Description
Your competence will be assessed through the Ethics THC4 proctored objective exam, and the THA4 performance assessment. This course of study represents 1 competency unit for THA4 and 2 competency unites for THC4. This course of study may take up to six 6 weeks to complete.

Introduction
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Central Time

Overview
Welcome to the Ethics domain at Western Governors University! This academic discipline helps you focus on understanding topics of:
- the early history of ethics,
- religion and moral behavior in society,
- ethical systems,
- the ethics of dignity and freedom, and
- modern ethical theories.

In order to help you understand these topics, you will have the opportunity to engage critically with readings, activities, and religious and ethical writings that will help you demonstrate competency in this subject. Ultimately, this course of study is designed for individuals in all areas of study to achieve a greater understanding and appreciation of what it means to look at the world from different ethical perspectives.

People will always disagree with each other about moral issues, but even when they disagree with each other they can benefit from understanding each other’s arguments. Preparation for the Ethics assessments (THC4 and THA4) will provide the foundation for evaluating and understanding moral claims.

Outcomes and Evaluation
There are 5 competencies covered by this course of study; they are listed in the "Competencies for Liberal Arts Ethics (THC4/THA4)" page found below.
- https://web5.wgu.edu/aap/content/competencies%20for%20thc4.html

You will complete the following assessments as you work through the course of study.
THC4 Objective Assessment
You will complete the following objective assessment:

- THC4

For specific information about this assessment, select this course under the "Course Details" section of your Degree Plan.

THA4 Performance Assessment
The THA4 will consist of 2 tasks, both of which will be essays completed in Taskstream. Screenshots of the tasks for the THA4 performance assessment have been provided to give you a preview of expectations for each task:

- THC4/THA4: Task 110.1.4-01
- THC4/THA4: Task 110.1.5-10,11

Please note that the instructions may change slightly from time to time. For the most up-to-date instructions, evaluation rubrics, and other related material, please log in to TaskStream—www.taskstream.com.

Preparing for Success
The information in this section is provided to help you become ready to complete this course of study. As you proceed, you will need to be organized in your studies in order to gain competency in the indicated areas and prepare yourself to pass the final assessments.

Your Learning Resources
Enroll in or order the learning resources for this course as early as possible so as to give them time to arrive and give you enough time to become familiar with them.

☐ Enroll in Learning Resources
You will need to enroll in or subscribe to additional learning resources as a part of this course of study.

You may already have enrolled in these resources for other courses. Please check the “Learning Resources” tab and verify that you have access to the following learning resources. If you do not currently have access, please enroll or renew your enrollment at this time.

*Note: For instructions on how to enroll in or subscribe to learning resources through the “Learning Resources” tab, please see the “Acquiring Your Learning Resources” page -- [https://web5.wgu.edu/aap/content/acquiring-your-learning-resources.html](https://web5.wgu.edu/aap/content/acquiring-your-learning-resources.html).*

McGraw-Hill eBooks
The following e-text is available to you for free through the Learning Resources tab:

- Ethics eBook

*Note: E-texts are available to you free of charge.*
The MindEdge Ethics modules contain summary discussions, Podcasts, and activities related to major ethical concepts and theories, as well as self assessment quizzes at the end of modules 3-7.

Other Learning Resources
You will use the following learning resources for this course of study.

WGU Library E-Reserves
This course of study utilizes resources located in the WGU Library E-Reserves, with articles available for you to download. For instructions on how to access WGU Library E-Reserves, see the “Accessing WGU Library E-Reserves” page -- https://web5.wgu.edu/aap/content/instructions_for_wgu_library_access.html.

- Chapters 3, 8, 14, and 16 from A Companion to Ethics are available as PDF files on E-reserve through the WGU library.

Additional Preparation
There are many different learning tools available to you within your course of study in addition to the learning resources already discussed. Take the time to familiarize yourself with them and determine how best to fit them into your learning process.

Student Self-Assessment
Before you begin your preparations for the THC4 assessment, you should complete the Student Self-assessment (SSA) for this area. For directions on how to receive access to pre-assessments, see the “Accessing Pre-Assessments” page -- https://web5.wgu.edu/aap/content/accessing%20preassessments.html.

This Student Self-Assessment can be completed on your computer at home or any other convenient location. Do not use your notes or texts when completing the Student Self-Assessment. This will help indicate areas where you will need to focus your study before taking the pre-assessment (PATH) and objective examination (THC4).

Message Boards, Study Notes, FAQs
Message boards, study notes, and FAQs are available in every course of study.

To review these tools, use the “Additional Learning Tools” page -- https://web5.wgu.edu/aap/content/Additional%20Learning%20Tools.html.

