**

Chapter 14: Racism, Equality, and Discrimination

Chapter 21: Global Economic Justice

Readings on Blackboard