UNCC100 MODULE 1:
THE GOOD LIFE AND THE GOLDEN RULE

Introduction
The values of Australian Catholic University
The ACU Graduate Attributes
What is The Good Life and Golden Rule: Introduction
The Good Life and Golden Rule: Explained
MODULE 1: THE GOOD LIFE AND THE GOLDEN RULE

Activities and materials in this module will help you meet:

**Learning Outcome 1:** Describe coherently in writing the principles of Catholic Social Thought (CST), and through a personal written commentary on each one, explain that the concepts of 'self' and 'community' are interrelated.

**Graduate Attribute 1:** demonstrate respect for the dignity of each individual and for human diversity.

**Graduate Attribute 4:** think critically and reflectively.

**Graduate Attribute 7:** work both autonomously and collaboratively.

**Graduate Attribute 9:** demonstrate effective communication in oral and written English language and visual media.

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**TRY: GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES REFLECTIVE TOOL**

![Audio Icon] **Graduate Attributes: Identify your strengths and weaknesses**

This unit will have given you the chance to start attaining well-developed skills in the targeted graduate attributes. As you progress through your studies at ACU, you will need to continue developing these and other graduate attributes so as to maximise your study outcomes and professional capacities.

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**WARNING**

Topics considered in UNCC LEO materials and in class discussions may be disturbing for some students.

If you are affected, please contact your Campus Leader and/or the [University Counselling Service](#).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are advised that this site may include voices or images of people who have passed away. It may also contain links to sites that may use images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now deceased.
1.1 THE VALUES OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

ACU has high hopes and great expectations for its graduates. In its Mission and Vision, ACU proudly claims, "Our graduates will be skilled in their chosen fields, ethical in their behaviour, with a developed critical habit of mind, an appreciation of the sacred in life, and a commitment to serving the common good."

Your ACU education is about becoming professionally competent, knowledgeable and skillful - yet it is also about so much more. It involves being ethically informed; being able to demonstrate respect for the dignity of each person and for human diversity; recognising a responsibility to the common good, the environment and society; and applying ethical perspectives in informed decision-making. The University’s Core Curriculum lies at the heart of this vision.

In this unit, you will be introduced to many of the ideas and principles that are the basis of what is known as Catholic Social Thought, with a particular focus on the common good. While much of this is not unique to the Catholic Church or even to Christianity, the development of a core of Church teaching on social justice and the common good forms a foundation for how ACU understands itself and its Mission, and therefore the calling of its students. These key principles promote human flourishing among all peoples.
1.2 THE ACU GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

Like other Australian universities, ACU has a set of what is known as “graduate attributes”—characteristics that ideally, all graduates would have developed during their time at university. The ACU graduate attributes are embedded strategically in all units and sequenced as a whole across courses. You will see that they bear a close relationship with the ACU Mission, but that they also emphasise the sorts of skills that employers value.

In this unit, four graduate attributes will be explicitly addressed. On successful completion of this unit, students will have developed their ability to:

GA1 - demonstrate respect for the dignity of each individual and for human diversity
GA4 - think critically and reflectively
GA7 - work both autonomously and collaboratively
GA9 - demonstrate effective communication in oral and written English language and visual media

Remember that the graduate attributes are to be gradually developed across the course of your degree. They do not have to be perfectly developed by the time you reach the end of this unit.

In UNCC100, we will emphasise some of the basic building blocks for the four graduate attributes concerned.

Graduate attributes 1 and 4 will be addressed explicitly through the content of the unit. In other activities, you will be asked to reflect on the kinds of values upheld by members of your profession, and how you see yourself in relation to these values.

Graduate attributes 7 and 9 will be addressed particularly through the processes employed in the unit, and to help you identify these processes we use icons to alert you to them. Here is an example:

When you see an icon like this, it is also a sign that there are additional resources available to help you to develop this graduate attribute.

How are you going in developing the ACU graduate attributes?

Use the reflective tool: 🧪 Graduate Attributes: Identify your strengths and weaknesses (on the LEO Page), to assess your strengths and weaknesses at this point in your career.

