

MILITARY ETHICS, MA

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More Information: <https://case.edu/artsci/militaryethics/>

Degree: Master of Arts (MA)
Field of Study: Military Ethics

Program Overview

Military ethics is a broadly interdisciplinary study, incorporating concerns about the conduct of war, decisions on how and when to engage in military operations, and issues relating to the moral psychology and care of those who serve and of veterans of military service. It focuses on the core values and moral principles that collectively govern the men and women serving in the military forces of nations around the world, as members of what is sometimes termed the “military profession” or “the profession of arms.” The ethical foundations that define the profession of arms have developed over millennia from the shared values and experiences, unique role responsibilities, and reflections of members of the profession on their own practices—eventually coming to serve as the basis for various warrior’s codes and the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC). Traditional just war theory (political and moral philosophy governing when the use of military force is justified for the resolution of international conflicts) plays a key role in international relations as well as in international law, including the LOAC and international humanitarian law.

The program has been designed to educate students on and guide their research into vital global issues in military ethics. These issues include (but are not limited to) modern applications of classical just war theory and traditional warrior’s codes, the principle of noncombatant immunity, human rights, international humanitarian law, humanitarian intervention, the ethical use of emerging military technologies, civil-military relations and society’s obligations to troops and veterans, transitional justice, and the moral foundations of sustainable peace.

The study of military ethics supports long-term humanitarian goals, such as preventing unjust wars; decreasing incidents of war crimes, genocide, human rights abuses, and other atrocities produced by the dehumanizing effects of armed conflict; supporting the mental health and successful transitions of military service members and combat veterans; and fostering a lasting peace founded in justice.

Graduate Policies

For graduate policies and procedures, please review the School of Graduate Studies section of the General Bulletin.

Program Requirements

The program curriculum is interdisciplinary, with a foundation in moral and political philosophy and international relations. Each student will complete a minimum of 30 credit hours, including a 6 credit hour cumulative research program that will typically be completed during the summer term following a full academic year of course work.

Over a 12- to 24-month program of study (designed to facilitate the enrollment of military personnel on educational assignment and the academic student looking for an intensive program), students will study foundational topics in moral and political philosophy, together with advanced core and elective topics in military and professional ethics, military medical ethics, military law, ethical leadership, and other related subjects (including optional supplemental electives in areas such as religious studies, history, literature, journalism, political science, classics, and the arts).

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Required Courses:		
PHIL 405	Ethics	3
PHIL 417	War and Morality	3
PHIL 419	Philosophy of State Violence: War, Colonization, Punishment, and Immigration	3
PHIL 436	Military Ethics, the Military Profession, and International Law	3
PHIL 501	Culminating Military Ethics Project	6

Capstone

When students begin the program, the program director will work with them individually to develop initial concepts for their specific concentrations of study and their capstone/culminating project. The capstone/culminating project involves both academic research and fieldwork, and is integrated with the degree candidate’s professional experience or interest. PHIL 501 will feature a summative project designed to integrate their common studies, but tailored to their individual future interests in teaching, further graduate study, or employment in public policy or foreign affairs, and may produce outcomes other than a traditional paper/thesis (such as the detailed and well-defended design of a military ethics training/education curriculum).

The outline of the project will typically be presented and defended by the spring recess of the candidate’s second semester in residence, and the project itself completed over the following summer term, for graduation in August the year following matriculation. If special circumstances prevent a student from completing the program in the intended time frame, the academic advisor will work with the student to create an alternative schedule.

Electives

Students will take a minimum of four elective courses. The selection of topic for the capstone project will dictate the selection of relevant elective courses by each student (in consultation with program faculty) to create an appropriate concentration of study. Electives may be in military and professional ethics, military medical ethics, military law, or ethical leadership, or in optional supplemental areas such as religious studies, history, literature, journalism, and the arts.

Elective courses from the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Law include:

Code	Title	Credit Hours
ARTH 436	Representations of War in Ancient Rome	3
CLSC 419	Greek Tragedy: Plays and Performance in Ancient Athens	3
LAWS 1901	International Law: Fundamentals	1

LAWS 4101	International Law	3
LAWS 5110	Contemporary Issues in International and Comparative Law	1
LAWS 5111	Admiralty Law	2
LAWS 5113	Counterterrorism Law	3
LAWS 5116	International Human Rights	3
LAWS 5118	International Law Research Lab	3
LAWS 5121	International Criminal Law and Procedure	3
LAWS 5124	Islamic Law	2
LAWS 5136	International Humanitarian Law	1
LAWS 5745	Foreign Affairs Law	3
LAWS 6051	Civil Rights, Human Rights, and Immigration Clinic	4
PHIL 425	Philosophy of Feminism	3
PHIL 430	Topics in Ethics	3
PHIL 433	Philosophy of Religion	3
PHIL 434	Political and Social Philosophy	3
POSC 460	Revolts and Revolutions in Global Perspective	3
POSC 451	Modern Political Thought	3
POSC 453	Political Thought and Political Change in China	3
POSC 455	Political Ideologies	3
POSC 456	Transitions to Democracy and Dictatorship	3
POSC 464	Dictatorship and Democracy in Modern Latin America	3
POSC 470H	China's Foreign Policy	3
POSC 473	Politics of the European Union	3
POSC 476	United States Foreign Policy	3
POSC 477	Politics of Russia	3
POSC 479	Introduction to Middle East Politics	3
POSC 486	Making Public Policy	3
POSC 488	Global Politics of the Climate Crisis	3
RLGN 448	Buddhism and Cognitive Science	3
RLGN 453	Hindu and Jain Bioethics: Special Focus on Women's and Gender Studies	3
WLIT 419	Greek Tragedy: Plays and Performance in Ancient Athens	3

Additional elective courses will continue to be added.

Sample Plan of Study

First Year

Fall		Credit Hours
PHIL 405	Ethics	3
PHIL 417	War and Morality	3
Elective		3
Elective		3
Credit Hours		12

Spring

PHIL 419	Philosophy of State Violence: War, Colonization, Punishment, and Immigration	3
PHIL 436	Military Ethics, the Military Profession, and International Law	3
Elective		3

Elective		3
Credit Hours		12
Summer		
PHIL 501	Culminating Military Ethics Project	6
Credit Hours		6
Total Credit Hours		30

Dual Degree Options

- Military Ethics, MA/Law, JD