

Philosophy 403: Professional Ethics

Eugene, Spring 2003

Instructor: Dr. Madronna Holden

3470 Potter St. Eugene 97405

541 345-8180

E-mail: mholden@linfield.edu

Course description: We will explore normative ethical theories and patterns of moral reasoning and apply these to ethical issues in contemporary professional fields. We will examine the historical, economic, technological, and social contexts of ethical choices of employers and employees. Working with case studies, we will explore rights and responsibilities involved in maintaining ethical standards in the contemporary workplace.

Course goals:

In this course students should

- Develop an understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of ethical theory.
- Develop critical analyses of differing ethical philosophies and their individual, social, environmental and professional consequences.
- Develop skills in assessing and applying ethical understanding to specific professional arenas.
- Develop an understanding of the relationship between values and ethics, in both the personal and the organizational realms.
- Develop ethical decision-making skills in assessing social, economic and organizational policy.

THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS IN THIS COURSE.

The purpose of this course is to help you clarify your personal values and develop your own ethical decision-making skills. You will be required to assume personal positions on issues and cases discussed in class and to use course materials to explain how and why you assume those positions.

Requirements and Evaluation:

GRADING:

Class participation: including discussion, small group exercises, "questions to ponder"	20%
Two case studies	40%
One reading response paper	15%
Final integration paper	25%

TEXTS:

Max DePree, *Leadership is an Art*

Jerry Harvey, *The Abilene Paradox*

Nan DeMars, *You Want Me to Do What?*

Class packet: You paid for this packet at registration: it will be distributed on the first day of class.

Late papers: Please arrange with me for late papers *before* the paper's due date. Otherwise, in fairness to your classmates who work to get their work in on time, your papers will be docked a letter grade for each week that they are late.

Students with documented disabilities may contact the Linfield counseling office for support.

Class Schedule and Assignments

Readings and assignments are *due* on the date listed.

September 17

Course Introduction. Ethical theory and values: utilitarian and deontological theories; philosophical reasoning.

Readings: (in class): "38 who saw murder, and "Neighbors lament not telling police."

September 24

Ethical theory and values continued: situation ethics, compassion, and responsibility

Readings: DeMars, chapter eight; Harvey, chapters one, four, and five.

Packet 1: "Our deepest fear", "Anyway", and "logical fallacies" (for your information only)

Packet 2 (has syllabus attached): Quotes.

October 1

Reading Response Paper I due

Individual (Developmental) Conditions of Ethical Decision-making; "Abilene Paradox"

Readings: DeMars, chapter one and pp. 37-46. Harvey: chapters 2, 3, and 6. DePree, pp. xi-22.

Packet 2: "Ordinary Heroes", "For Us, the Living"; "Responsibility among the Lakota".

October 8

Individual (Developmental) Conditions of Ethical Decision-making; continued

Readings: Harvey, chapters 7 and 8; DeMars, chapter 3; DePree, pp. 23-51.

Packet 2: Martin Luther King: Letter from a Birmingham Jail.

October 15

Social and Cultural Conditions of Ethical Decision-Making,

Legitimate and illegitimate authority.

Readings: DePree: 53-108; DeMars, chapters 4 and 6 and page 79 (chart).

Packet 1: "How to succeed without even vying";

Packet 2: Salaries and Subsistence; Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

October 22

Case Study I Due

Ethics and Professionalism; emotional intelligence

Readings: DePree: finish. DeMars, chapter 9;"The Business of Business";

Packet 2: "How Corporate Law Inhibits Responsibility"; "A More Basic Terrorism"; "The Nature of the Machine".

October 29

Economic Justice; ethical definitions of profit, bottom line;

Readings: DeMars, chapters 7 and 17;

Packet 1: "Welfare: Who Needs It"; "Higher Education and Poverty"; Ten Food First

Fundamentals"; "The rich get rich"; "Homeless, who are they?" "Aid to dependent corporations".

Packet 2: "Enron: No Taxes...".

November 5

Social Responsibility of Business: Employee Rights and Responsibilities, Whistle Blowing;

Readings:

DeMars, chapters ten and eleven; from packet 1: "Interest-Based Negotiation".

Packet 2: A Textbook for Whistle Blowers.

November 12

Case Study II Due

Environmental issues and worker safety and health issues; right to know and precautionary principle; the commons.

