Disgrifiad y Cwrs/Course Description:

What is so deadly about the ‘deadly sins’? Does the inclusion of gluttony, lust and sloth merely reflect a Puritanical suspicion that virtue can’t be any fun? Does the person without pride lack anything but appropriate self-respect? Aren’t such alleged vices less deadly than some so-called virtues? What are faith and hope but an abdication of responsibility for one’s beliefs and a foolish penchant for comforting delusions? Have we inappropriately medicalised vices such as addiction? Does research on ‘implicit bias’ show that the most virtuous of efforts will anyway be undermined by vices of which we are not even aware?

This course will explore the nature of vice in the light of both philosophical theory and psychological research. We will examine what guidance philosophy may offer us in shaping our characters, evaluating those of our fellow citizens and formulating public policy.

No previous knowledge of philosophy will be assumed.

The specific content of the course will vary, but the following list of sample topics indicate the kind of subject matter which may be discussed:

- What can psychology tell us about the empirical respectability, or otherwise, of our concept of ‘vice’?
- What makes a character trait a virtue or a vice?
- What is the nature of particular vices?
- Are some vices especially ‘deadly’ and, if so, why?
- Can somebody have one or more vices while still possessing some virtues?
- Does the nature of particular vices make them especially corrupting of good character?
- What is the relation between vice, blameworthiness and moral responsibility for character and action?
- Is addiction a vice or an illness?
- To what extent are we responsible for our implicit biases and their influence on our behaviour? Do implicit biases necessarily undermine virtue? What, if anything, can we do about them?
- How can we eradicate vices in ourselves, prevent their development in our children, and assist our fellow citizens to resist them?
- Can public policy shape citizens’ character? Should it?

The course may draw on case studies and examples from fiction and non-fiction to illustrate the theoretical positions discussed and students are encouraged to draw further examples from their own experience.
Amcanion/Goals:

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of core elements of the course material;
- critically read and analyse a philosophical text;
- use philosophical vocabulary appropriate to the subject matter of the specific course;
- formulate and defend a philosophical thesis;
- constructively discuss philosophical ideas with others;
- recognise, analyse and critically evaluate arguments;
- compare and contrast different positions on an issue;
- explain and defend a view clearly and concisely whether orally or in writing;
- respond constructively to disagreement;
- evaluate claims concerning ethical character in the context of historical and contemporary discussions;
- bring the insights of both philosophy and psychology to bear on questions concerning the nature of vice; the architecture of character, virtues and vices; and the implications for public policy;
- formulate useful questions in the context of ethical theory, empirical research and public policy.

Amgylchedd/Environment:

If something occurs which you feel negatively affected your ability to learn, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me. If you have any disability which may affect your ability to succeed in the class, please discuss any accommodations you may require with me as soon as possible.

Cymraeg/Welsh:

Croeso i chi anfon ebost ataf yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

Ymhellach, mae gennych hawl i gael eich asesu trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu’r Saesneg. Os hoffech gael eich asesu yn Gymraeg, rhowch wybod imi cyn gynted à phosib.

You are welcome to send email to me in Welsh or English.

Furthermore, you have a right to be assessed through the medium of Welsh or English. If you would like to be assessed in Welsh, please let me know as soon as possible.

Cyfrifon Llyfrgell a Chyfrifiadur/Library and Computer Accounts:

You will be provided with details of your computer account during the first class provided that you registered in advance and do not already have one. Your computer account will enable you to submit work for feedback and assessment, to make use of institutional subscriptions to electronic resources and to use the university’s computing facilities.

All students are entitled to use the university libraries. Lifelong Learning students can obtain a card from the library in the Centre for Lifelong Learning on Senghennydd Road.

As the course proceeds, we will draw on a number of resources, including the paper and electronic resources available through the university, publicly accessible internet sources and photocopies.
Llyfrau/Books:

*You will need your library/computer account in order to access certain readings.*

Readings listed in the class schedule are key. In general, you will find it difficult to follow the class if you have not read the assigned readings for that week. Where possible, these key readings will be included in the course packet.

Asesiad/Assessment:

Assessment for this module consists of (i) a contribution to a class glossary, and (ii) a final paper.

**Glossary entry** 300–400 words (20%)

- Each student will be responsible for writing one entry. There will be opportunities to draft, discuss and revise these entries in class, although students are welcome to work on them further outside class time if they wish to.

- Finalised entries should be typed and submitted electronically as explained above.

- I will collate the entries into a glossary of key terms as a resource for all members of the class. Obviously, I will only include entries whose authors do not object to my doing so. If you would prefer that I not include your entry in the collection, just let me know.

