

# METC101 Teaching Critical Thinking through Debates in the Ethics Classroom

ECTS Value: 5 ECTS

## Module Description

Ethics was introduced in Maltese schools in 2014 and is currently being rolled out across all state schools. It is also available in some independent schools. The Ethics syllabus touches upon a number of controversial ethical issues, such as self-harm, suicide, euthanasia, abortion, capital punishment, pornography, revenge porn, digital ethics and so on. This module prepares prospective Ethics teachers to discuss these controversial issues in the classroom and explores how the various Ethical theories can help us resolve these complex issues rationally. Our ability to reason ethically is directly dependent on our critical thinking skills. Thus, this module attempts to introduce prospective and current Ethics teachers to the art of good thinking, which necessarily involves the understanding of arguments, their evaluation, and the ability to respond with alternative arguments. It also presupposes a commitment to the possibility of changing one's opinion when faced with compelling arguments which challenge our way of thinking.

## Overall Objectives and Outcomes

### Competences

- a. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts of good reasoning;
- b. Evaluate how the Philosophy for Children methodology contributes to the teaching of critical thinking;
- c. Facilitate discussions about controversial issues in the Ethics Classroom.

### Knowledge

- a. Differentiate between a strong and weak argument;
- b. Extend knowledge of Ethical theories to the discussion of controversial issues;
- c. Engage with the controversial issues that are in the Ethics syllabus.

### Skills

- a. Identify the ethical issues that are embedded in the readings and case-studies;
- b. Argue effectively in order to support their opinions;
- c. Develop resources based on case-studies to use in the classroom;

- d. Adapt topical issues, news articles, case-studies, etc. to be used as resources in the ethics classroom;
- e. Engage with current issues and locate them within the Ethics curriculum.

## Mode of Delivery

This module adopts a blended approach to teaching and learning. Information related to the structure and delivery of the module may be accessed through the IfE Portal. For further details, kindly refer to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures found on the Institute for Education's website.

## Assessment Methods

This module will be assessed through: Presentation and Assignment

## Suggested Readings

### Core Reading List

1. Noddings, N., & Brooks, L. (2017). Teaching controversial issues: The case for critical thinking and moral commitment in the classroom. Teachers College Press. The Ethics Curriculum
2. Burwood, L. (1996) 'How Should Schools Respond to the Plurality of Values in a Multi-cultural Society?', in Journal of Philosophy of Education, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp.415-427.
3. Hand, M., & Levinson, R. (2012). Discussing controversial issues in the classroom. Educational Philosophy and Theory, 44(6), 614-629.
4. Hunter, D. A. (2014). A practical guide to critical thinking. Hoboken NJ

### Supplementary Reading List

1. Cam, P. (20). Thinking tools. Camberwell: ACER Press. An Australian perspective, 165.
2. Morrow, D. R., & Weston, A. (2019). A workbook for arguments: A complete course in critical thinking. Hackett Publishing.