***Ethical Reasoning***

**Definition**

*Ethical reasoning* is reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to assess their own ethical values, recognize ethical issues across a variety of contexts, think about how different ethical values and perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ethically relevant ramifications of alternative actions or policies. Students’ ethical self-identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe, analyze, and evaluate perspectives on ethical issues.

Courses seeking the Ethical Reasoning outcome should provide evidence that (1) students will be introduced to competing ethical theories and principles concerning proper human conduct; and that (2) students will have the opportunity to apply these theories and principles to the assessment of concrete ethical dilemmas.

**Rationale and Intent**

Ethical reasoning is a *way of thinking* about ethical issues and ethical perspectives. The point of instruction in ethical reasoning is to prepare students to think more clearly, carefully, and productively *about* ethical issues and perspectives. As an institution, Fitchburg State University is committed to preparing our students to engage in reasoned reflection on ethical issues and their ethical responsibilities. The Ethical Reasoning learning outcome and course requirement in the LA&S curriculum reflects this commitment.

**Goal**

Fitchburg State University students will develop their ability to think critically about right and wrong human conduct, assess their own ethical values, recognize ethical issues across a variety of contexts, think about how different ethical values and perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ethically relevant ramifications of alternative actions or policies.

**Potential Course Objectives**

The objectives below are recommended as models for general education course syllabi. The list is not meant to be complete. Faculty should feel free to adopt these as course objectives, or they may develop their own.

* Learn how to identify, analyze, and make judgements about ethical issues across a variety of contexts.
* Learn the mechanics of ethical reasoning and logical argument.
* Understand major ethical theories and the principles associated with these theories.
* Explore ethical dilemmas in an historical and/or present-day context.
* Learn how to apply ethical theories and principles to the assessment of concrete ethical dilemmas.
* Develop and apply a framework for analyzing ethical issues.
* Explore ethical issues that emerge within the context of a particular practice (e.g., *business ethics*) or a particular discipline (e.g., ethics and economics, ethics and sociology, etc.).