- We will discuss the format and content of entries in class but the basic idea is that your entry should explain the relevant term to the ‘bright 14 year old’ with no knowledge of philosophy described in my handout on writing philosophy.

**Paper** 1,200–1,500 words (80%)

- A draft should be submitted in advance and will be returned with comments to help you prepare the final version.

- A list of topics and other details will be provided.

- Both drafts and final papers should be typed and submitted electronically as explained below.

- Deadlines are marked on the class schedule.

General The following points apply to all work submitted for assessment.

- All work should include appropriate references, be double-spaced in a reasonable font and submitted electronically through Learning Central, which includes plagiarism detection.

- Do not include your name on your work itself. Use your student identification number instead. This enables me to grade ‘blind’ (or at least attempt to).

- Deadlines are marked on the included class schedule.

- ‘Asesiad/Assessment’ and ‘Adnoddau/Resources’, included in this course packet, provide detailed instructions and guidance, and I am happy to answer any questions in class.

- Please keep copies of all work submitted.

*Please keep copies of all work submitted.*
Cyfeirnodi/Referencing:

The Centre’s Student Handbook explains the basics of formatting citations and references and is available online at [http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/learn/choices/student-information/](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/learn/choices/student-information/).

The handbook also explains what plagiarism is and strategies for avoiding it. **You should read this if you are in any doubt whatsoever about these matters.** I would be happy to answer any further questions you might have.

Achrediad a Chyllid/Accreditation and Funding:

This is an accredited course. The guidelines anticipate that students will study for 80–100 hours for a 10 credit module such as this one, including class contact time and activities outside the classroom.

Students taking the course as a free-standing module should ensure that I am aware of this and that I have your full details as you are not included on the pre-printed register and the paperwork necessary for reporting assessment will not be automatically generated. Please also ensure that you provide me with your home school, your university email address, a current telephone number and preferred postal address so that you can be contacted if necessary. I do not have these and the Centre may not have them if your home school registered you directly.

I strongly encourage all students to attempt one of the assessment options. Even if you are not personally concerned with gaining the credits available, there are at least two reasons to participate. The first and most important reason is that assessment is designed as an integral part of the course and will form the basis for class discussion and collaboration. Participation should enhance your understanding of the reading and enable you to get the most out of the class. I hope that completing the assignments will prove an enjoyable and stimulating part of the course.

Unfortunately, the second reason is less pedagogically inspiring. *The viability of the Centre in general, and the humanities programme in particular, depends on students attempting assessment.* This is a consequence of national educational funding policy. The Centre relies on two primary sources of income to fund its programmes: student fees and HEFCW funding. We receive no HEFCW funds for students who do not attempt assessment.

Amserlen y Cwrs/Course Schedule

This schedule is tentative and may require modification depending on the pace at which we cover the material. Full references for all readings are included in the list which follows this schedule.

Further readings are included in the topic introductions later in the course packet. This reflects their secondary importance.

*The key to success when beginning philosophy is to read the core material carefully, and to actively seek to understand and evaluate it.* Some readings may seem short, but you will often need to read them two or three times in order to prepare well for class.
Fatal Attractions

Week 1: 28 Sept  Once upon a time...

Illusory Goods

Week 2: 5 Oct  Temptation & Illusion
Murray, ‘Vice and Illusion: The Psychology of Vice’ (1936)

Deontological Approaches

Week 3: 12 Oct  Failing Oneself
Kant, Metaphysics of Morals (1999, AK 6:421–437)

Week 4: 19 Oct  Snobbery
Hill, ‘Social Snobbery and Human Dignity’ (2012)

The Deadly Seven

Week 5: 26 Oct  Destructive Desires
Taylor, Deadly Vices (2006, ch. 2)

— Wythnos Darllen/Reading week —

6 Nov  Draft glossary entries due by noon.

Beyond the Seven

Week 6: 9 Nov  Ignorance Is No Excuse

Week 7: 16 Nov  Efficiency & Ethical Deficiency

20 Nov  Glossary entries due by noon.

Vicious Attitudes

Week 8: 23 Nov  Bad Attitudes
Hurka, ‘Vices as Higher-Level Evils’ (2001)

27 Nov  Draft papers due by noon.

Week 9: 30 Nov  The Problem of Implicit Vice
§7 Sick Minds

Week 10:  7 Dec  Poor Health or Bad Character?

— Diwedd y dosbarthiadau/Classes end —

14 Dec  Papers due by noon.

CYFEIRIADAU/References


