Program Proposal for a Minor

1. Name of the proposed minor: Ethics

2. Name of the department involved: Philosophy and Religious Studies

3. Name of contact person: Kate Padgett Walsh, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies (kpadwa@iastate.edu)

4. General description of the minor:
   Ethics is the branch of human thought that addresses questions of human morality. It seeks to define right and wrong at the theoretical level and to guide action across diverse fields of practice. An ethics minor will provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of both the theoretical foundations and the practical applications of ethics. It will serve students who wish to understand how ethical thought complements their chosen majors, but also students who have an interest in learning about ethics more generally.

   The minor in ethics will require 15 credits in courses with a significant focus on ethics, at least 6 of which are at the 300 level or above. To ensure that students gain a theoretical understanding of ethics, the minor will require students to take either Philosophy 230 (Moral Theory and Practice) or Philosophy 330 (Ethical Theory). Students will further choose 6 credits from a list of core ethics courses offered by the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, and 6 more credits from that list of core courses combined with an expanded list of courses with an ethics focus from across ISU.

5. Need for the proposed minor:
   The ethics minor will help students from across the university to sharpen their critical thinking abilities, develop writing and communication skills, and infuse ethical perspectives into their studies. It will provide a way for graduates to signal their skills and understanding of ethics to employers and graduate or professional schools.

   The idea for the minor came about in part through discussions with academic advisors who note that a variety of courses across the university focus at least in part on ethics. Philosophy and Religious Studies faculty teach core courses in ethics to many students, yet students interested in further studying ethics are not necessarily positioned to pursue a major or minor in philosophy. The proposed minor will meet the needs and interests of students who are interested in exploring theories and applied topics in ethics, in many cases in conjunction with other fields of study.
6. Objectives of the proposed minor:

After completing the minor in ethics, students will demonstrate:

* knowledge of the theoretical foundations of ethics
* understanding of how to apply ethical principles within practical contexts
* proficiency in thinking critically about ethical issues that arise in personal and professional contexts
* skills of effective communication about complex and controversial ethical questions

The proposed minor will provide an excellent background for a variety of careers and is especially likely to be of interest to students studying business, law, agriculture, medicine, psychology, and education, among others.

7. Relationship of the minor to other programs at Iowa State University:

Currently, there is no program of study at ISU focused on ethics specifically, nor is there a mechanism for building an individualized cross-disciplinary program. What currently exists is a core set of courses on ethics offered by Philosophy and Religious Studies, alongside a variety of complementary courses with an ethics focus that are offered by other units across ISU.

8. Relationship of the minor to the strategic plans of the university, college, and department:

The ethics minor builds on the core educational mission of ISU by creating a pathway for students from across the university to develop ethical perspectives, critical thinking skills, and communication abilities. It contributes directly to Goal 1 of the ISU Strategic Plan, to provide an education “offering practical, global, and leadership experiences that shape the well-rounded citizens and informed critical thinkers needed in the 21st century.”

The minor also contributes directly to two key focus areas of the LAS Strategic Plan that focus on equipping students to meet complex challenges in today’s world. The first is to Enhance the Education of All ISU Students, specifically Objective 1.1, to “provide a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of society, that has the flexibility to adapt to advances in disciplines within LAS and in other colleges, and that includes emphases on critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical skills.” The second relevant focus area from the LAS Strategic Plan is to Prepare LAS Majors for Success, specifically Goal 1, to “maximize the relevance and applicability of LAS courses and majors to important questions facing a world that is inherently interdisciplinary.”

Finally, the minor contributes to the educational goals of Philosophy and Religious Studies by bringing together the Department’s significant offerings in ethics with courses from across the university so as to better support students interested in developing an understanding of ethics in conjunction with their chosen major.

9. Comparison of the proposed minor with similar programs at other universities:
Many schools, including AAU institutions and other R1 universities, currently offer similar programs of study, including: Arizona State University, Emory University, Dartmouth College, Temple University, Duke University, and Colorado State University, and University of Northern Iowa.

Like the proposed ISU minor, the programs at these schools combine 1 or 2 required courses with a choice of electives. At some schools that list of electives is largely or entirely intradisciplinary within philosophy, while at others it is more interdisciplinary. For example, University of Northern Iowa offers an ethics minor that is largely but not entirely intradisciplinary in philosophy and religious studies. Arizona State offers an ethics certificate that is entirely intradisciplinary in philosophy but otherwise has a structure to the proposed ISU minor. And Emory offers an ethics minor that is somewhat interdisciplinary and is otherwise structured like the proposed ISU minor.

The proposed ISU minor will allow students to choose whether their ethics minor will consist entirely of philosophy courses or also include courses with a significant ethics focus from other units.