Course Mentor Assistance
Course mentors are available to help you. Their job is to aid understanding in areas where you need to improve, and to guide you to the learning resources that will help you. Request their help as needed when preparing for assessments.
If you fail assessment attempts, go through the provided feedback first, then ask specific questions. Mentors cannot guarantee you pass as they do not evaluate assessments; however, they can provide the assistance and advice necessary to help you succeed.

**Elements of Ethical Thought**
The activities under this subject will introduce you to some of the basic questions and problems of ethical thought. All human societies develop forms of morality—codes of conduct and basic beliefs about right and wrong action. Ethics is the branch of philosophy that analyzes and seeks to understand morality and how we make (or, should make) decisions about proper conduct. Several background questions deserve attention before beginning a course of study on ethical thought:

- What is the nature of an ethical theory?
- Can it be proven, like a scientific or mathematical theory? (This is a question that philosophers have argued about for many centuries).
- What does moral judgment consist of?

Thinking about these questions will prove useful as you complete the Course of Study in Ethics.

**Moral Theory**
As background to further study in this domain, you will want to examine the basic elements of moral theory, as well as the question of whether we can ever (or need ever) prove an ethical theory.

**Textbook Readings**
Read the following chapters in James Rachels' *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (in the customized Ethics textbook):

- Read Chapter 1 ("What is Morality?")
- Chapter 3 ("Subjectivism in Ethics") In Chapter 3, focus especially on sections 3.5 and 3.6.
- Preview Chapter 13 ("What Would a Satisfactory Moral Theory be Like?")

Pay close attention to the following concepts and questions as you study these sections:

- What does James Rachels say about a "minimum conception" of morality?
- What does Rachels mean by "moral reasoning"?
- What is the "requirement of impartiality"?
- What is the difference between proof and persuasion?
- How do ethical reasoning and scientific reasoning differ?

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community.

**MindEdge Ethics**
- Listen to Podcast 3.01.
Complete Activity 3.02 "Definitions" and Activity 5.02 "Modern Moral Philosophy", in MindEdge Ethics.

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete these activities:

- Do ethics and legality differ from each other?
- Can you identify the distinctive elements of modern moral philosophy?
- What is the - slippery slope and defense?

**Moral Judgment**

The act of moral judgment is a central topic in the study of ethics. How do we make judgments? What is their basis? And how we should explain them to other people?

☐ **Textbook Readings**

Please read the following in James Rachels' *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (in the customized Ethics textbook):

- Read Chapter 13 (“What Would a Satisfactory Moral Theory Look Like?”) (Please note that this chapter is the last section written by Rachels in the customized Ethics text.)

Here, he clarifies the main questions and concerns that frame his discussions in other chapters.

Pay close attention to the following questions as you study this chapter:

- According to James Rachels, what is the relationship of moral judgment to reason?
- What does Rachels mean by the "moral community"?
- What is a "moral agent"?

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community.

☐ **MindEdge Ethics**

- Complete Activity 7.07, "Moral Judgments"

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete this activity (you will be reviewing the same questions asked in the activity immediately above):

- According to James Rachels, what is the relationship of moral judgment to reason?
- What does Rachels mean by the "moral community"?
- What is a "moral agent"?

**Ancient Ethical Thought**

The activities under this subject will introduce you to some of the basic problems of ethical thought in the ancient world.

Many of the fundamental questions of ethical thought were introduced by philosophers in ancient Greece. Often, their ways of asking a question seem unusual to us on first glance. For example, the philosopher Socrates almost always claimed to be ignorant about any subject being debated (he also almost always won his debates). But it turns out that he had some compelling reasons for making this claim. In addition to helping you understand such interesting
features of ancient philosophy, our resources will help you to find the connections between ancient ethical ideas and modern thought. Pay particular attention to discussions of virtue and knowledge in Greek philosophy.

**Competency 110.1.1: Early History of Ethics**
The graduate identifies seminal moments & concepts in the early history of ethics, including the pre-philosophic origins of ethical thought & the rise of philosophic ethics in classical Greece

**Historical Origins of Morality**
Moral codes and ethical thought emerged in early history as people sought to organize societies (often around religious teachings).

*WGU E-reserves reading*
Read the following chapter from *A Companion to Ethics*:
- Chapter 3 (“Ancient Ethics”) This chapter is available on E-reserves in the WGU Library.

Take notes by responding to the following guiding questions as you read this chapter:
- In what kinds of documents do we find the sources of the earliest known ethical writings? (Pay particular attention to discussions of non-philosophical texts, including "hero stories" that held ethical significance).
- How did value concepts emerge in ancient Mesopotamia?
- What was the historical significance of Hammurabi’s Code?
- Which ethical ideal is presented in the Legend of Gilgamesh?
- What was the Egyptian “Book of the Dead”?
- Which distinctive ethical ideas are contained in the Hebrew Scriptures?

