Theory and Skills of Ethics Teaching
The University of Montana-Missoula

With pre-residence online sessions

Instructor: Professor Deni Elliott
Office Hours: By appointment
Elliott@usfsp.edu
Cell phone: 406 360-6606

Course Options:
Take the course for credit as PHI 521, Theory and Skills of Ethics Teaching (3 Graduate Credits), for traditional or p/f grading, or audit as workshop only. Students are responsible for arranging the transfer of credits from University of Montana to their home institutions.

Course Objectives:
Through active involvement, participants will
1) observe themselves as learners to learn about themselves as teachers;
2) develop materials for use in teaching in their own settings;
3) practice with philosophical concepts relevant to teaching practical ethics;
4) develop and defend a system for ethical analysis;
5) determine characteristics that make teaching and learning environments ethically and pedagogically sound;
6) experiment with learning and teaching styles including synchronous and asynchronous online, case-based discussion, lecture, collaborative learning groups, and Socratic dialogue.

This course is a hybrid course, taught through a combination of online instruction (15 of 45 contact hours) and through an intensive, 5-day workshop at the University of Montana – Missoula (30 of 45 contact hours). The online portion of the course will be conducted through Google + beginning six weeks prior to the in-residence week. We will use Google + to save participants the UM online access cost. Participants will find exercises and assignments to complete, and discussion board threads with which to engage. We will also meet in a virtual chat session for 1 1/2 hours for 7 sessions. The live online sessions will be scheduled to best meet the needs of participants. The pre-residence work, including online sessions, reading, and participation in blogs or discussion groups, will take 25-35 hours. Participants not able to make live online sessions will have access to transcripts for review.

Pre-residence, we will tackle some primary philosophical reading (Aristotle, Kant, Mill) and readings from some feminist philosophers with the objective of having all participants come to the residential portion of the course with a basic understanding of three influential classical
philosophers, contemporary feminist response, and how this work can be best used in the teaching of practical and professional ethics.

The course will meet in residence at the University of Montana-Missoula June 25-29, 2012. We will meet 9-5 M-F, with a half-hour lunch break and two 15 minute breaks. On Wednesday, formal instruction will end at noon. In-residence work will take approximately 40 hours, including class time and preparation. Individual consultation is available after the June workshop week as requested.

Course Materials:

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics, Books I, II, VI* (available through websearch)


Mill, J. S. *Utilitarianism* (available through Amazon or websearch).

Mill, J. S., *Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion* (available through Amazon or websearch).


Assessment:
This class is offered audit, P/F or traditional grading option. Participants are expected to offer responses to blog or discussion boards and to participate in the live online sessions or read the transcripts if unable to attend. Participants are expected to attend all sessions during the in-
residence week, and participate in all individual and group exercises. Participants will create materials during the in-residence week to take into their specific learning environments.

In addition, students who are taking the class for a letter grade are expected to submit four learning units (see final assignment sheet) for evaluation no later than two weeks following the end of the face-to-face portion of the class. These students will also turn in a written self-assessment based on personal and professorial learning goals.

**Daily Schedule for Face-to-Face Week**
*(except Wednesday):*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-10:30</td>
<td>Large Group Lecture/Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-10:45</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-12:15</td>
<td>Large Group Lecture/Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative Learning (CL) Exercise Explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15-3:00</td>
<td>Lunch, Individual Work, CL Group, Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-5:00</td>
<td>Large Group Summary and Closure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On Wednesday, June 27, formal instruction ends at noon.

**The Ethics of Teaching Ethics:**
Ethics teaching communicates values and beliefs about human nature as well as content. Everything that I do in this course is what I do in my “real life” teaching. I expect us all to be actively and authentically engaged in all activities as teachers and as learners. I cringe when I hear someone say, “Well, if I were teaching a real class, I would……” I will stop you if you say that. Please do the same to me. This IS a real class. Indeed, it is a real ethics class.

