

**24.191 Ethics in Your Life: Being, Thinking, Doing (or Not?)
Spring 2025**

Description: The aim of this seminar is to prompt you to reflect on your own ethical commitments. Through consideration of various ethical case studies and topics, special attention will be given to our own ethical formation: how do we attune to our own deepest values? What inhibits us from speaking out when ethical leadership is necessary? How do we discern when further contemplation is necessary and how do we relate to those who disagree with us? How does our own personality help us and limit us as ethical leaders?

This 6-credit, pass/fail seminar is a place to build relationships, share resources, and explore tools and frameworks for discerning responses to ethical problems. Some meetings will be led by guest speakers, and there will be space to consider topics of special interest to students that arise over the course of the semester. Reading is minimal but important and writing assignments will consist of weekly one-page reflection exercises.

Meetings: Tuesdays from 7:00-8:30pm in 32-D461. Dinner is included; please notify the instructors of any dietary preferences or restrictions in advance.

Instructors:

Nicholas Collura

Director of Radius, MIT

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Office hours by appointment.

Joshua Pearson

Postdoctoral Associate in Philosophy, MIT

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Office hours: Thursdays from 11am-12pm (32-D962).

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: Enrolled students are required to attend every seminar. If you cannot make a seminar, please contact one of the instructors in advance of the session. Unless otherwise discussed with the instructors, more than two absences will require a written assignment in order to receive credit for the class.

Participation: This is a discussion-focused class, and every enrolled student should aim to participate actively in the conversation each week.

Reading and writing: There is minimal required reading, but links to assignments and other resources will be provided on Canvas. Students are required to submit a short (one page, double-spaced) reflection paper after every class between February 25 and May 6. The purpose is to reflect further on that week's class discussion; suggested prompts will be provided for these. Students may elect to skip TWO weeks of their choice, but please note that missing a class will automatically count for one of these "skip" weeks.

POLICIES

Plagiarism: Any writing you submit must of course be your own. Any text that's lifted verbatim from a source must appear in quotation marks and be appropriately referenced. Any text paraphrased from a source must be referenced too – changing the way something is worded does not make it your own writing. Copying or paraphrasing outputs from ChatGPT or other LLMs counts as plagiarism. You can review MIT's "Academic Integrity Handbook" [here](#).

Disability accommodations: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodation, please let us know as soon as possible. If you already have an accommodation letter prepared by Disability Services, make sure to bring it with you to the first session. Any information you share with us will be treated as confidential. If you are unsure whether you need accommodation or not, contact Student Disability Services, located in 5-104, and reachable by e-mail (uaap-sds@mit.edu) or phone (617-253-1674).

SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTIONS

Feb 4 – Introductions

Feb 11 – Critical Thinking Case Study: Animal Ethics (Joshua Pearson)

February 18: No class (Monday schedule)

DISAGREEING WITH OTHERS

Feb 25 – Disagreeing With Others (Joshua Pearson)

Please read the two short blog posts by Kevin Dorst available on Canvas.

March 4 – Civility and Affective Disagreement (Guest Speaker: Katie Zhou)

FORGIVENESS

March 11 — Theories of Forgiveness (Abe Mathew)

March 18 — Forgiveness of Self and Others (Nicholas Collura)

Please Read Part 1 of The Sunflower and ten of the essays in Part 2. Book will be provided.

Wellesley spring break; see below.

March 25: No class for MIT students (spring break); Wellesley students invited to meet separately, TBD.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Apr 1 — Discerning Our Values (Nicholas Collura)

Possible readings TBD.

Apr 8 – Giving Voice to Values 1 (Nicholas Collura)

Please read assigned PDFs from Giving Voice to Values available on Canvas.

Apr 15 – Giving Voice to Values 2 (Nicholas Collura)

Please read assigned PDFs from Giving Voice to Values available on Canvas.

Apr 22 – Ethics in the Workplace: A Panel (Special Guests)

APPLIED ETHICS

Apr 29 — TBD based on student suggestions/interest

May 6 — TBD based on student suggestions/interest

CONCLUSION

May 13 – Sharing what we have learned