You can use the tool as many times as you wish until close to the end of semester, when your last selections will be recorded. Indeed, we encourage you to revisit this tool a number of times as you refine your understanding of what the attribute means in a university setting, and judge your own capabilities.
1.3 THE GOOD LIFE AND THE GOLDEN RULE

1.3.1 WHAT CONSTITUTES A GOOD LIFE?

How do human beings thrive? What do we need to enable us to realise our potential? How do we judge what we really need as opposed to what we really want? How do we ensure that all people have the opportunity to reach their full potential as human beings, no matter what their circumstances? There are many challenges in this for modern, Western societies, where individualism, consumerism, and materialism often lead to great inequities.

1.3.2 WHAT IS THE GOLDEN RULE?

This is known as the 'Ethic of Reciprocity' and is found in numerous cultures, religions, ethical systems and secular philosophies. It transcends so many traditions and philosophies and is often described as the universal ethical principle.

The Golden Rule has the capacity to be the ethical cornerstone as the human family works together to build a peaceful, just and sustainable global society.

Its appeal is augmented by the fact that its message is simple, universal and powerful.
ACTIVITY 1

Your first task involves thinking reflectively.

There are multiple examples of “Ethical frameworks” or “Codes of Conduct” to be found in different professions. This can include counselling, nursing, teaching and business. It should not be difficult to devise examples of the Golden Rule being applied (or not) but illuminated by the ethical framework. Can you devise applications and examples of the Golden Rule?

In “There’s more to life than being happy,” Emily Esfahani Smith argues that there is a difference between the search for happiness and the search for meaning in our lives. She maintains that the search for happiness is a “self-centered” approach, whereas the search for meaning extends this horizon to encompass others. Ultimately, the author claims that it is finding meaning of true and lasting value that constitutes “a good life.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What do you think constitutes “the good life”?
2. How do you respond to the author’s proposals about happiness and meaning?
3. What do you value? In what way does what you value contribute to happiness and meaning in your life?
4. What, for you, are the indicators of success in life?
5. What role do your relationships with others have in the development of meaning in your life?
6. How would you categorise what is important in life and what is not?
1.4 THE GOOD LIFE: EXPLAINED

1.4.1 WHAT IS THE GOOD LIFE?

Australian social researcher Hugh McKay discusses the proposition of his recent book “The Good Life” in this interview below. He proposes that the good life is based on a life lived for others and not for self.

The Good Life: Hugh McKay (watch here or read the transcript):

1.4.2 WHAT DO YOU THINK CONSTITUTES THE GOOD LIFE?

The question of what constitutes a good life has concerned philosophers and thinkers for millennia. The famous Greek philosopher, Aristotle, considered this question as part of his thinking on what it is to be human and how humans could best order their society to allow for the flourishing of its citizens. Aristotle saw that the “good” of humans was to flourish as individuals, but he reasoned that as humans are also social beings, their flourishing is dependent on the flourishing of others as well.
1.4.3 WHEN FLOURISHING DOESN’T HAPPEN

If indeed human flourishing is dependent on individuals, what happens when humans are not allowed to flourish? When they are faced by numerous obstacles?

The invisible discriminator: Stop, think, respect

What are the consequences of these actions?

1.4.4 UBUNTU

Human flourishing is dependent in many ways on the quality of our relationships, because human beings are social creatures. To truly flourish, humans need each other. Ubuntu is an African word which means "I am who I am because of who we all are".

It highlights the fact that we are all interdependent.

The Golden Rule is most familiar in the Western world as “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”. It has reflections in every major world religion.

ACTIVITY 2

Read Witenberg, Rivka."A refugee, like me: why the Golden Rule matters in an era of mass migration."

Read United Nations."The Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Read United for Human Rights."A Brief History of Human Rights, United for Human Rights."

Read Pagnucco, Ron. "Human Rights CST and the Liberal Rights tradition"

Questions for reflection:

1. Can you think of examples where the golden rule has been applied?
2. How does the golden rule apply in relation to human rights?
3. What do you think constitutes “the good life?”
4. How does one know how others want to be treated?