

**Cedar Crest College**  
**CRJ 211 Criminal Justice Ethics**  
**Spring 2010**

Course: CRJ 211  
Credits: 3

Paul J. Werrell  
Phone: home 610-965-0130, cell 484-619-5840  
E-Mail: [pwerrel@cedarcrest.edu](mailto:pwerrel@cedarcrest.edu)

**Course Description**

There is perhaps no more appropriate place for the study of ethics than in the criminal justice profession. In order for a society to have a system of enforcement of social rules and norms, it must first establish a standard measure of ethical behavior. This course will examine how a society establishes moral and ethical behavior; the challenges faced by the establishment of a system of enforcement; and the dilemmas faced by those charged with enforcement. It will examine the ethical issues raised by things such as Megan's Law; hate crimes; gun control; legalization of drugs; DNA testing; and racial profiling. It will also examine the individual ethical dilemmas faced by the people who are considered criminal justice professionals.

**Course Objectives**

Through this course, the intent is to assist the student to develop and use critical thinking skills to:

1. Gain a more in-depth understanding of how a society establishes moral and ethical standards of behavior.
2. Identify the unique ethical dilemmas faced by each component of the criminal justice system.
3. Develop an understanding of why society requires a system of legal intervention and identify the ethical challenges that exist when such a system is operated.
4. Identify the unique ethical dilemmas created by specific enforcement practices and policies.

**Course Outcomes**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of how a society establishes the moral and ethical standards for which it will require compliance.

Assessment: Students will read selected chapters from Professional Ethics in Criminal Justice, participate in class discussions, and prepare a written analysis of the process of the establishment of ethical standards.

Students will be able to identify the ethical challenges faced by each of the major components of the criminal justice system; law enforcement; the courts; and corrections.

Assessment: Students will read selected chapters from Professional Ethics in Criminal Justice, and Taming the System: The Control of Discretion in Criminal Justice, participate in class discussions, and prepare a written analysis on the ethical challenges faced by one of the components of the criminal justice system.

The student will be able to identify the code of conduct common in criminal justice organizations and analyze how this code impacts the ethical standards established by the individual agency.

Assessment: Students will read selected chapters from Professional Ethics in Criminal Justice, and Taming the System: The Control of Discretion in Criminal Justice, and present an oral presentation on an ethical issue in criminal justice.

### **Texts and Readings**

Albanese, J.S. (2008). Professional Ethics in Criminal Justice. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Walker, S. (1993). Taming the system: The control of discretion in criminal justice. New York: Oxford University Press.

### **Student Assignments**

Each student is expected to do high quality work in completing the following assignments:

1. To regularly attend all class periods and read all assigned readings.
2. Students will excel in two written assignments in which the student will be asked to analyze an ethical issue presented and discussed in class.

#### **Paper # 1**

- We have discussed three major ethical approaches during the theoretical evaluation of criminal justice ethics. You are to take the concept of terrorist interrogations as it has been presented and discussed in class and outline the following:
  - a. Identify and define the ethical dilemma

- b. For each ethical principle value, formalism (deontology) and utilitarianism, describe the ethical approach taken to solve the ethical dilemma. Take caution to analyze the dilemma from each of the distinctive perspectives, describing how each would view the resolution.
- c. Provide the resolution of the ethical dilemma from each of the perspectives.

Paper # 2

- We have viewed “Acres under the Skin” and discussed the issue of medical testing of inmates in class. You will be asked to choose a theoretical approach to take when considering the ethical dilemma presented in the film and complete the following assignment:
  - a. Once you have chosen a perspective, briefly summarize the ethical dilemma presented in the film.
  - b. Analyze the problem according to the principles of the theoretical base you have chosen.
  - c. Provide a resolution to the dilemma based on the theoretical perspective you have chosen.

All written assignments will be graded using the accompanying rubric. There is no designated length to the papers, however, students should realize that it is their responsibility to demonstrate an understanding of a given content area. To do so requires some degree of detail, thought and preparedness.

3. Students must provide an oral presentation in which they apply the ethical frameworks presented in class to solve an ethical dilemma now facing the profession. As an example, a student may select any one of the following subjects:
  - The chemical castration of sex offenders
  - The registration and publication of personal info on SO’s
  - Torture and dehumanizing tactics in the interrogation of terrorist suspects
  - Death Penalty
  - Mass incapacitation
  - Legal and social restrictions on convicted offenders
  - Rape shield law
  - Immigration
  - Three strikes legislation
  - Life without parole
  - Organ donation from convicted offenders
  - Mandatory DNA sampling on convicted offenders

You may certainly select a topic of your choice in an area of the criminal justice system that interests you. All topics must be submitted in writing and approved by me, by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> week. Students may choose to work alone or in small groups of no more than two.

Requirements: Using the outline below, examine the selected topic critically, using the relevant ethical considerations discussed in class.

