

PIU33112 — Metaethics

Module Information	
Module Code	PIU33112
Module Title	Metaethics
Department	Philosophy
Year Group	Junior Sophister
Module Personnel	Dr. Farbod Akhlaghi
Academic Year	2026-27
Credit Weighting	10 ECTS
Semester	2
Contact Hours	22 hours (2 hours of lectures per week)

Module Content	
Module Description	The chances are that you have some views about the nature of morality. Perhaps you think morality is all a matter of your own opinion; that objective moral truths depend upon the existence and commands of a deity; or even that there are no moral truths. These and other views about the nature of morality are investigated in metaethics. In this course, we will undertake a journey together through some major metaethical debates. That journey, however, will be unlike a standard ‘key topics’ course in metaethics. Instead, the module has two aims, which we will pursue in two halves (separated by Reading Week). The first half of the module focusses on several questions that build up a picture of metaethics today. In it, we will encounter most major contemporary metaethical theories and the influential arguments over them. In the second half, we will focus on the exciting, developing topic of the nature of truth in ethics. We will ask: what does truth amount to in ethics? What, if anything, makes ethical claims true? And what does all that tell us about the nature of morality itself? We will explore the nature of truth in ethics both for its own sake, and with an eye to how reflection upon it, may help us make progress in metaethics more generally.

Module Content

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- Describe core theses in, and areas of research on, several main theories and debates in metaethics over the nature of morality in general, and on truth in ethics.
- Critically assess arguments for and against these theses and related research.
- Engage in further, independently guided study in metaethics.

Assessment

Assessment Components

Two coursework essays and one exam.

Assessment Details

Each coursework essay is worth 20% of your overall grade, for a total of 40%, and the exam is worth 60%.

Additional Information

Prerequisites

None.

Co-requisites

None.

Any other information

In this module, the use of Generative AI is prohibited in any form for the planning, preparation, and production of either your coursework essay(s), or exam question(s). This includes the use of Generative AI for brainstorming, research/learning assistance, writing assistance, or the inclusion of material/content generated directly or indirectly by such AI. You will be asked to declare in a coversheet, that you have not used AI for these or any other purposes related to the production of your coursework essay(s) at the time of submission.