

Ethical Judgments in Professional Life
Carnegie Mellon University
Summer Session II 2016

Instructor: Aidan Kestigian
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Office hours: by appointment

Course location: Baker Hall 150
Time: MTWRF 3:00 – 4:20 p.m.

Course Description:

This class considers the nature of moral obligations in professional life. In particular, we will discuss what obligations individual professionals and professional institutions have. We will begin by surveying several competing ethical theories. We will then use these theories to address several questions regarding the nature of moral obligations in business, medicine, and government professions. Some questions we will consider are the following: what moral obligations do employers have to their employees? What do business and governments owe the greater public? How ought physicians and clinical researchers treat patients and research subjects? The course uses ethical and political theory, case studies, and empirical evidence to consider these questions.

Philosophical inquiry is pursued via writing, speaking, and reading. Throughout this course, students will be asked to read primary source texts, write short essays, and make presentations to the class. Essays and presentations will typically involve a summary of one or more philosophers' arguments, followed by an original critique or defense of those arguments. No philosophical background is required for this class. However, if you are having difficulty with the readings, essays, or presentations, please make an appointment to meet with the instructor.

Text:

There is no required text. All readings will be available on the Blackboard site.

Course Expectations:

By the end of this course, students should have a general understanding of core contemporary theories of moral obligation, and be able to apply those theories to the topics of professional ethics. In particular, students should be able to:

- Read philosophical articles critically, and be able to summarize the main points of those articles in a classroom discussion.
- Generate thoughtful discussion questions in response to readings.

- Summarize the ethical theories discussed in class in both short blog posts and medium-length essays.
- Explain clearly how the theories discussed in class would apply to contemporary issues in medicine, business, and government.
- Read and respond to peers' work by critiquing or providing further justification for their peers' claims.

Grading:

Participation & Attendance	15%
Leading Discussions	20%
Essay Outline	5%
Essay Presentation	10%
Essay	20%
Blog Post 1	5%
Blog Post 2	5%
Blog Post 3	10%
Blog Post 4	10%

Participation

Students will be evaluated on their preparedness for the day's discussion. In order to be successful, a student must have completed the reading and come prepared with any questions or comments about the reading. Note: you must attend to participate, so attendance is an implicit part of the participation grade. Every student is given one "free" absence. Every absence after the first will result in a 5 pt. deduction from your in-class participation grade.

Leading Discussions

Each student will be asked to lead two class discussions. The purpose of these presentations is two-fold. First, presentations provide a different method of assessment from writing, which better suits some students' skills. Second, the presentations force students to dig into the reading deep enough to be able to explain the topic to others (which will be very helpful when it comes to writing!). At the beginning of the term, students will choose the day on which they would like to present. While I expect the presentations to be rather informal, they should be comprehensive. An adequate presentation will include a summary of the main argument of the reading due that day, as well as a summary of comments, questions, and critiques of the reading that you think would enhance class discussion.

Blogging Assignment

Each student will be responsible for maintaining a blog throughout the course. The goal of the blogs is to have students (1) practice writing about course topics in their own words and (2) apply course concepts to real world ethical problems of interest. Each student will select one ethical issue from business, government, or medicine, and provide an ethical analysis of that issue throughout the course. On Fridays we will come together as a group and discuss what we have blogged about that week. Students are required to ask questions and provide feedback to their peers during Friday course meetings. Instructions for each blog post are provided below.

Blog post 1: Briefly describe the topic you have chosen to study.

Blog post 2: Provide a 500-750-word post explanation of the topic you have selected.

Blog post 3: Provide a 750-1000 word post in which you (a) introduce one of the ethical theories discussed in class and (b) discuss how a proponent of that theory would evaluate your chosen topic.

Blog post 4: Repeat the steps of blog post 3, this time using an alternate ethical theory.

Essay

This course requires students to write one essay. This essay will bring together your work from your blogging assignment into one complete, coherent essay. Instructions for the essay will be distributed once blogging has begun. In general, the essay will require that students explain their chosen ethical issue, evaluate that issue from two competing ethical perspectives, and provide an original evaluation of that analysis.

Late Work

All work handed in late will receive a deduction, starting the minute after assignments are due. Late work will receive a 10 point deduction for every day late. Assignments that are more than four days late will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

I take very seriously the university's policy on plagiarism and cheating. In all original work, you *must* cite every source you use. Please use a consistent, standard system of citation unless otherwise noted. MLA and APA are common formats in the humanities and social sciences. If a student is caught plagiarizing, the assignment in question will receive a failing grade for both the assignment and the course. In addition, the university will be notified of the student's misconduct.

