

Education Policy Studies 456 A2

Moral Education – with CSL Option

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Office Hours: M, T 11-12; *or by appointment*

Time: T, R 9:30-10:50
Location: ED 107
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Summary

As an exploration of the critical questions behind moral education, we'll begin with some exposure and discussion of the ethical theories defended historically (e.g., relativism, utilitarianism, deontology) as a way into the discussion concerning what is 'good', who determines this, and what role our answers to this question ought to play in moral education. From here, we move to a critical discussion on the ethics of care, the role of the teacher, and the importance of dialogue as a means to cultivating moral citizens. Our specific focus will be on how dialogical approaches to education (such as those contained in the philosophy for children program) might play a role in moral education.

The primary method used for this exploration will be the community of inquiry as championed by the engaged inquiry approaches to education. This means that we will often use alternative stimuli to prompt our thinking about serious and important ideas relating to our own lives. As part of this approach, for students who choose to do so, there will be an option to put theory into practice in grade-school classrooms in the Edmonton and surrounding community as part of a Community Service-Learning program. Participating in this program is a way of developing philosophical sensitivities and competencies, locating the class material in "the real world", and gaining valuable experience in engage inquiry, an approach central to the new proposed Alberta curriculum.

Objective

By the end of the course you should be able to identify and speak meaningfully about central moral theories, especially when it comes to applying each to real-life(educational) situations. You should also be able to identify and speak meaningfully about some of the main questions and issues in moral education (e.g., how ought we to conduct moral education?, Is it the task of educators to form good citizens or to teach truth?, etc).

Texts

Required: Sprod, Tim. "[Philosophical Discussion in Moral Education: the community of moral education](#)"

Online databases and Articles, as well as various handouts/ electronic essays, distributed online.

Recommended: Wartenberg, Tom. *Big Ideas for Little Kids: Teaching Philosophy Through Children's Literature*

Various Children's Books (occasionally used in class, available through the EPL)

Website

The website for the course can be found through eClass. You will be expected to actively participate on line *throughout* the term. If you want to know more about the Philosophy for Children program, visit the UofA website, <http://p4c.ualberta.ca>

Instructor Availability

Office hours are the times that I *promise* to be in my office and available for drop-in discussion. I have other responsibilities within the university, including other classes, so it is best to book in advance whenever possible. Note that this is **not** the only time that I am available. Should office hours not fit your schedule then either email or speak to me immediately before or after class to arrange an alternative time.

Email is the best way to contact me. Please have your subject line begin with the class number (e.g. 103, 456) followed by the subject (e.g., Phil, EDPS). If you do not include the course number then your email may not be given the attention it deserves. You can expect a response within 24 business hours (usually less). *Do not use* the messaging feature on the moodle to contact me since this makes certain replies problematic.

A face-to-face meeting is the best way to overcome misunderstandings. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the class — including everything from feeling lost or bored to not understanding course material or how you are being graded — come and see me ASAP. There are very few problems with logistics or understanding that cannot be solved easily with an early discussion. Hiding or running away does not help you understand the material or get back on track. I will *ALWAYS* do what I can to help you within the guidelines of what is fair, reasonable, and within the academic policy of the university.

Evaluation

Engagement – 15%	Reflections x2 (1-2 pgs) – 15%
Mid-Term – 30%	Term Paper – 40%

The four means of evaluating you over the term and the weighting of each are listed in the preceding table. Brief descriptions of them are below, with full expectations outlined in class and on handouts. Note: grades are not distributed on a 'curve'.