My teaching strategies, as well as the materials for each day, are carefully designed to meet clear instructional goals both in what I teach as well as how I teach. During our end-of-the-day summary discussion, you are expected to make public note of what you noticed in the way of pedagogy during the day, whether your response is positive, negative or puzzled. My goal is to be conscious of and purposeful about everything that I do in our seminar experience. My goal is to be able to justify and explain everything that I do as a teacher. I model transparency because I believe that transparency is a reasonable expectation of every ethics teacher.

Here are my expectations for you: I start from the belief that the actively ethical person is someone who is self-aware, self-reflective and self-critical. A person who is *self-aware* is someone who works hard to notice the choices that s/he is making, and who attempts to articulate the reasoning behind those choices (at least to him/herself). The person who is *self-reflective* is someone who is conscious of alternative choices and who works to explain what makes one alternative better than others. The person who is *self-critical* is someone who understands him/herself to be someone who is sometimes wrong. The *self-critical* person recognizes his or her own fallibility and celebrates opportunities for moral growth and development. You will have opportunities throughout the week to demonstrate being self-aware, self-reflective and self-critical.

**Collaborative Learning Groups:** Every afternoon except Wednesday, you will spend up to ½ hour preparing individual assignments either on your own or in tutorial with the instructor and will spend up to two hours working in collaborative learning (CL) groups. The purpose of the CL
group is to give you practice in applying the concepts that we have covered in the morning and
to give you the support of a small group as you do so.

By noon on Day 1, please form your CL group based on shared discipline, teaching level or
other attraction. Try to avoid having life partners, teaching partners, or other people that you
know well in the same group. Each group should have four members.

We will follow CL group work each day with a large group summary session, in which we will
review the concepts of the day and the individual and group application of those concepts.
Please appoint a recorder/reporter each day to keep track of the CL work and to share
information from your experience with the large group. All group members should listen for
information, ideas and insights that might be interest to the class as a whole.

CL group work is meant to be directly applicable to your learning environment. Some exercises
will ask you to develop materials or devise strategies. Others will ask you to discuss concepts
with your group. Please appoint a timekeeper to manage your time so that you can attempt all
exercises.

Please let me know where your CL group chooses to meet so that I can visit your group.
I will circulate among the groups to answer questions, provide assistance, and to complicate the
assignment if you are having too easy of a time of it. There are lounges in Anderson that are
good for meeting, as well as picnic tables outside the building.

Special Assistance/Accommodation:
Please let me know if I can provide special assistance or accommodation. I am available to
meet with you individually before class, at lunch, or at the end of the day.
Online Session #1, Classical Philosophy and the Teaching of Practical Ethics


Mill, J.S.. “Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion”

Complete Activities #4 and #5 in *Ethical Challenges*

Participate in Discussion Board #1 by answering the following questions and engaging with other participants:

1) Based on your completion of activities, readings and your own experience, determine if you are more of an absolutist or a relativist.
2) Are you an idealist?
3) What is the goal of ethics – being your own best self? Taking care of specific others? Making the community a better place? Something else?
4) Why should you want to be consciously aware of your own ethical intuitions?
5) What is the good of seeking opinion (or ethical intuitions) different from your own?

Virtual Classroom Topics

Classical philosophers and building an understanding of oneself
Variations in ethical intuitions and personal ethical growth
Seeking opinion different from one’s own

*Classroom Exercise: Was Mill Right?*

Online Session #2, Ethics as habit and knowing our extremes

Read Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Books 1 & 2

Complete Activities #1 and #2 in *Ethical Challenges*

Participate in Discussion Board #2 by answering the following questions and engaging with other participants:

1) Based on your reading of Aristotle and completion of activities, along with your own experience, consider when being ethical is a habit (that is, takes no or little conscious thought) and when it takes more work.
2) Aristotle tells us that the point of learning ethics is to help make people good. Do you see that as a teaching goal for your ethics classes? Why or why not?
3) Are you consistent in what you personally value and what you value in how people act in regards to you? What differences do you notice and what do you make of the differences?

