PHI 250: Introduction to Professional Ethics

Thursdays 7-9:30

Spring 2009

Blaney Hall Room 11

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Office Hour: Wed. 10-12 and by appointment

Textbook: *Ethical Issues in Professional Life*, Joan C. Callahan, ed.

Course Description:
This course is an introduction to the fundamental principles of ethical theory and their application to the professions. While individual professions such as nursing, business, law, medicine, social work and journalism will be discussed, the emphasis of the course is on the ethical principles and issues which apply to all professions, including confidentiality, deception, whistle-blowing, and social responsibility. Students will study various codes of professional ethics, encounter case studies drawn from multiple professions, and engage in research on a profession or issue of their own choosing. The course will be conducted in seminar format.

Course Objectives
Students completing this course will have attained a thorough knowledge of 1) the major ethical theories of the Western tradition; 2) the major principles of professional ethics; 3) the application of these theories and principles to multiple professions; and 4) will be able to formulate and defend a moral position on an aspect of professional life and performance. In addition, particular attention will be paid to improving students’ skills in written communication.

Assessment
Student knowledge of the major ethical theories and major principles of professional ethics will be evaluated on the basis of performance on one midterm and one final examination. The ability to apply these theories and principles to multiple professions will be evaluated on the basis of performance on the midterm and final examinations, and on the basis of performance on a research project. Moral reasoning skills will be evaluated on the basis of performance on the research paper and on the basis of the writing assignments. Writing skills will be evaluated on the basis of the writing assignments.

Requirements
- Attendance/Participation 10%
- Midterm exam 20%
- Short paper 15%
- In-class writing assignments 15%
- Research paper 20%
Due Dates
Papers and take-home exams are due in class on the date indicated. Work may be emailed to me prior to the deadline, as long as it is a Word document. Any work not brought to class, or not received by email by 7:00 p.m. on the due date is late and will be penalized accordingly.

Writing Intensive
This is a writing intensive course, fulfilling the WRI2 requirement of the curriculum.

Course Policies
• Students must retain a hard copy of all submitted work.
• Students must complete and submit all required work to pass.
• Work that is submitted late without prior consent from the instructor will be penalized 1/3 grade per day until it is received.
• Attendance is required and graded. Chronic lateness will result in a drop in the attendance grade.
• Plagiarism will be penalized either with a failing grade for the paper, or with a failing grade for the course, depending on the severity of the case, at my discretion
  ● There is a mandatory writing workshop on February 26. Failure to attend or to have a completed paper for that workshop will result in your grade for the assignment being lowered 5 points. This penalty will carry over into rewrites as well. If you have a dire emergency, please speak with me.

Plagiarism is representing another person’s words or ideas as your own. If you include words or ideas in your paper or test which come from another source, without letting me know with the appropriate documentation, you have plagiarized. The source can be anything: Web pages, newspapers, your textbook, a television show. There is an appropriate way to document every conceivable kind of source. It is plagiarism whether it is a direct quote, a paraphrase, or an idea. “Forgetting” to put in citations is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism, any more than “forgetting to pay” is an acceptable excuse for shoplifting. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will be dealt with seriously.

E-Companion
In order to reduce the use of paper, this course will utilize the eCompanion software to post all documents for the course: the syllabus, PowerPoint slides, paper topics, study guides, etc. Please call IT at 3348 if you have trouble accessing the eCompanion site.

Honor Philosophy
This course will be conducted in accordance with the principles of the Cedar Crest College Honor Philosophy.

Email Policy
All communications must be made using Cedar Crest College email accounts. This is to protect your privacy, in accordance with federal law.
Class Cancellation Policy
In the event that I must cancel class, I will make every reasonable effort to email each of you at your Cedar Crest College account. If the cancellation is weather related, and the College is remaining open, you may check my voicemail at extension 3417. If I need to cancel class because of weather, I will leave an outgoing message on my voicemail advising students that class is cancelled. I will also post an announcement on the course’s eCompanion site.

Statement on Accommodations
Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with their professors during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the Advising Center.
Readings and Assignments

Jan. 22  Introduction to the course

Jan. 29  Chapter 1: “Basics and Background”
   First in-class writing assignment

Feb. 5   Chapter 3, “Occupational and Ordinary Morality”
   5. “Professional Responsibility of the Criminal Defense Lawyer”
   7. “Is Business Bluffing Ethical?”
   Second in-class writing assignment

Feb. 12  Chapter 4, “Professionals and Clients: Models and Metaphors”
   10. “Models for Ethical Medicine in a Revolutionary Age”
   12. “From Loyalty to Advocacy: A New Metaphor for Nursing”

Feb. 19  Chapter 5, “Deception”
   17. “Lying and Lies to the Sick and Dying”
   18. “Lies for the Public Good”
   * “Self-Interest and Business Ethics: Some Lessons of the Recent Corporate Scandals” Thomas L. Carson (available on eCompanion course site)

Feb. 26  Writing Workshop/ Review for midterm
   Short Paper Due

Mar. 5   Chapter 7, “Privacy and Confidentiality” – Privacy
   26. “Can You Pass the Job Test?”
   27. “Privacy, Morality and the Law”
   Midterm Exam due

Mar. 12  No Class – Spring Break

Mar. 19  Chapter 7, “Privacy and Confidentiality” – Confidentiality
   29. “The Limits of Confidentiality”
   30A. “Majority Opinion in Tarasoff”
   30B. “Dissenting Opinion in Tarasoff”

Mar. 26  Chapter 6, “Informed Consent”
   23. Informed Consent and Patient Autonomy
   25. “Medical Experimentation on Prisoners”

Apr. 2   Video: “The Insider”
   Research Paper Due
Apr. 9  Chapter 8, “Individual and Collective Responsibility”
       33. “Corporate Moral Agency”
       35. “What is Hamlet to McDonnell-Douglas?”

Apr. 16  Chapter 9, “Social Responsibility and Professional Dissent”
        40. “In Defense of Whistle-Blowing
        41. “Whistle-Blowing and Professional Responsibilities

Apr. 23  Appendix One: Sample Codes of Professional Ethics

Apr. 30  Review for Final Exam