- **Engagement.** Regular, valuable, participation *both* in class and online will earn you 15%. You should aim to post online at least once a week, and speak at least once in class, for (around) a B/B-. If you ever want to know where you stand in this regard, come to see me. *Note: class attendance, thus, helps to form part of the course final grade, but merely being present in class is not sufficient.*
- **Reflections.** These *two page maximum (double spaced)* assignments are to be drawn from the weekly in-class discussions and readings. They should 1) summarize one educational-philosophical issue addressed in the readings and during discussion. This summary should outline the problem/ issue and 2) provide at least one potential solution to it. (More information can be found on eClass). Ideally, these will help you to begin to reflect usefully and thoughtfully for your term paper, which can be built on these reflections; even if these are unrelated to your term paper, however, they should help you clarify the issues from the week's readings and corresponding discussion. There are *two* due; they should be submitted by email as a .docx or .doc file. One is due in late Oct. (after the mid-term) and one is due Nov.; exact due dates are flexible to your own schedule, but should come within 7 calendar days of the class/ material on which it is based (e.g., a reflection on material covered Oct. 14 can be submitted no later than Oct. 21). If you choose to do the CSL options, both of these should be written on your *placements*, not on our own class.
- **Mid-Term.** The mid term will cover all the theoretical theories covered in the first half of the course. You will be asked to analyze and assess a series cases (distributed before hand), in light of the different theories. It will be judged on both your ability to express your understanding of the theories as well as you ability to implement them meaningfully with respect to case studies. To help you be successful in this regard, some class time will be spent assessing different cases. It will be held on October 9th, unless we move very slowly through the theoretical components of the term. Any postponement will be announced in class.
- **Term paper.** The term paper, of 6-8 pages is due Dec. 4th; this must be submitted as a hard copy in class. The term paper is meant to synthesize your learning from the term while addressing a directed question which you find interesting and pertinent. It should include some discussion of the topic(s) from the term. A draft version (of no less than 5 pages) is due in class Nov. 20th for in-class editing. A proposal for your term paper is due Oct. 30th. More information (about drafts, and proposals, as well as the paper) will be given during class, as the term progresses.

Community Service Learning Component

The CSL component in this class is *optional*. In total, the commitment is to 14 "meetings": 8 classroom visits; 3 meetings with the placement supervisor; and 3 meetings with me.

How things will unfold: I will place you at a school, within the first two weeks, with one other person from the class. (In rare cases you'll be in a group of three). I'll make first contact with the placement supervisor for your team by email, but you and your team are responsible for following up within a day or two via email, to set up your first meeting with your placement supervisor. At that meeting you will complete the CSL form (found on the website), which will include picking the (at least) 8 days you'll run the P4C program, as well as the *two* other times you'll meet with your supervisor to 'check in' with him/her. You will also be responsible for meeting with me (as a group), after this first supervisor meeting. We will also meet twice more before the end of term. Each meeting should be coordinated/initiated by *you*, to fit everyone's schedule.

Why all the meetings? The meetings with the teacher and me are crucial 1) to ensure that you are getting the most out of the program; 2) to head off any potential problems with your partner; and 3) to guarantee that the placement teacher is intimately involved with the process; s/he is a great resource who should be utilized whenever possible.

For meetings with me, you should 'come prepared'.

For the **first** meeting, this means having written (even if point form) responses to the questions: "What are you feeling good about with respect to the opportunity?", "What are you concerned about with respect to the opportunity?", and "What can I (Jason) do to help you?".

For the **second** meeting, this means bringing a lesson plan that you have used and a lesson plan that you have yet to use, and be prepared to talk meaningfully about the placement specifics. Teams should, thus, be bringing four lesson plans.

For the **final** meeting, this means coming prepared to discuss the placement as a whole, specifically as it relates to the use of the P4C methodology as a tool for promoting moral development. Try formulating answers to these questions: What are the advantages of using the P4C method for moral development? What are the disadvantages? Do you think it's possible, in the current educational contexts, to use P4C effectively? etc.

What if I miss a meeting? If any of these meetings are missed your engagement grade will be affected negatively. Missing one meeting (without extenuating circumstances), will result in an automatic 4% penalty from your final engagement grade; missing two meetings will result in a 10% deduction; and, missing more than two will result in a 15% deduction. These deductions will be applied after the engagement grade is calculated (based on in-class and online engagement).

