

Building a Better Service Course with OER

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PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

One significant barrier to student success in courses across the curriculum is the rising cost of access to course materials (Colvard et al., 2018.) While Open Educational Resources and other free materials have seen increased use in recent years, not all faculty and students are entirely comfortable or familiar with their use (Anderson & Cuttler, 2020; Hilton, 2019). Yet there is at least some evidence suggesting that turning to open materials not only improves access to education by removing cost as a barrier, but also contributes to the improvement of student learning (Hilton, 2020; Colvard et al. 2018). This poster presents an example of a service course deliberately designed to use OER and Open Access texts and other free tools in a flipped classroom model, built with accessibility (very broadly understood) in mind: ETH 121 (Introduction to Ethics), first taught in the Spring 2022 term at the University of Evansville. This presentation also offers some reflections on how the class worked in practice and some considerations for designing future open-valued courses. Of particular note here is the pervasiveness of the open ethos – while affordability is an important part of improving access, it may be most powerful as a part of a broader emphasis on accessibility relative to the possibilities inherent in universal design and different kinds of assessment practice.

The primary drive behind sharing and reflecting on this course design is twofold:

1. To suggest/model an approach to using open resources that improves access in a way that makes the process of designing an “open” class itself a bit more accessible (in several senses) for both faculty and students
2. To actively promote Open Educational Resources, Open Access materials, and other access-promoting tools and practices.

OPEN TEXTS AND TOOLS

Selected Free/Open Reading Sources

- Matthews, G. (ed.) (2019). *Introduction to Philosophy: Ethics*. Rebus Community. <https://press.rebus.community/intro-to-phil-ethics/> *
- Kim, B. (2019). *Critical Thinking*. Oklahoma State University Libraries. <https://www.oercommons.org/courses/critical-thinking-simple-book-publishing/view> *
- Reference works:
 - *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <https://plato.stanford.edu/>
 - *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <https://iep.utm.edu/>
- Cases and Framework for Ethical Decision making from the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University: <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/>

* Released under an open CC license

Open and Free Tools

- LMS option: Canvas Free for Teachers: <https://canvas.instructure.com/> **
- Padlet (<https://padlet.com/>) and Slack (<https://slack.com/>) (free versions available)
- Kahoot (<https://www.kahoot.com/>) (free version available)
- Captioning: Web Captioner (free in-browser captioning): <https://webcaptioner.com/>
- Online meetings/office hours: Jitsi Meet (free, integrated with Slack if needed): <https://meet.jit.si/>

**Canvas courses can be shared under an open CC license

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Description

According to the university catalog, Introduction to Ethics “presents a systematic and historical discussion of moral and social values through classical and contemporary readings” with an “emphasis on applying moral theories to concrete moral problems.” This term, the form that discussion takes is 15 weeks of meetings (1/week) in which students are required to learn the basics of ethical argumentation, read and study selected readings on a set of basic categories or types of ethical theory, test theoretical approaches against each other, and apply these approaches to the development of arguments in response to cases representing a selection of applied ethics subfields (business ethics, environmental ethics, medical ethics, healthcare ethics, etc.).

Objectives/Outcomes

By the end of term, students who successfully complete this class should be able to do the following:

1. Analyze, construct, and respond effectively to philosophical arguments about ethical theories and moral problems
2. Explain the basic principles, presuppositions, terminology, and arguments associated with a set of broad categories of ethical/moral theory (virtue ethics, consequentialism or utilitarianism, deontological ethics, the ethics of care, etc.)
3. Apply any or all of the theoretical approaches studied in the course to create and respond to arguments in order to address moral problems or cases

Graded Work

- Reading Notebook (done before and during/after each class meeting) [Pass/Fail]
- Pre- and post-lecture low-stakes review quizzes [5 points each, averaged]
- In-class applied ethics exercises using Padlet and Slack for small group work [Pass/Fail]
- Two argument essays (~1200-1700 words, using a provided template, topic selection, and specs rubric); class time devoted to initial prep/draft writing
- Final exam exercise (a peer response to someone else’s anonymized second essay, using a similar template and specs rubric to the argument essays)

Visit the initial Spring 2022 version of the syllabus and read more about the course here: <https://blog.apaonline.org/2022/12/21/syllabus-showcase-introduction-to-ethics-laura-m-bernhardt/>

REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

What Worked	Room to Grow
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More deliberate engagement- Topical flexibility in controlled environs- More obvious use of the reading- Lively and focused discussions- More useful and less burdensome grading- More immediate feedback- Easily customizable reading selections through open licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Visual access is only part of the puzzle- Onboarding challenges with new technology- Remix/Revelop/Rebuild needed for some readings- What happens when the tech doesn’t work?- More consistent follow-through needed with argument unit content

OER RESOURCES

Finding and Creating Open Access Texts and Open Educational Resources (OER)

- OpenStax: <https://openstax.org/>
- OER Commons: <https://www.oercommons.org/>
- MERLOT: <https://merlot.org/merlot/>
- OAPEN: <https://oapen.org/>
- Write it yourself, with a little help from *The Rebus Guide to Publishing Open Textbooks (So Far)* (2022): <https://press.rebus.community/the-rebus-guide-to-publishing-open-textbooks/>
- Reuse, remix, and release content under a Creative Commons license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

USI Resources

- The David L. Rice Library Affordable Learning Guide: <https://usi.libguides.com/affordable-learning>
- OER Stipends: <https://usi.libguides.com/affordable-learning/stipends>

REFERENCES

- Anderson, T., & Cuttler, C. (2020). Open to open? An exploration of textbook preferences and strategies to offset textbook costs for online versus on-campus students. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 21(1), 40–60. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v20i5.4141>
- Colvard, N. B., Watson, C. E., & Park, H. (2018). The impact of Open Educational Resources on various student success metrics. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 30(2), 262-276.
- Hilton, J. (2020). Open educational resources, student efficacy, and user perceptions: A synthesis of research published between 2015 and 2018. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 68(3), 853–876. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-019-09700-4>
- Kenyon, A. (2022, September 21). What is ungrading? *Duke Learning Innovation*. <https://learninginnovation.duke.edu/blog/2022/09/what-is-ungrading/>
- Nilson, L. B. (2016, January 19). Yes, Virginia, there’s a better way to grade. *Inside Higher Education*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/01/19/new-ways-grade-more-effectively-essay>

CONTACT AND LICENSING INFORMATION

Questions? Send me an email at bernhardt@usi.edu.

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