*MindEdge Ethics*
- Complete Activity 3.03 “Human Morality and Early Ethical Texts” in MindEdge Ethics.

Pay close attention to the following questions as you work on this activity (here, you will be reviewing some of the key ideas from Chapter 3 in *A Companion to Ethics*):
- What was the historical significance of Hammurabi’s Code?
- Which ethical ideal is presented in the Legend of “Gilgamesh”?
- What was the Egyptian “Book of the Dead”?
- Which distinctive ethical ideas are contained in the Hebrew Scriptures?

**Greek Philosophy**
Systematic ethical thought developed first in Greek philosophy. The Greek philosophers provided the foundations for much of modern ethical thought.

*Textbook Reading*
Read the following chapters in Stumpf and Fieser's *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond* (in customized Ethics textbook):
- Chapter 1 (“Socrates’ Predecessors”)
Chapter 2 ("The Sophists and Socrates")
Chapter 3 ("Plato")
Chapter 4 ("Aristotle")
Chapter 5 ("Classical Philosophy after Aristotle")

You may want to respond to the following guiding questions or see other students' responses about these chapters in the learning community:

- What did Democritus contribute to ethical thought?
- Who were the Sophists? Why did they emphasize rhetoric?
- Who was Socrates? How did he differentiate himself from the Sophists? What did he believe was the basis of virtue? What did he claim was the root of evil (take note of the fact that he did not believe that anyone was inherently bad)? What did he say about self-interest?
- What was the "Socratic method"?
- Who was Plato? What was his philosophical relation to Socrates? How did his ethical ideas differ from Socrates' philosophy?
- Who was Aristotle? Why did he emphasize virtue? How did his ideas about virtue differ from the views of both Socrates and Plato? (Take note also of differences in how these three philosophers discussed the cardinal virtues).
- What were the main ideas of Epicurus?
- What was the significance of the idea of "reason" in Greek philosophy?

MindEdge Ethics
Complete Activities in MindEdge Ethics:
- Activity 3.04 "Early Greek Philosophy"
- Activity 3.05 "Greek Philosophical Thought: The Sophists and Socrates"
- Activity 3.06 "Plato and Moral Philosophy"
- Activity 3.07 "Who was Aristotle?"
- Activity 3.08 "Aristotle and Ethics"
- Activity 3.09 "Classical Greek Philosophy and Moral Thought"
- Activity 3.10 "Key Concepts and Vocabulary Check"

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete these activities (here, you will be reviewing some of the key ideas from Socrates to Sartre and Beyond):

- What did Democritus contribute to ethical thought?
- Who were the Sophists? Why did they emphasize rhetoric?
- Who was Socrates? How did he differentiate himself from the Sophists? What did he believe was the basis of virtue? What did he claim was the root of evil (take note of the fact that he did not believe that anyone was inherently bad)? What did he say about self-interest?
- What was the "Socratic method"?
- Who was Plato? What was his philosophical relation to Socrates? How did his ethical ideas differ from Socrates' philosophy?
- Who was Aristotle? Why did he emphasize virtue? How did his ideas about virtue differ from the views of both Socrates and Plato (take note also of differences in how these three philosophers discussed the cardinal virtues)?
- What were the main ideas of Epicurus?
- What was the significance of the idea of "reason" in Greek philosophy?

**Virtue Ethics**

One distinctive tradition in the history of ethical thought places virtue at the center of moral life. This tradition, which usually focuses on the Greek philosopher Aristotle, has experienced a revival in the past century (as James Rachels explains in the textbook reading activity below).

**Textbook Reading**

Read the following chapters in James Rachels' *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* in customized Ethics textbook:

- Chapter 12 ("The Ethics of Virtue")

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:

- What is a virtue, according to Aristotle?
- What virtues did Aristotle list?
- What advantages can you cite in the use of "virtue" as an ethical standard?
- What disadvantages can you cite in the use of "virtue" as an ethical standard?
- What is James Rachels's conclusion on whether the theory of virtue can serve as "complete theory" of ethics? How does he explain his conclusion?

**MindEdge Activity**

- Complete Activity 3.11 "Advantages and Disadvantages of Ethics of Virtue"

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete this activity (here, you will be reviewing some of the key ideas from Socrates to Sartre and Beyond):

- What is a virtue, according to Aristotle?
- What virtues did Aristotle list?
- What advantages can you cite in the use of "virtue" as an ethical standard?
- What disadvantages can you cite in the use of "virtue" as an ethical standard?
- What is James Rachels's conclusion on whether the theory of virtue can serve as "complete theory" of ethics? How does he explain his conclusion?