- a. Issue Identification
  - Define the problem and overview the issue.
- b. Identify the current approaches to the problem
  - What is the rationale or reasoning for the current approach
- c. Ethical analysis
  - Describe the main ethical problem
  - Present pro and con perspectives on a resolution to the issue and its current state
- d. Personal View
  - Indicate your view on the issue
  - Select one of the major theoretical perspectives and describe how your view best fits one of those perspectives.
  - Discuss the rationale for your decision

Oral presentations will be graded using the accompanying evaluation form. All presentations must be at least 15 minutes in length but no longer than 30 minutes. All students must speak during the presentation should they choose the small group format. Any presentation falling short of the time requirement will receive no greater than a 'C' as their final grade. This presentation is expected to be detailed and rehearsed to ensure time and content compliance.

A student must submit an assignment for each of the described categories. If a student decides not to submit a course requirement, they will fail the course.

### **Attendance Policy**

Students may be absent without penalty to their grade on two occasions. Any student absent on 3 or 4 occasions will have their attendance grade reduced by 25%; any student absent on 5 or 6 more occasions will receive a zero for class participation; and any student absent on 7 or more occasions will not pass the course. All absences must be discussed with the instructor in advance, with the exception of medical emergencies.

### **Classroom Protocol**

Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest College Honor Code. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous,

respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations and any other behavior that might disrupt instruction and/or compromise students' access to their Cedar Crest College education. Anyone who will be arriving late because of another class must notify me in advance.

Sleeping, or the appearance thereof, is strictly prohibited. Any student who sleeps, or appears to sleep through a lecture will receive a 0 for class participation. If the student makes a habit of sleeping after being spoken to, she/he will fail the course.

The use of cell phones is strictly prohibited. All cell phones must be turned off or placed on "quiet" or vibrate mode. If a student is observed texting during a lecture, presentation or film, the phone will be taken from the student and she/he will receive a 0 for class participation.

Furthermore:

Students are expected to have prompt and regular classroom attendance in accordance with the policy stated on the syllabus.

Faculty are expected to make clear on the first day of class reasons for specific classroom decorum and repercussions for non-compliance. Faculty should be aware of setting boundaries and procedures for exceptions to expectations stated in the syllabus.

Students need to understand that open discussion is encouraged and expected in order to foster an advanced learning environment. However, all students should use caution when sharing personal information. There is a point to which personal experiences are detrimental to the learning environment.

### **Honor Philosophy**

The Cedar Crest College Honor Philosophy is based upon the principle that, as a self-governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgment that will guide them through life.

### **Grading**

Attendance, Participation, and Critical Thinking Discussion	20%
Paper # 1	25 %
Paper # 2	25 %
Presentation	<u>30 %</u>
	100 %

## Course Outline

### **Week 1**      January 19

Review of attendance and grading policies  
Review of the course syllabus  
Review of the course objectives and instructor expectations  
The Importance of Ethics in the Criminal Justice System  
Recognizing Ethical Dilemmas  
Discussion – Critical Thinking Exercises

#### *Assignments for 1/26:*

Chapters 1, 2    in Professional Ethics

### **Week 2**      January 26

Virtue Ethics  
Discussion – Critical Thinking Exercise

#### *Assignments for 2/2:*

Chapter 3      in Professional Ethics

### **Week 3**      February 2

Formalism (Deontological) Ethics  
Discussion - Critical Thinking Exercise

#### *Assignments for 2/9:*

Chapter 4      in Professional Ethics

### **Week 4**      February 9

Utilitarian Ethics  
Discussion - Critical Thinking Exercise

#### *Assignments for 2/16:*

Chapter 5      in Professional Ethics

**Week 5**      February 16

**Crime and Law:**

What Behaviors Ought to be Crimes?

Discussion - Critical Thinking Exercise

*Assignments for 2/23:*

Chapter 6      in Professional Ethics

Chapter 2      in Taming the System

**Week 6**      February 23

**Police:**

How Should the Law Be Enforced?

Film: *Racial Profiling*

Film: *Taxi to the Dark Side*

Discussion - Critical Thinking Exercise

*Assignments for 3/2:*

Chapter 7      in Professional Ethics

Chapters 3, 4   in Taming the System

Oral Presentation Topics Due

**Week 7**      March 2

**Courts:**

How Ought a Case be Adjudicated?

Film: *Culpability*

Discussion - Critical Thinking Exercise

*Assignments for 3/16:*

**Paper #1 Due**

Chapter 8      in Professional Ethics

Chapter 5      in Taming the System

**Week 8**      March 16

**Punishment and Corrections:**

What Should be Done with Offenders?

Film: *Acres of Skin: Medical Abuse Behind Bars*

Discussion – Critical Thinking Exercises

*Assignments for 3/23:*

Chapter 9      in Professional Ethics

**Week 9**      March 23

**Liability:**

What Should be the Consequence of Unethical Conduct?

Discussion - Critical Thinking Exercise

*Assignments for 3/30:*

**Paper #2 Due**

**Week 10**      March 30

Review

**Weeks 11 through 14**      April 13, 20, 27, May 4

These weeks will be devoted to the oral presentations.