

The Ethical Life: Moral and Social Responsibility

ETL 235: Sec. 05

Cedar Crest College, Spring 2010

W 11-11:50 PM; Room: CUR 112

Format: Discussion Seminar

Dr. Robert A. Wilson

Office: 113 Hartzel Hall

Office Hours: T & R, 1-1:50 PM

T & W 6-6:50 PM, & by appointment

Email: rawilson@cedarcrest.edu

Phone: x3474, off campus dial

610-606-4666

This section schedule supplements the ETL 235 program syllabus and the Community Partnership Handbook. Please refer to those documents for an outline of course objectives, the attendance policy, due dates for site paperwork, and course grading policies.

For our section, you will also need access to Cedar Crest's eCollege course companion website:

www.cedarcrestonline.net. You will find course documents available from the site, you'll be able to track your course grade, and we'll use it to facilitate the submission of writing assignments. Contact the Registrar Office for your account ID and password, if you haven't been provided one already.

Writing Assignments: There are two writing assignments due each week, one on the reading ("Reflection") and one on your site ("Application"). Each one must be a minimum of one typed page in length, double-spaced, in a 12-point Times New Roman font. In accordance with Cedar Crest College's policy on academic honesty, and in keeping with the subject matter of the course, plagiarism of writing assignments will also result in failing the course. Refer to the ETL 235 program syllabus (p. 3) for details on writing assignment evaluation.

Writing assignments should respond to the below questions, or one of the alternative questions provided in your Ethical Life reader. Both the "Reflection" and "Application" essays are due the week of the assigned reading at the beginning of our class.

You will submit writing assignments via the eCollege companion website under the appropriate dropbox for each week. Essays should be submitted, preferably, in MSWord (*.doc/.docx) format, or at least as a Rich Text Format file (*.rtf).

We'll assess your essays three times during the semester: once after Week 2 (to provide you with early guidance), again after Week 8, and a final time after Week 14.

Seminar Schedule

Date	Reading Assignment	Reflection	Application
1/20	Course & Site Introduction		
1/27	“Ethics for the New Millennium” (pp. 5-15)	In this reading, the Dalai Lama notes that in his travels he has noticed an increased internal suffering with increased material prosperity. What are some of the factors he thinks might be responsible?	Do you observe any of the same phenomena the Dalai Lama discusses, in your own life or community, or here at Cedar Crest?
2/3	Kant’s Categorical Imperative (pp. 29-38)	Using the formulation of the Categorical Imperative, what would Kant say about the morality of cheating on a test? Telling lie to a friend who asks if her friend is cheating on her when you know he is?	At your site, what measures do you see that ensure clients are treated as ends in themselves? These would be policies, practices and procedures that respect the clients’ dignity and autonomy, and preserve the clients’ ability to make their own choices and decisions. What do you do to make sure you treat the clients as ends in themselves?
2/10	“Utilitarianism” (pp. 43-56)	Have you ever done something you might otherwise not have done, on the grounds that it was the best thing for everyone involved (the greatest good for the greatest number)? Maybe it was telling a lie to save someone’s feelings, even though you are normally very truthful? Were you satisfied with how that incident ended up?	In what way is your site working to achieve the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people?
2/17	“From A Theory of Justice” (pp. 57-71)	Public schools across the United States are funded by property taxes. As a consequence, schools in areas with high-value residential properties have the best funding, while schools in areas of low-value residential properties have the worst funding. Discuss the fairness and justice of this method of funding public education, using Rawls’ hypothetical constructs of the original position and the veil of ignorance.	Does an unequal distribution of goods, service, opportunities, etc. have anything to do with why your agency is needed to provide services?
2/24	“Life at the Top” (pp. 84-101)	What are the factors that led to the three people featured in the article getting different care for the same condition? Think about things like support systems, access to hospitals and rehab, transportation, and so on. In what way are these factors related to class?	As you look at your own community, or the community your site is situated in, how many and what kinds of services are available? Do you think the upper class, middle class, or lower class tends to have more services conveniently available to them?
3/3	“Pay Inequity” (pp. 75-83) “Serving in Florida” (pp. 103-132)	Reflect on the employment policies that Ehrenreich encountered in her Florida jobs. What do they say about attitudes towards low wage workers? Have you had to work under similar conditions?	Describe the neighborhood your site is located in (if you are at an on-campus site or on-line site, pick an urban location to describe). Note type and condition of houses, type of businesses, condition of roads and sidewalks, etc. Compare it with your neighborhood, or the neighborhood right around Cedar Crest College.
3/10	No Class: Spring Break		
3/17	“Four Pennies to my Name” (pp.156-176)	In what way does Addie Morris’ story reflect a welfare success story? In what ways does it reflect a typical story of a “bad” welfare mother? What does it tell you about living on welfare?	Do the people you encounter at your site seem very much like or unlike the people you encounter in other areas of your life?
3/24	“Flat Broke with Children” (pp. 133-155)	What are some of the factors the author discusses as leading to the enormous gap between rich people and poor people in the US?	In what ways are the people at your site invisible and/or excluded in society? What steps does your site take to make them more visible and included?
3/31	“Angela Whitaker’s Climb” (pp. 177-200)	What are the factors that got Angela Whitaker out of poverty and into the middle class? What are some of the features of moving into the middle class that Angela Whitaker could not have anticipated?	Does your site do anything to provide either human capital or social capital to its clients (see p. 197)?
4/7	“Crossing Class Boundaries” (pp. 263-276)	In what ways did hooks’ mobility across class lines cause conflict with her friends and family?	Discuss any signs of class segregation that you see at your site, in your community, or at Cedar Crest.
4/14	“A Different Mirror” (pp. 223-239)	Would anyone ever mistake your nationality? How would you feel if people questioned any part of your identity: your nationality, ethnicity, gender, etc?	What is the racial composition of your site? Does it tell you anything about the significance of race in the community?
4/21	“Growing Up, Growing Apart” (pp. 240-261)	Why do you think the students in this article had a hard time maintaining trans-racial friendships past high school? What does it say about race in America today?	How have you changed or grown since you began to work at this site? What have you learned about yourself and the people you work with?
4/28	“On Being a Good Neighbor” (pp.17-28)	King suggests that not viewing all humankind as our neighbor has been responsible for many tragedies. What kinds of tragedies do you think could be attributed to people believing they have no moral obligation to someone who is not of their kind?	One of the conditions of your community placements is that you work with a group of people from a different community than your own. They may be people that you do not normally think of as your “neighbors.” As you are among the people you work with at your site, reflect on what your moral beliefs tell you your obligation to these people is. Is it the obligation of passing the course? The obligation of fellow residents of a community? The obligation of your fellow human beings?