**MindEdge Self-Assessment Quiz**

Complete the following:

- MindEdge Module 3 "Self-Assessment"
- Activity 3.12, a cumulative quiz on ancient ethical thought.
Religion and Morality
The following activities will introduce you to fundamental questions regarding the relationship of ethical thought to religions. From its historical origins to the present day, ethical thought has been closely connected to religious ideas, beliefs, and customs. Because religions have emerged in so many different forms throughout the world, it is not surprising to find that ethical thought has also taken many forms. But sometimes we overlook ethical themes that cut across many (or even all) religions. You will want to watch carefully for themes that appear in relation to more than one religion. In order to grasp many of the key questions and concept of ethical thought, we must study closely the ethical ideas associated with the major religions.

Competency 110.1.2: Religion & Moral Behavior in Society
The graduate understands the arguments related to the relationship between religion & moral behavior in society.

Theories of Moral Authority
The theories of "Divine Command" and "Natural Law" have provided two significant ways of viewing ethical life and the nature of moral authority within the history of Christian thought.

Textbook Reading
Read the following in James Rachels' The Elements of Moral Philosophy (in the customized Ethics textbook):
- Chapter 4 ("Does Morality Depend on Religion?")

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:
- What is the source of moral authority in Divine Command Theory?
- What key dilemmas are introduced in the study of Divine Command Theory?
- What is the relationship between Natural Law and God's will? What does James Rachels say about the problem of "what is the case" vs. "what ought to be the case"?
- Why is there a conflict between Natural Law and science?

MindEdge Activities
Complete the following activities:
- Activity 4.03 "Divine Command Theory"
- Activity 4.04 "Natural Law"

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete these activities (here, you will be reviewing some of the key ideas from James Rachels' "Does Morality Depend on Religion?"):
- What is the source of moral authority in Divine Command Theory?
- What key dilemmas are introduced in the study of Divine Command Theory?
- What is the relationship between Natural Law and God's will?
- What does James Rachels say about the problem of "what is the case" vs. "what ought to be the case"?
- Why is there a conflict between Natural Law and science?

**World Religions**

The following activities will guide you through an exploration through several world religions that play crucial roles in ethical thought.

**Textbook Readings (Eastern Religions)**
Read the following in Michael Molloy's *Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change* (in the customized Ethics textbook):
- Chapter 3 ("Hinduism")
- Chapter 4 ("Buddhism")
- Chapter 5 ("Jainism and Sikhism")
- Chapter 6 ("Daoism and Confucianism")

Read the following in Michael Brannigan's *Ethics Across Cultures: An Introductory Text with Readings* (in the customized Ethics textbook).
- Chapter 7 ("Hindu Dharma")

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:

**Hinduism:**
- What is the Bhagavad-Gita?
- How has a system of social castes in India been significant in the development of Hinduism?
- What was the significance of the Ramayana?
- What were the Vedas?
- What are karma, artha, kama, dharma, and moksha?

**Classical Chinese- Confucianism and Daoism:**
- How were the "Five Great Relationships" central to the teachings of Confucius?
- What is the Dao (or, "the Way")?
- What significance is held by the Dao de Jing (Tao Te Ching)? What kind of text was this?

**Jainism:**
- What is ahimsa?
- How did ahimsa guide moral conduct under Jainism?
- Buddhism: What are the Four Noble Truths?
- What is the Eight Fold Path?
- What is the relationship of the Mahayana sutras to the Buddha?
- What characterizes the state of nirvana?
- What functions does meditation serve?
- Why is the idea of reincarnation central to Buddhism?
Gandhianism:
- Who was Mahatma Gandhi?
- Why were passive restraint and practical wisdom central to Gandhian ethics?
- How did Gandhianism draw on and transform concepts from other traditions (particularly Jainism)?

☐ Textbook Readings (Monotheistic Religions)
Read the following in Michael Molloy's *Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change* (in the customized Ethics textbook):
- Chapter 8 ("Judaism?")
- Chapter 9 ("Christianity")
- Chapter 10 ("Islam")

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:

Judaism:
- What are central ethical ideas associated with Hebrew scripture?
- What are the distinctive features of the Torah?
- What is Kabbalah?
- What is the ethical significance of Halakhah?

Christianity:
- How do the Ten Commandments shape ethical thought?
- What is the ethical ideal embodied by the Golden Rule?
- How do Christian ethics diverge from the ethical ideals of Judaism?

Islam:
- Who was the Prophet Muhammad?
- What is the Qur'an?
- What are the Five Pillars?
- How do the Shi'a tradition and the Sunni tradition differ from each other?