From packet 1:: "A Declaration of Sustainability"; "Why No One Can Say Pesticides are Safe"; "Freedom from Pesticides is Everybody's Right"; "What you Should Know about Pesticides";

Packet 2: "A Road Map for Natural Capitalism;" "Indecent Exposures"; "Right to Risk Information..."

November 19

Discrimination and violence.

Readings: DeMars, chapters 14 and 15.

Packet 1: "Cooperation"; Excerpts from "Uprooting Racism"

Packet 2: "What is the sexual assault of a child?" "A Woman Couldn't..." Optional: Personal Safety for Women

November 26

"Natural capitalism" and emerging models of the ethical workplace.

Readings: DeMars, chapter 16, 18 and pp. 321-329.

Packet 2: "Should corporations get away with murder?"; "Restorative Justice; "WTO cases and alternate proposal (Portland City Council); "Socially responsible investing"; "Workplace democracy"

December 3

Final integration paper part I

Shareholders and Stakeholders. Consumers, clients, and information sharing. Community involvement in professional decision-making.

December 10

Final Integration Paper Part II due

Visions of the future; developing a code of ethics based on personal and professional values.

Make-up for Missed Classes

Class participation is a substantial portion of your grade. Absence from class is *not* an excuse for late papers. If personal or professional emergencies do necessitate your missing a class, you should make up your missed class in the following manner:

1. Get notes on class material from a classmate; turn in a one-paragraph to one-page outline summary of class ideas from these notes.
2. If we showed a film in your absence that is available in video stores or from the Linfield library, make arrangements to view that film on your own. Otherwise, get notes on that film from another student. Turn in a one-paragraph summary of and response to the ideas in that film.
3. If we had a group exercise or class sharing in your absence, write your own response to the discussion question assigned to the group.

(continued)

4. Write a reading response paragraph (giving the main idea of the reading and your response to it) for any three of the readings assigned on the day you missed.
5. Make-up assignments should be turned in within two weeks of the missed class or by the end of the term, whichever is sooner. Last class make-up must be turned in with the final paper.

Guidelines for Papers

Format

Please use a font large enough to allow me room to comment and double space your papers for the same reasons. You may print on both sides of a page or use the clean back of another page-- paper conservation is always appreciated! There is no need for a title page. Just put your name and assignment number/title on each page.

Please indicate which question you are answering in the body of your paper. Please number your pages and put your name on each, in case they get separated.

Grammatical and proofing errors

I mark grammatical errors for your information. Though I do not generally count off for them, these errors will certainly affect your grade if they effect the clear presentation of your idea. I will also count off for grammatical errors if the same errors I have marked appear in your next paper. I will also mark your paper down if your paper averages more than two proofing errors per page, since this obviously affects the strength and clarity of your presentation.

Present and substantiate your own ideas

Your papers give you a chance to develop and express your own insights with respect to class material. I will never grade you down for expressing your own point of view-- in fact, I expect you to do so. But you must also substantiate the points you make. Explain why you make each of your assertions, and support your position with concrete examples from class materials. (What is it in class material that gives you your idea? Why?)

Use the ideas of others appropriately

Try not to use quotes over two lines (not sentences) in length. Paraphrase longer quotes in your own words or break them into smaller parts, which you discuss, part by part. Quotes should support your ideas, not speak for you. Your papers should show me you understand class ideas and can use them to develop your own ideas.

Be wary of unintentional plagiarism. Give credit to those whose ideas you use, even if you paraphrase them.

Be thorough and well organized

Answer questions completely: address each part of a question in turn. Papers will be docked if you fail to discuss any part of a question.

Organize your paper clearly around your specific point(s). As you write don't move to a new point without relating it to the previous one. A paper can be too long as well as too short. Leave out statements that detract from your discussion because they not directly to your topic.

Be concrete and well focused

Avoid sweeping or vague statements ("people have always acted this way"). Avoid statement attributed to vague authority ("It is common knowledge," "They say"). Use general terms and ideas only if you specify how you are using them in your particular discussion, and support them with concrete examples.

Additional hints:

--Spellcheckers are useful, but don't let them replace your own proof reading, as did the student who wrote an entire paper discussing Indian "mascara" (Can you guess what he really meant?) For insurance that you are saying what you want to say, proof read your work out loud or have some one else read and respond to your paper.

-- Don't assume the reader (even if it your professor!) understands your ideas before you put them across. In order to strengthen and clarify your paper, you might imagine you are writing to a co-worker or friend, explaining your ideas thoroughly enough for that person to understand them.