Virtual Classroom Topics

Living a life in accordance with virtue
Knowing oneself and one’s drift toward extremes
Building character

*Classroom Exercise: Personal and professional virtues and the golden mean*

Online Session #3: Knowing vs. Doing and Correct Deliberation

Read Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Book VI
Kant, Preface and Chapter 1
Ethical Challenges, pp 11-16

Complete Activities #6, #7, #8, #9 and #10
Participate in Discussion Board: Aristotle and Kant both expect individuals to do autonomous work in the process of becoming a person of character (Aristotle) or in making the right ethical choices (Kant). In your view, how much of ethics is dependent on individual autonomy and how much can be taken care of simply by following external rules?

Virtual Classroom Topics
The person of practical wisdom
Making oneself do the right thing
Duty vs. Good Will
Be the change you want to see in the world
*Classroom Exercise: Intentionality and Moral Blameworthiness*

Online Session #4: Free Will and Respecting Humanity in All Persons
*Read* Kant, Chapter 2 and 3
*Participate* in Discussion Board: Think of some ways that you respect humanity in self and others. How is punishment an example of showing that respect?

Virtual Classroom Topics
The implications of autonomy
The responsibility of autonomy
Ideal goals and the problem of fallibility
*Classroom Exercise: Making and Mitigating Moral Mistakes*

Online Session #5, Justice and Utility
*Read:* Mill, Utilitarianism, with special emphasis on Chapter V.
*Elliott, Getting Mill Right*
*Participate* in Discussion Board: Why is it important to consider if every person is being treated justly before applying the utilitarian calculus?

Virtual Classroom Topics
Aggregate good vs. good for the majority
Mill’s concept of justness and Kant’s respect for each person’s humanity
*Classroom Exercise: Different notions of justice*

Online Session #6, Foundational Goal: Making Oneself Good or Making Community Good
*Read:* Mill, Utilitarianism, with special emphasis on Chapters II and III.
*Participate* in Discussion Board: Is Mill telling us that people should want to make their communities better or that people will naturally want to make their communities better if they are well enough educated or enlightened?

Virtual Classroom Topics
Better Socrates Dissatisfied
Understandings of the Educated Person
Mill’s Educated Person, Aristotle’s Person of Practical Wisdom and Kant’s Dutiful Person
*Classroom Exercise: One’s own ethical goals and one’s goals for teaching ethics*

Online Session #7, If Aristotle were Alice Stotle; the narrow view of traditional Western ethics
Participate in Discussion Board: From a feminist point of view, what do you think is missing in the traditional Western discussion of ethics? How would you incorporate consideration of those missing aspects?

Virtual Classroom Topics
An Ethics of Strangers vs. An Ethics of Connection
Respecting Individual Liberty vs. An Ethics of Care
Integrating Feminist Response

Classroom Exercise: Integrating Feminist Response for an Ethical Classroom
WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Monday, June 25        The Context of Ethics Teaching
Ethical Theory and Systematic Moral Analysis
Goals for Teaching Ethics
Understanding Oneself as a Moral Agent
Identification of Role-Related Responsibilities

Readings:  Gert, B., “Avoiding Moral Cynicism”
Elliott, D., First Person, Intro; Chapter 1, Chapter 3

Tuesday, June 26       The Methodology of Ethics Teaching
Conceptualizing Questionable Acts
Examining Context
Asking Relevant Questions
Case Method and the Paradox of Directed Facilitation
Consensus Building

Readings:  Elliott, D., Chapter 6

Wednesday, June 27     Classical Theory and Practical Ethics
Teaching Mixed Formalism

Readings:  Elliott, D. Chapter 4
Elliott, D., “Getting Mill Right”
All classical and feminist readings, with special attention to Mill, Utilitarianism

Thursday, June 28      The Psychology of Ethics Teaching
Moral Development Theory
Moral Development as a Teaching Tool
Reasonable Expectations and Intentionality
Moral Causality, Harm and Justified Harm

Readings:  Elliott, D. Chapter 5

Friday, June 29        The Ethics of Ethics Teaching
Outcomes Assessment
The Teacher as Model in the Learning Environment
The Nature of Intellectual Risk
Creating the Conditions for Ethics Teaching and Learning
Closure

Readings:  Elliott, D. Chapter 2