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community.

☐ WGU E-Reserves Reading
Read the following chapter from *A Companion to Ethics*. This chapter is available on E-reserves in the WGU Library:
- Chapter 8 ("Christian Ethics")

Pay close attention to the following questions as you read this chapter:
- What are the central components of Christian ethics?
- How do Christian ethics diverge from the ethical ideals of Judaism?
- How does Richard Niebuhr explain the relation of Christ and culture?

☐ MindEdge Activities
Complete the following activities:
- Activity 4.05 "Eastern Religion and Ethics"
• Activity 4.06 "Monotheistic Religions and Ethics"

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete these activities (here, you will be reviewing some of the key ideas from the chapter readings):

**Judaism:**
- What are central ethical ideas associated with Hebrew scripture?
- What are the distinctive features of the Torah?
- What is Kabbalah?
- What is the ethical significance of Halakhah?

**Christianity:**
- How do the Ten Commandments shape ethical thought?
- How do Christian ethics diverge from the ethical ideals of Judaism?

**Islam:**
- Who was the Prophet Muhammad?
- What is the Qur’an?
- What are the Five Pillars?

**Religion and Social Ethics**
One of the central issues in ethical thought is how religious teachings can guide moral behavior.

☐ **Textbook Reading**
Read the following chapter in James Rachels’ *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* in customized Ethics textbook).
- Chapter 4 (“Does Morality Depend on Religion?”)

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:
- Are morality and religion the same thing?
- According to James Rachels, what dilemmas are created by applying religious teachings-scriptural and traditional - to contemporary social issues?
- According to James Rachels, do religious beliefs provide definition solutions to specific moral issues?

☐ **MindEdge Activity**
Complete the following activity:
- Activity 4.08 "Applying Religious Teachings to Contemporary Social Issues"

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete this activity:
- What dilemmas are created by applying religious teachings-scriptural and traditional-to contemporary social issues?
- Do religious beliefs provide definition solutions to specific moral issues?
Early Modern Ethical Systems
The activities under this subject will introduce you to two significant ethical systems initially developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

- Social contract theory and Utilitarianism
- Social contract theory emerged in the writings of Thomas Hobbes in the seventeenth century

Both of these theories have significantly influenced the development of modern ethical thought. You will want to refer back to these theories throughout the rest of this Course of Study.

Competency 110.1.3: Ethical Systems
The graduate identifies the major points of view & influences of Social Contract & Utilitarian ethical systems.

Social Contract
The following activities will guide you through the theories of social contract.

Textbook readings
Read the following chapter in James Rachels’ *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (in the customized Ethics textbook).

- Chapter 10 ("The Idea of a Social Contract")

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:

- What is Thomas Hobbes's argument for basing morality on the social contract?
- What is the "state of nature" according to Hobbes? Why is it important?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of social contract ethics, according to James Rachels?
- How can "civil disobedience" be justified, according to modern social contract theory?

MindEdge Activities
Complete the following activities:

- Activity 5.03 "Hobbes and the Social Contract"
- Activity 5.04 "Strengths and Weaknesses of the Social Contract"
Pay close attention to the following concepts as you complete these activities (here, you will be reviewing some of the key ideas from James Rachels’ “The Idea of a Social Contract?”):

- What is Thomas Hobbes's basic argument for an ethics based on a social contract?
- What is the "state of nature" according to Hobbes? Why is it important?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of social contract ethics?
- How can civil disobedience be justified, according to modern social contract theory?

**Utilitarianism**

The following activities will guide you through an exploration through the history and philosophy of utilitarianism.

- **Textbook readings**
  Read the following chapter in Stumpf and Fieser’s *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond* (in the customized Ethics textbook)
  - Chapter 14 (“Utilitarianism and Positivism”)
  Read the following chapter in Brannigan's *Ethics Across Cultures* (in the customized Ethics textbook)
  - Chapter 5 (“Utilitarian Ethics”)
  Read the following chapters in James Rachels’s *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (in the customized Ethics textbook):
  - Chapter 6 (“The Utilitarian Approach”)
  - Chapter 7 (“The Debate Over Utilitarianism”)

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:

- What are the basic elements of a definition of utilitarianism?
- What is consequentialism?
- How did the ideas of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill differ?
- What does the - greatest good for the greater number mean?
- According to James Rachels, what arguments support the theory of utilitarianism?
- According to James Rachels, what are the strengths and weaknesses of utilitarianism?

