STUDYWALKS · COURSE SYLLABUS

Ethics and Values — High School Course with DSST Preparation

Ethics gives you a vocabulary for decisions that have no easy answer.

CREDIT LABEL	HOURS GOAL	STUDYWALKS LEARNING HOURS	SUGGESTED OFFLINE HOURS
0.5 credit	**60 h**	**9 h**	**51 h**
high school, with the study plan	the 0.5-credit convention	measured runtime plus assessment time	reading, review and writing

9 h StudyWalks (1.8 h of lessons, 3.8 h of lectures, 3.4 h of quizzes and exams) + **51 h** suggested offline study = **60 h**. 210 lessons in 9 units; prepares for the DSST Ethics in America exam.

High school credit is granted by the homeschool parent under the state's rules. StudyWalks supplies the record: hours, scores and this syllabus. The credit label is a suggestion; the parent makes the final call.

Course contents

Unit	Title and lecture topics	Lessons	Lecture
1	**Moral Reasoning Foundations** Two kinds of claim · What a verdict needs · Equal weight · Building an argument, and holding it steady · Disagreement, and testing a principle · Freedom, determinism, and blame · Putting it to work	24	24 min
2	**Challenges: Relativism, Subjectivism, Religion** The claim, and the argument for it · What follows if it is true · What survives the objections · Attitudes in place of facts · Expressing rather than reporting · Whether ethics can be proved · Command, and the Euthyphro question · Nature, scripture, and shared ground · The case	29	29 min
3	**Egoism & the Social Contract** The thesis, and how it defends itself · Two arguments, and two replies · From describing to prescribing · The case for it · Two objections that stick · Life without a common power · The trap, and what dissolves it · The lineage · Fairness behind the veil · The case	28	27 min
4	**Utilitarianism** Outcomes, and nothing else · What is being counted · The objection to the measure · Two ways to apply it · Not knowing what will happen · Where the sums go wrong · What it asks of you · Three defences, and a problem · The audit · The case	24	24 min
5	**Kantian Ethics & Absolute Rules** Two kinds of command · Maxims, and the test · Two things it is not · Persons as ends · Punishment, and self-legislation · The hardest case · Running it, and a problem · The case	21	22 min
6	**Virtue Ethics & the Ethics of Care** A different question · Where a virtue sits · The judgment, and why character pays · Three objections · Are the virtues local? · Starting from relationships · The limit, and the settlement · The check · The case	24	24 min

Unit	Title and lecture topics	Lessons	Lecture
7	**Value Theory** Two kinds of value · Whose life, and which question · Pleasure as the measure · Desire as the measure · A list instead · Many values, no common currency · The method · The case	18	20 min
8	**Applied Ethics** How this unit works · Euthanasia: the kinds, and the case for · Euthanasia: the case against · What we owe distant strangers · Unjust law · Punishment · War · Medicine and the person · Machines that decide · The method · The case	35	33 min
9	**Capstone Synthesis** The toolkit · A promise nobody would know you broke · Legal, popular, and wrong · What two people at a kitchen table owe · The oldest question, laminated · Must goodness bankrupt you? · What survives	7	25 min

Assessment and grading

- **Unit quizzes.** 9 quizzes, 10 questions each, checked as the student goes, each answer with the lesson to review. Untimed; retakes are unlimited.
- **Mid exam.** 25 questions on units 1–5, drawn fresh each time and scored at the end with a breakdown by content area. Untimed; retakes are unlimited.
- **Final exam.** 50 questions, 45 minutes, on the whole course. Scored 20–80; 50 passes (33 of 50 correct, about 66%). Retakes are unlimited with a 24-hour wait, each a fresh draw.

Suggested composite grade

Part	Weight
Unit quizzes (average of best scores)	20%
Mid exam (best score)	20%
Final exam (percent correct)	60%

Suggested letter scale

Letter	Composite
A	90–100
B	80–89
C	70–79
D	60–69
F	below 60

Suggested; the parent sets the grade. A passing final is the completion standard for the course record.

Study plan

The 51 offline hours are spread over the units in proportion to each unit's StudyWalks time. For each unit: read the matching sections of *The Elements of Moral Philosophy; The Fundamentals of Ethics*, review the unit quiz misses, and write a one-page unit summary. Log the time as you go.

Unit	Title	StudyWalks	Offline, suggested	Unit total
1	Moral Reasoning Foundations	37 min	5 h 35 min	6 h 12 min
2	Challenges: Relativism, Subjectivism, Religion	43 min	6 h 30 min	7 h 13 min
3	Egoism & the Social Contract	41 min	6 h 15 min	6 h 56 min
4	Utilitarianism	37 min	5 h 35 min	6 h 12 min
5	Kantian Ethics & Absolute Rules	33 min	5 h	5 h 33 min
6	Virtue Ethics & the Ethics of Care	36 min	5 h 30 min	6 h 6 min
7	Value Theory	29 min	4 h 25 min	4 h 54 min
8	Applied Ethics	51 min	7 h 45 min	8 h 36 min
9	Capstone Synthesis	29 min	4 h 25 min	4 h 54 min
Lessons and lectures		**5 h 36 min**	**51 h**	**56 h 36 min**
Quizzes, mid exam and final (stated time)		**3 h 24 min**	**—**	**3 h 24 min**

Unit times are the unit's lecture runtime plus its lessons at the course's measured average lesson length; totals can differ from the learning hours by rounding.

Sources

- **Anchor:** Rachels, James, and Stuart Rachels. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. 10th ed. McGraw Hill, 2023. ISBN 978-1-264-93142-2.
- **Secondary witness:** Shafer-Landau, Russ. *The Fundamentals of Ethics*. 6th ed. Oxford University Press, 2023. ISBN 978-0-19-769747-4.

StudyWalks finals are modeled on the DSST exam blueprint in scope and rigor. Scores are StudyWalks scores, not DSST scores, and are not affiliated with or recognized by Prometric, which administers the DSST.

StudyWalks is a private educational site and is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or connected to any government agency, the College Board, DSST, ACT, Inc., the National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT), or any testing or licensing body.

College credit for CLEP and DSST exams is set by each college. CLEP is administered by the College Board; DSST is administered by Prometric.

studywalks.com/c/ethics/syllabus/