10. Program requirements and procedures:
   a. prerequisites for prospective students
      All students pursuing the minor in ethics must complete either PHIL 230 (Moral Theory and Practice) or PHIL 330 (Ethical Theory). In addition, students must complete 6 credits of courses chosen from a list of core ethics courses (Table A below), as well as 6 credits of courses chosen from a broader list of courses with a significant ethics focus (Table A and Table B combined).

   b. application and selection process
      The minor is open to all students pursuing a baccalaureate degree at ISU, and no prior experience with courses in the subject matter is required.

   c. language requirements
      There are no language requirements for the proposed minor.

   c. courses and seminars presently available for credit toward the program
      The minor requires 15 credits in courses with a significant focus on ethics, at least 6 of which are at the 300 level or above. In addition to PHIL 230 or PHIL 330, students must take at least 2 core ethics courses (chosen from Table A) and 2 elective ethics courses (chosen from Table A or Table B):

      **Core Ethics Courses (Table A)**
      - PHIL 230  Moral Theory and Practice
      - PHIL 235  Ethical Issues in a Diverse Society
d. proposed new courses or modifications of existing courses

No new courses or modifications of courses are planned at this time. In the future, when departments and programs across campus add and revise courses with a significant ethics focus, the lists of electives
within the minor will be updated to reflect those changes. The Curriculum Committee in Philosophy and Religious Studies will make changes to the minor when appropriate.

f. advising of students

The advisor for Philosophy and Religious Studies will advise students pursuing the ethics minor, approve transfer and study abroad courses, and approve requests for course substitution.

g. implications for related areas within the university

1. The proposed minor will provide a significant credential for students across the university that integrates ethics with other fields of study. This credential will help graduates to demonstrate their knowledge and skills to employers and graduate schools.

2. The proposed minor will enhance demand for currently offered courses throughout ISU that focus on ethics.

3. Because there is no competing program of study focusing on ethics at ISU, the minor should enhance current offerings and not compete with any existing academic programs.

11. General description of the resources currently available and future resource needs:

a. faculty members

The proposed minor will utilize one of the existing strengths of Philosophy and Religious Studies, which already offers a large number of core courses in ethics. No new faculty hires are needed for this minor.

b. computers, laboratories, and other facilities

No new facilities are needed.

c. library facilities (journals, documents, etc.) in the proposed area

No new library facilities are needed.

e. supplies, field work, student recruitment, etc.

No new supplies or other resources are needed for this minor.

12. Describe the needs for new resources and/or reallocated resources:

No new resources are requested and no reallocations are needed. All of the courses that will comprise the minor are currently in place. New courses eligible for inclusion will be added to the minor when appropriate, but all of the courses needed already exist and are taught on a regular basis. Administration and advising will be assumed by the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies as part of its existing administration of programs and advising of students.
13. Attach to the program proposal, letters of support, recommendations, and statements when appropriate, from programs and departments at ISU which are associated with the proposed program or have an interest in the proposed program:

   Letters of support will be attached from the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Chair of Philosophy and Religious Studies.

14. If the new program is interdisciplinary, a governance document should be created and submitted to the Associate Provost for Academic Programs:

   The proposed minor is not interdisciplinary. Like other programs administered and advised by Philosophy and Religious Studies, responsibility for overseeing the curriculum for the minor and making changes, including adding new courses, will belong to the PHIL Curriculum Committee. Responsibility for approving transfer or study abroad courses and for approving course substitutions will belong to the departmental advisor.
**Academic Program Approval Voting Record**

This document is to be appended as the last page of the proposal for any new or revised academic program to record the successive votes of approval as the proposal moves through its required review and approval steps. Consult Faculty Handbook Section 10.8 or the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee website for information regarding Committee review and voting requirements for each action.

**Curricular Action:** (check appropriate boxes below)

1. X New Program □ Name Change □ Discontinuation □ Concurrent Degree for:

2. □ Undergraduate Major □ Graduate Major X Undergraduate Minor □ Graduate Minor
   □ Undergraduate Certificate □ Graduate Certificate □ Other: ___________________

3. Name of Proposed Change: __Ethics___________________________________________

4. Name of Contact Person:  Kate Padgett Walsh  e-mail address: _katepadwa@iastate.edu__

5. Primary College: _LAS_ Secondary College: _____ N/A ______

6. Involved Department(s): _Philosophy and Religious Studies_______________________

**Voting record for this curricular action:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voting Body</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Date of Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dept. or Program Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Philosophy and Religious Studies Dept</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sept. 3, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAS College Curriculum Committee</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sept. 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Approval Vote:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Faculty Representative Assembly</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sept. 22, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Graduate Council                                 | N/A      | N/A          |
| Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee              | 6        | Oct. 6, 2020 |
| Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Council          | 10       | Oct. 23, 2020|
| Faculty Senate                                   |          |              |

[FSCC – November 2013]
October 25, 2020

Dear Members of the Faculty Senate,

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences fully supports the proposal for a new Ethics minor, developed by the faculty of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. This interdisciplinary minor is in keeping with our mission to educate future leaders and also addresses key features of the strategic plan of the college. This Ethics minor can provide students from any major the opportunity to earn a credential to highlight their capacity to think critically about the ethical dimensions of issues that arise in their workplaces, communities and homes.

I am happy to endorse this proposal on behalf of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Sincerely,

Beate Schmittmann
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
202 Catt Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011
9/10/2020

Members of the LAS Curriculum Committee:

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies is proposing a new minor, Ethics. I strongly support the proposal and it comes with a strong support from the department. Twenty-one faculty were present when we discussed and voted on the final version of the proposal. Of these, 19 voted in favor of the proposal and no one voted against it. The proposed minor is interdisciplinary in nature, providing both solid foundation in ethics, with nine philosophy credits, and practical applications, provided both by some of the philosophy courses as well as by six credits from courses taken in other departments; courses that focus at least in part on ethics, usually with a strong disciplinary perspective. All of the courses listed in the minor already exist in the ISU catalog. The minor requires no new courses and no new faculty. Administration of the minor as well as advising will be assumed by the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. New courses deemed appropriate for inclusion in the minor can be added as appropriate.

Heimir Geirsson
Chair, PhilRS