- **MindEdge Activities**
  Complete the following activities:
  - Activity 5.05 “Empiricism”
  - Activity 5.06 "Utilitarianism”
  - Activity 5.07 "Criticisms of Utilitarian Ethics”

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete these activities:

- How is utilitarianism related to the tradition of empirical philosophy?
- What are the basic elements of a definition of utilitarianism?
- What was Jeremy Bentham's attitude towards capital punishment?
- How did the ideas of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill differ?
- What does the - greatest good for the greater number mean?
- What are four major objections to utilitarian ethics?

☐ MindEdge Self-Assessment Quiz
Complete the following MindEdge Module and activities:
- Module 5 "Self-Assessment"
- Activity 5.08 "Key Concepts and Vocabulary Check"
- Activity 5.09, a cumulative quiz on social contract theory and utilitarianism.

Kantian Ethics
The activities under this subject will introduce you to the ethical thought of Immanuel Kant. Immanuel Kant transformed ethical thought at the end of the eighteenth century. He emphasized the ability of the individual to use reason to figure out universal moral principles (rules that, according to reason, everyone should always follow). In contrast to many of his philosophical predecessors, Kant viewed any moral rule as illegitimate that was not the product of the individual's own use of reason.

Competency 110.1.4: Ethics of Dignity & Freedom
The graduate knows the arguments contained in the ethics of dignity and freedom as argued by Immanuel Kant.

Freedom, Dignity, and Duty
The following activities will guide your study of Kantian ideas of freedom, dignity, and duty.

☐ Textbook readings
Read the following chapter in Stumpf and Fieser's *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond* (in the customized Ethics textbook):
- Chapter 12 ("Kant")

Read the following chapters in James Rachel's *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (in the customized Ethics textbook).
- Chapter 8 ("Are There Absolute Moral Rules?")
- Chapter 9 ("Kant and Respect for Persons")

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:
- How would you define Kant's idea of autonomy?
- What is heteronomy, according to Kant?
- How did Kant's ethics represent a response to previous ethical theories?
- What does dignity consist of, according to Kant?
- How did Kant's retributive theory of punishment differ from Utilitarian philosophy (specifically Jeremy Bentham's theory of punishment)?
**WGU E-Reserves reading**

Read the following chapter from *A Companion to Ethics*:
- Chapter 14 ("Kantian Ethic")

This chapter is available on E-reserves in the WGU Library. Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:
- How did Kant's ethics represent a response to previous ethical theories?
- What does Kant mean by a "Good Will"? And why is this concept important?
- What do dignity and respect consist of, according to Kant?

**MindEdge Activities**

Complete the following activities:
- All activities (with the exception of Activity 6.10 "Self-Assessment") in Module 6 "Kant: Ethics of Dignity and Freedom"
- Listen to Kant overview Podcast 6.01.
- Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete these activities:
  - What does dignity consist of, according to Kant?
  - How did Kant's retributive theory of punishment differ from Utilitarian philosophy (specifically Jeremy Bentham's theory of punishment)?

**Categorical Imperative**

The Categorical Imperative is the central concept in Kant's theory of ethical decision-making. You might think of it as blueprint, or a formula, that tells us what we can do to assure that we will be able to use our reason to establish universalizable moral principles. As our resources explain, Kant presented his Categorical Imperative in several different formulations.

**Textbook Readings**

Read the following chapter in James Rachels' *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (in the customized Ethics textbook):
- Chapter 8 ("Are There Absolute Moral Rules?")

Read the following chapter in Stumpf and Fieser's *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond* (in the customized Ethics textbook, especially pages 193-195):
- Chapter 12 ("Kant")

Read the following chapter in Michael Brannigan, *Ethics Across Cultures* (in the customized Ethics textbook, especially pages 701-707):
- Chapter 4 ("Kant's Deontology")

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:
- What are the different formulations of the Categorical Imperative?
- What is an absolute rule?
Why is universalizability important to Kant's ethics?
What does Kant mean by the "Kingdom of Ends"?
How does Kant explain that lying is never acceptable?

MindEdge Activities
- Review all activities (with the exception of Activity 6.10, "Self-Assessment") in Module 6 "Kant: Ethics of Dignity and Freedom"
- Listen to Kant overview Podcast 6.01.

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete these activities:
- What are the different formulations of the Categorical Imperative?
- What is an absolute rule?
- Why is universalizability important to Kant's ethics?
- What does Kant mean by the -Kingdom of Ends?
- How does Kant explain that lying is never acceptable?

☐ Website Visit
Visit the following website for an overview of Kant's Moral Theory.

Criticisms of Kant
Few philosophers have influenced the history of ethical thought to the extent that Kant has. And few have received more thorough criticism.

☐ Textbook Readings
Read the following chapter in James Rachels' The Elements of Moral Philosophy (in the customized Ethics textbook).
- Chapter 8 ("Are There Absolute Moral Rules?")

