



## **St. Olaf College General Education Curriculum Ethical Issues and Normative Perspectives (EIN) Requirement**

### **Description:**

An upper level course that analyzes ethical issues from a variety of perspectives that provide norms of justice and well-being and guide moral reasoning. The normative frameworks employed in the course will include one or more perspectives from the Christian theological tradition.

### **Intended learning outcomes:**

*Students will demonstrate:*

1. understanding of particular normative perspectives, including at least one from a Christian tradition.
2. the ability to see similarities and differences in the ethical reasoning of two or more normative perspectives.
3. the ability to analyze current ethical issues from two or more normative perspectives.

### **Course guidelines with Curriculum Committee comments:**

1. The approach and content of this course must be chosen primarily for junior and senior students.
2. The course must be constructed around issues of contemporary ethical concern and of relevance to students' study at St. Olaf.
3. Whatever its disciplinary basis, the course must integrate the disciplinary content and approach with the consideration of ethical issues and the analysis of normative perspectives.

*Comment:* Assuming that instructors teaching the course will include faculty from disciplines in addition to ethics and theology, the Curriculum Committee will expect those instructors to have undertaken appropriate faculty development to prepare to teach the ethical and theological dimensions of

the course at a level appropriate for an upper level, general education course.

That this course must be integrative may be understood in at least two ways. If the course is based upon some discipline other than ethics or Christian theology, then it will be integrative in an interdisciplinary sense: it will bring together its primary discipline and ethical study. At another level it will be integrative by considering how the good offered by one discipline fits into a total concept of what is considered good, how the part is integrated into the whole. This sense would apply even if the course were being taught exclusively as a course in Christian theological ethics or primarily as a course in philosophy. In both cases, it would consider how what the discipline offered fitted into some comprehensive notion of what is good.

4. Ethical analysis is central to the course and should have both a practical and a theoretical dimension to it: it should be practical in its focus upon current issues; it should be theoretical in developing an understanding of moral reasoning itself.
5. The normative perspectives employed in the course must be drawn from a combination of the Christian theological tradition and other traditions, or from the Christian theological tradition alone. The normative perspectives may be historical, contemporary, or a combination of both.

*Comment:* Examples of historical and contemporary normative perspectives include the Aristotelian, utilitarian, Kantian, Marxist, and feminist. They also include perspectives drawn from religions other than Christianity. Examples of historical and contemporary Christian perspectives include the Augustinian, Thomist, Lutheran, liberal, and liberationist.

6. The course must show that there are alternative normative frameworks for critical and constructive ethical reasoning.

### **Information for instructors proposing EIN credit for a specific course:**

The St. Olaf Curriculum Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving proposals to designate individual courses as meeting the Ethical Issues and Normative Perspectives requirement. Instructors may seek EIN credit as part of a proposal for a new course, or may seek to add EIN credit to an existing course. EIN credit is attached to the *course*, not to the instructor or to the specific term in which the course is offered. A proposal for EIN credit must show how the course meets each of the EIN course guidelines; the comments following each guideline provide additional information about how the Curriculum Committee interprets and applies that guideline in reviewing proposals. Instructors are encouraged to consider the comments as well as the guidelines themselves in preparing proposals. Forms and

additional instructions for submitting proposals electronically are available on the website of the [Office of the Registrar](#).

The process for submitting a proposal for EIN credit is the same as the process for submitting a proposal for any other GE credit; the only difference is that the Curriculum Committee confers with the Director of EIN in reviewing submitted proposals. Questions about preparing proposals should be addressed to the Director of EIN.

*August 2011*