

Ethics as a way of life

Due:

December 10, 11:59 PM

What and Why:

Ethics is about more than thinking about what you should value and how you should live; it's about putting those thoughts into action. Over the course of the semester, complete five of the activities listed below (without breaking the law), as well as a reflective journal on each activity. Each entry should be about 150 words and should include an image that shows what you did. When you are done, submit all of your journals as a single file.

Your reflective journal should include a description of what you did, how it relates to a topic we studied in class, and how doing that activity impacted you. For example, did the experience cause you discomfort? Did it excite you? Did it meet your expectations? How did doing the activity impact your thinking on the related class topic? A good reflective journal entry will engage thoughtfully and extensively with these questions, while a problematic entry will engage superficially and briefly. It's probably a good idea to spend some time in reflection before completing a final draft, rather than combining your reflection and your final draft into one activity.

Grading Criteria:

Journal entries will be judged individually on the following criteria:

- How well was the activity connected to a topic we studied in class?
- How well did the student engage reflectively with their activity?
- How well did the student express the activity's effect on their view?

Extra Credit:

If you complete six of the listed activities, I will grade each of them. This means that you can earn a maximum of 120% on this activity. This would count as extra credit when calculating your final course grade.

Activity Options:

Memento Mori

Spend 15 minutes in silent reflection at a memorial for the dead. This could include a cemetery, columbarium, monument, or other memorial. Nearby options include the First Presbyterian Church columbarium (to the left of the formal entrance on 3rd St. SW), the Soldiers Field Veterans Memorial (on the north end of Soldiers Field, behind the YMCA), or Oakwood Cemetery (behind Mayo Field, entrance on 7th Ave NE)

Effective Altruism

Engage in an act of effective altruism by making a donation or volunteering for an organization because doing so will promote the most good. For a list of effective charities, see GiveWell's [list of top charities](#). For volunteer opportunities, try to figure out which opportunity will do the most good relative to your other options.

Treat Yo Self!

Do something you wouldn't normally do, and do it because it makes you feel good. Go see a movie. Get your nails done. Buy that donut. Treat yo self!

Civic Engagement

Take part in the civic life of your community. Attend an open government meeting (e.g., a city council meeting), a political rally, a protest, or an organizing event. These activities can either be focused on government and policy at the local/state/national level or at UMR via RSA and the 318 Community Council.

God and the Good Life

Attend a religious service, either of your faith tradition or another tradition. For this activity, attending an event sponsored by the Rochester Area Freethinkers (an atheist, agnostic, and secular humanist organization) also counts. Christian, Islamic, and Jewish services can all be found within walking distance of campus. Other services (e.g., Hindu and Unitarian) can be found within a short drive.

A Little Culture Never Hurt Anyone

Attend or take part in a local cultural event. This can include choir concerts, theatre productions, art shows, poetry slams, public lectures, art films, and so forth. Films in wide release *do not* count towards this activity. (A good rule of thumb is that if it's at the Grey Duck, it counts.)

Get a Move On!

Attend a group fitness class at a local gym three times. You should attend the same class each time (i.e., do yoga three times, but not yoga twice and tai chi once). UMR yoga classes can count for this activity.

Symposium

With at least ten people, have a symposium where the topic of discussion is the good life. A symposium was a party in Ancient Greece where people would get together, eat food, and talk about an important topic like art, poetry, politics, or philosophy. Traditionally, the food included bread with olive oil and salt.