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:
- What does James Rachels conclude about Kant and the case of the "Inquiring Murderer"? Why does he reach this conclusion?
- Why does Rachels emphasize conflicts between rules?
- Does Kant's ethical theory appear salvageable, according to Rachels?

☐ WGU E-Reserves readings
Read the following chapter from A Companion to Ethics This chapter is available on E-reserves in the WGU Library:
- Chapter 14 ("Kantian Ethics") especially pages 181-183

Respond to these guiding questions in your notebook. You may also want to explore these questions in the Ethics learning community:
- Why is Kant criticized for formalism?
- Why is Kant criticized for rigorism?
- Why is Kant criticized for abstraction?
- How does Kant's ethical theory struggle with "conflicting grounds of obligation"?
MindEdge Activity
- Review Activity 6.09 "Criticism of Kant's Ethics",
Pay close attention to the following concepts as you review this activity:
- Why do some criticisms of Kant focus on absolute rules?
- What problems emerge if we accept Kant's effort to universalize morality?

MindEdge Self-Assessment Quiz
- Complete the MindEdge Module 6 "Self-Assessment",
- Complete Activity 6.10, a cumulative quiz on Kant's ethics.

Modern Ethical Thought
The following activities will introduce you to major concepts and theories in modern ethical thought.
One of the major themes of post-Kantian ethical thought has been the turn away from universal moral principles. Why has this happened? Part of the answer may lie in the emphasis of modern thought on the differences rather than similarities that emerge when we examine how people experience the world around them. But are there philosophical reasons for this turn away from Kant's ethical vision? The three theories to be studied in this week-relativism, subjectivism, and egoism- represent significant modern attempts to understand morality in non-universal forms.

Competency 110.1.5: Modern Ethical Theories
The graduate identifies the major modern (post-Kantian) ethical theories-Cultural Relativism, Subjectivism, and Egoism.

Relativism
Cultural or moral relativism is a way of viewing ethical life that rests on the observation that different cultures appear to maintain different moral codes. Relativists conclude from this observation that there exist no universal moral standards.

Textbook Reading
Read the following chapter in James Rachels' *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (in the customized Ethics textbook):
- Chapter 2 ("The Challenge of Cultural Relativism")

Take notes by responding to the following guiding questions as you read this chapter:
- How does cultural relativism differ from other ethical theories?
- What is the evidence upon which relativism is based?
- What does James Rachels identify as the "Cultural Differences Argument"? What is the significance of the "Cultural Differences Argument" for cultural relativism?
- What values does Rachels identify as universal?
- What are some prevalent criticisms of relativism?
MindEdge Activities
Listen to Podcast 7.01. Complete Activity 7.02 "Cultural Relativism",
- Complete activity 7.03 "The Question of Universal Values"

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete these activities:
- What are the basic elements of cultural relativism?
- What are some prevalent criticisms of relativism?
- What values might be considered universal?

Subjectivism
Although it builds upon a number of old traditions in the history of ethical thought,
subjectivism has found its largest audience in the past century. The primary claim of this
theory is that our moral judgments reflect our feelings and emotions (this claim has been
made in a number of different ways).

Textbook Readings
Read the following chapter in James Rachels’ The Elements of Moral Philosophy
(in the customized Ethics textbook):
- Chapter 3 (“Subjectivism in Ethics”)

Take notes by responding to the following guiding questions as you read this
chapter:
- What is the basis for the primary claim of ethical subjectivism?
- What is simple subjectivism?
- What is emotivism? How does it differ from simple subjectivism?
- What are some of the reasons why this theory might be appealing?
- What weakness does James Rachels point out in this theory?

MindEdge Activity
Review Activity 7.04 "Ethical Subjectivism and Emotivism"

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete this activity:
- Who was David Hume? What did his philosophy emphasize?
- What are the elements of ethical subjectivism?
- How does emotivism build upon simple subjectivism?

Egoism
In ethical thought, egoism refers to behavior motivated by self-interest. In approaching
this topic, you will read about two versions of the theory: psychological egoism and
ethical egoism.

Textbook reading
Read the following chapter in James Rachels’ The Elements of Moral Philosophy
(in the customized Ethics textbook):
- Chapter 5 (“Ethical Egoism”)
Take notes by responding to the following guiding questions as you read this chapter:

- What should motivate ethical decision-making, according to ethical egoism?
- What motivates our moral behavior, according to psychological egoism?
- How does ethical egoism differ from psychological egoism?
- Is altruism possible, according to psychological egoism?
- What is the strategy of reinterpreting motives?
- What are some prevalent criticisms of ethical egoism?
- What are some prevalent criticisms of psychological egoism?
- What is the difference between selfishness and self-interest?
- What major fallacy does psychological egoism commit?