A short excerpt from the Carnegie Mellon *Policy on Academic Integrity* is listed below:

“In any manner of presentation, it is the responsibility of each student to produce her/his own original academic work. Collaboration or assistance on academic work to be graded is not permitted unless explicitly authorized by the course instructor(s). Students may utilize the assistance provided by Academic Development, the Global Communication Center, and the Academic Resource Center (CMU-Q) unless specifically prohibited by the course instructor(s). Any other sources of collaboration or assistance must be specifically authorized by the course instructor(s).

In all academic work to be graded, the citation of all sources is required. When collaboration or assistance is permitted by the course instructor(s) or when a student utilizes the services provided by Academic Development, the Global Communication Center, and the Academic Resource Center (CMU-Q), the acknowledgement of any collaboration or assistance is likewise required. This citation and acknowledgement must be incorporated into the work submitted and not separately or at a later point in time. Failure to do so is dishonest and is subject to disciplinary action”

For more information, please read the full *Policy on Academic Integrity*, found at the following link: <http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Academic%20Integrity.html>

Daily Readings and Assignments

Week 1: Introduction

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
Monday June 27	Introduction to Course What is Ethics?	
Tuesday June 28	Ethics v. Law Presentation Selection	Weinstein, "If it's Legal, it's Ethical- Right?" Dworkin, "The Concept of a Moral Position"
Wednesday June 29	Subjectivism vs. Objectivism	Rachels "Ethical Subjectivism" & Shafer-Landau "How Ethical Objectivism Solves..."
Thursday June 30	Ethical Egoism	Rachels "Ethical Egoism"
Friday July 1	Introduction to Blogging Assignment	Blog Post 1 Due by 6:00 p.m. on Blackboard

Week 2: Two Ethical Theories

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
Monday July 4	No Class (Holiday)	
Tuesday July 5	Consequentialism & Utilitarianism	Consequentialism Handout & Rachels, "The Utilitarian Approach"
Wednesday July 6	Concerns about Consequentialism	Rachels "The Debate over Utilitarianism"
Thursday July 7	Deontology	Rachels, "Kant & Respect for Persons" & O'Neill "A Simplified Account"
Friday July 8	Blogging Day & Week 2 Recap	Blog Post 2 Due 12:00 p.m.

Week 3: Business Ethics

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
Monday July 11	What is the goal of business?	Friedman, "Social Responsibility"
Tuesday July 12	Market Failures & Public Goods	Murphy, "Climate Change"
Wednesday July 13	The goal of business, revisited	Bowie, "New Directions"
Thursday July 14	Case Study	Wagner, "Is Facebook Suppressing...?"

Friday July 15	Blogging Day	Blog Post 3 Due 6:00 p.m.
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Week 4: Business Ethics vs. Gov't Ethics

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
Monday July 18	Public vs. Private Sectors	Harvey, "Why Government should Not be Run like a Business"
Tuesday July 19	What is the goal of government?	Simmons, "The Consent Tradition"
Wednesday July 20	Political Obligations	Simmons, "The Natural Duty of Justice"
Thursday July 21	The goal of government, revisited	Nozick, "Distributive Justice"
Friday July 22	Blogging & Case Study Day	Blog Post 4 Due 12:00 p.m.

Week 5: Medicine: Public or Private?

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
Monday July 25	What is the goal of healthcare?	Segall, "Is Healthcare (Still) Special?" Essay Outlines Due
Tuesday July 26	Obligations of Physicians	Beauchamp, "The 'Four Principles' Approach"
Wednesday July 27	Justice in Healthcare	Daniels, "Justice, Health, and Healthcare"
Thursday July 28	Public Health	Kenny, "Re-visioning Healthcare Ethics"
Friday July 29	No Class- Work on Papers and Final Presentations!	

Week 6: Course Wrap Up and Presentations

Date	Topic	Reading
Monday August 1	Course Wrap Up	
Tuesday August 2	Presentations	
Wednesday August 3	Presentations	
Thursday August 4	No Class- Open Office Hours 12:00-3:00 p.m.	
Friday August 5	No Class (Exam Day)	Final Essay Due 6:00 p.m.