What if I miss the class visits? Missing any of the 8 classroom visits, unless there are extenuating circumstances, will result in me pulling you from your placement. The teacher and the students depend on you being there, so absence without getting in touch well prior to the date is unacceptable. If I pull you from your placement, you will not be permitted to submit the reflections (15% of your grade), and thus your mark will be further affected.

I'm interested, what now? If you choose to sign up, you should get in touch with me via email, after having looked at the placement options on the CSL website. Your email should list your top two choices for placements (with accompanying reasons), as well as the times that you are available.

Recording

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the instructor.

Faculty of Education

"The Faculty of Education is committed to providing an environment of equality and respect for all people within the University community, and to educating faculty, staff, and students in developing teaching and learning contexts that are welcoming to all."

Academic Integrity

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/governance/studentappealsregulations.cfm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

The code of student behaviour is lengthy, but it would be well worth your while to make sure that you fully understand what constitutes cheating, plagiarism and violations of safety or dignity. An appropriate summary may be found at www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/governance/StudentAppealsCheatsheet.cfm. The "Truth-In-Education" handbook or website (<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>) is also useful. Note that that neither of these summary resources are a substitute for reading the full code.

"Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar."

Approximate Schedule*

WEEKS	READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, ETC.
W1 – Sept 4	Introduction - ‘Questions’, <i>Lisa</i> excerpt and Discussion (handout)
W2 – Sept 9, 11	Introduction (continued, if necessary) Relativism – Wilson (08), pgs. 1-12
W3 – Sept 16, 18	Utilitarianism, Introduction – Wilson (08), pgs. 13-21 John Stuart Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , 1861, chapters I-IV, pgs.1-40 (available online)
W4 – Sept 23, 25	Utilitarianism, Applications and Problems – Wilson (08), pgs. 21-30 Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”, <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> 1, 1972, pp.229-243
W5 – Sept 30, Oct 2	Deontology, Introduction – Wilson (08), pgs. 31- 45 Immanuel Kant, <i>Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> (1785), sections 1 and 2, pgs.7-44 (available online)
W6* – Oct 7, 9	Agents, Reason, and Autonomy: more on Deontology – Sprod, Ch. 1, 2 Mid term, Oct 9th
W7* – Oct 14, 16	Reason and Deontology: Sprod - Ch. 1, 2 continued Pedagogy and autonomy - Sprod, Ch. 3
W8* – Oct 21, 23	Moral Development, Virtue Ethics - Sprod, Ch. 4
W9* – Oct 28, 30	Moral Development, Discourse Ethics - Sprod, Ch. 5 Proposed Thesis Due, Oct 30th
W10* – Nov 4, 6	Moral Development, Problems and prospects - Sprod, Ch.6
W11* – Nov 13	Communities of Inquiry - Sprod, Ch. 7 Ann Margaret Sharp. 1987. “What is a Community of Inquiry” <i>Journal of Moral Education</i> , 16(1). David Kennedy. 2004. “The role of a facilitator in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry” <i>Metaphilosophy</i> , 35(5), 744-765.
W12* – Nov 18, 20	Moral Development and the COI - Sprod, Ch. 8
W13* – Nov 18, 20	COI in the classroom - Sprod, Ch. 9 Draft of term essay due, Nov 20th
W14* – Dec 2, 4	TBD – possibly: Hope and Moral Education - Edgoose, J. (2010). <i>Hope in the Unexpected: How can Teachers Still make a Difference in the World?</i> Term Essay Due, Dec 4th

* I reserve the right to add additional (non/ optional) readings to these weeks to supplement the material in Tim Sprod's book.

*The schedule and due dates for assignments are only approximate; readings and due dates may be changed by the professor. Students are responsible for checking the eClass component of the course for official readings for each week.