☐ WGU E-Reserves reading

Read the following from A Companion to Ethics this chapter is available on E-reserves in the WGU Library.:  
- Chapter 16 ("Egoism").

Take notes by responding to the following guiding questions as you read this chapter:

- What should motivate ethical decision-making, according to ethical egoism?
- What are some prevalent criticisms of ethical egoism?
- What are the strong and weak versions of ethical egoism?

☐ Website visits

Visit the following websites to find summary information regarding theories of egoism.

- Psychological Egoism--http://philosophy.lander.edu/ethics/egoism.html
- Egoism--http://www.iep.utm.edu/egoism/

Pay close attention to the following questions as you visit these websites:

- What is the difference between selfishness and self-interest?
- What are the strong and weak versions of ethical egoism?
- How does ethical egoism differ from psychological egoism?
- What major fallacy does psychological egoism commit?

☐ MindEdge Activities

Complete Activity 7.05 "Ethical Egoism",
- Listen to Podcast 7.01.

Pay close attention to the following questions as you complete this activity:

- How does ethical egoism differ from psychological egoism?
- Is altruism possible, according to psychological egoism?
- What is the strategy of reinterpreting motives?
- What are some prevalent criticisms of ethical egoism?
- What are some prevalent criticisms of psychological egoism?
What is the difference between selfishness and self-interest?
What is the Principle of Equal Treatment?

☐ MindEdge Self-Assessment Quiz
Complete the following:
- MindEdge Module 7 "Self-Assessment",
- Activity 7.06, "Key Concepts and Vocabulary Check"
- Activity 7.08, a cumulative quiz on modern ethical theories

Final Steps
Congratulations on completing the Ethics domain in the Liberal Arts at Western Governors University! As you progress through your WGU program, you will find that much of the information you have learned can be applied to other subjects. For example, the study of reasoning and problem-solving will draw on and help you develop your understanding of ethical reasoning. You will find that the insights of Socrates and Immanuel Kant, in particular, inform many areas of learning-ranging from natural science to social science.

The study of ethics can help us make good decisions about the dilemmas we encounter in our professional and personal lives. It also can provide an understanding of the different ways of thinking about morality that we encounter. Our own ethical decisions often require that we understand others perspectives. The study of ethical thought beyond this Course of Study will hone your abilities to understand other people in all kinds of settings.

Assessment Information
The following activities will prepare you for taking the THC4 proctored objective assessment.
Now that you have completed the reading and worked through the activities in Liberal Arts Ethics, you are ready to take the pre-assessment (PATH) for the THC4 proctored objective assessment.

☐ Accessing Pre-Assessments
Take the pre-assessment before taking the THC4 proctored essay assessment. For directions on how to receive access to pre-assessments, see the “Accessing Pre-Assessments” page listed below.
- https://web5.wgu.edu/aap/content/accessing%20preassessments.html

☐ Accessing Objective Assessments
Once you have obtained a satisfactory score on the pre-assessment, you are ready to demonstrate your competency in the Ethics domain by taking the THC4 proctored objective assessment. Review your notes in your study journal. Review readings to fill in any holes in your notes. Engage in the Learning Space discussion threads or contact a course mentor for further clarification of concepts.

For directions on how to receive access to objective assessments, see the “Accessing Objective Assessments” page below.
• https://web5.wgu.edu/aap/content/accessing%20objective%20assessments.html

☐ Task 1 Final Preparation Checklist
Complete the “Task 1 Checklist (https://web5.wgu.edu/aap/content/thc4-tha4%20task%201%20checklist.pdf)” document.

☐ Task 2 Final Preparation Checklist
• Complete the “Task 2 Checklist (https://web5.wgu.edu/aap/content/thc4-tha4%20task%202%20checklist.pdf)” document.

☐ Accessing Performance Assessments
You are now ready to demonstrate your competency in the Ethics domain by completing the THA4 performance assessment. Review your notes in your study journal. Review readings to fill in any holes in your notes. Engage in the Learning Space discussion threads or contact a course mentor for further clarification of concepts.

You will complete the following tasks:
• THA4: Task 1 Kant's Ethical Thought
• THA4: Task 2 Psychological Egoism and Ethical Egoism

For directions on how to receive access to performance assessments, see the “Accessing Performance Assessments” page below.
• https://web5.wgu.edu/aap/content/accessing%20performance%20assessments.html

Feedback
To provide feedback on this or any other course of study, please use the Course of Study Feedback form found below.
• http://www.wgu.edu/cosfeedback

ADA Requirements
Please review the University ADA Policy found below.
• http://kb.wgu.edu/article.asp?article=1019&p=3