

ETHICS & JUSTICE PROGRAM

Co-Director: Tanya Loughhead, PhD, Professor, Philosophy

Co-Director: Philip Reed, PhD, Professor, Philosophy

The contemporary world is fraught with serious challenges to well-being, a world in which poor and marginalized peoples are especially at risk because of their vulnerability to the effects of globalization and climate change, human trafficking, disease, and war. We are surrounded by moral disagreements that appear to be incommensurable and irresolvable. Moreover, moral discourse seems to be rooted in pernicious relativism that prevents genuine, sustained, rational, and reflective inquiry. To address the pressing concerns of our contemporary world, the community of Jesuit colleges and universities has espoused a special commitment to promote the causes of social justice. In this connection, they are redoubling their efforts to develop academic programs and social activities that cultivate the values of responsible citizenship among their students.

The Department of Philosophy at Canisius University has taken up this cause by developing a curriculum that addresses concerns of social justice. The Department has also developed two interdisciplinary minor programs — one in Ethics, the other in Justice.

These minors help students to participate in careful analysis and to cultivate moral imagination and thereby to enrich their capacities for moral discernment. We want students to advance beyond merely espousing opinions to become enabled to examine their pre-reflective commitments in the context of commitments to truth and the promotion of justice. The overarching objective is to provide students with occasions to enrich their skills to think clearly and thoroughly about matters of ethics and justice.

These minors compliment any major or focus, since the questions we ask are universal questions central to creating a more ethical and just world. Students sometimes find themselves especially drawn to issues of ethics and justice. These minor programs will enable students to engage in sustained examination to better prepare them to be more effective leaders in our community. The minors are flexible in their requirements, allowing room for students to focus on their particular interests, such as moral or justice concerns relating to the environment, gender issues, or health care, among many others. The Ethics Minor and Justice Minor will serve also to provide credentials for students seeking employment or applying to graduate school.

Advisement

All students should meet with one of the Ethics & Justice program directors (Loughhead or Reed) in choosing their electives, developing their entire academic program and planning their co-curricular or supplemental academic experiences, along with designing the themes and timeline of their theses.

Canisius University offers two minors from this program: a minor in Ethics and a minor in Justice.

- Ethics Minor (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/division-arts-education-sciences/school-arts-social-sciences/ethics-justice-program/ethics-minor/>)
- Justice Minor (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/division-arts-education-sciences/school-arts-social-sciences/ethics-justice-program/justice-minor/>)