Feminist Ethics
DPLS 748-Spring 2013

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Course Information

Course Name: Feminist Ethics  
Course Number: DPLS 748  
Credits: 2  
Day of the Week/Time: Saturday / 8 a.m.-12 p.m.  
Dates: January 26, February 9 and 23, March 9 and 23  
Location: TIL 106  
Instructor: Silvia Behrend D. Min  
Email: behrend@gonzaga.edu  
Phone: 360.259.3971  
Skype: Silvia.Behrend  
Office Hours: By appointment.

Description & Overview

This course will explore where you are currently situated as an ethical being and leader and to articulate which mainstream, contemporary and/or feminist theories undergird your ethical and moral compass. As you engage with the questions raised and addressed by feminist ethics, you will examine whether and how feminist ethics may change and affect your thinking and your praxis, or conversely, how other theories may impact your stance.

The class will be a lived ‘doing ethics’ experience, explicitly grounding interactions in the ethics of care and respect, the recognition and articulation of the notions of capabilities, autonomy, agency and choice, power, gender, sexual orientation, religion, multiculturalism, race, and privilege. Working groups will examine not only the theories and their implications, but will pay careful attention to how the members of the group engage in such discussions. The final, a combination of group presentation and individual reflection on the theories and praxis, will ideally demonstrate how feminist ethics can inform your relationships to self, others and the demands of leadership.

To this end, you will begin by writing an Ethics Manifesto, based on your reading of Hinman. While Hinman postulates a pluralistic approach to moral theory, the purpose of reading the book is to help you articulate where you are currently philosophically situated. Thus when you engage with the text, I am most interested in where you see yourself, recognizing the advantages and limitations of your ethical stance and how you may be challenged by other views and experiences. This exercise will orient you personally and theoretically as you engage with others with different and sometimes opposing views. This will also provide you an understanding of where others are situated. This manifesto is due the first day of class: January 26 and will be sent to behrend@gonzaga.edu before the class meets, that is, by Saturday 8 a.m. See “Manifesto Guide” for framework.

We will then compose three working groups, each of which will include the most diverse expression of ethical stances possible and will be based on your self-identification with a particular stance as stated in your manifesto. Each group will be responsible for two
presentations: one on the readings assigned to the group (see “Reading Presentation Guide”) and one as a final presentation (see “Final Presentation Guide”) on an ethical issue or consideration which will emerge from the group’s working together. There will be class time dedicated to group work. You will be responsible for two other written assignments:

1. A **Reading Reflection** paper of no more than 10 pages due the week after your working group’s presentation of the readings. See “Schedule” and “Reading Reflection Guide” for details.

2. A **Final Reflection** paper of no more than 15 pages. This paper will be due no later than April 14. See “Final Reflection Guide” for details.

I am most interested in your personal experience of applying the theory to your lived interactions. Ideally, you will be able to ground your actions/thoughts/behaviors solidly in a theoretically viable position which is both academically sound and personally satisfying. You will be asked to form and articulate a position that integrates the readings with your work as a member of a group.

**Required Texts**


**Recommended Texts**

Format, Assignments, and Schedule

First Class: January 26 – A Question of Ethics
- Orientation to the Class
- First assignment due: Ethics Manifesto, 6-10 pages based on:
- Group Formation and Discussion of Assignments

Second Class: February 9 – Historical Antecedents
- Group 1 Presentation on:

Third Class: February 23 – Feminists Doing Ethics
Group 2 Presentation:

Fourth Class: March 9 – Ethics for All
Group 3 Presentation on The Capabilities Approach

Fifth Class: Final Group Presentations
Groups will create a 30-45 minute presentation of a contemporary ethical issue that emerges as the group works together. See “Final Group Presentation Guide.”
## Assignments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Date</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
<th>Assignment and Due Date</th>
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See Reading Presentation Guide |
(group 1’s papers due) |
(group 2’s papers due) |
| March 23 | Contemporary Ethical Considerations, all groups present | All groups present  
(group 3’s papers due) |

**Final Papers Due:** emailed to behrend@gonzaga.edu no later than April 14, 2013.
**Ethical Manifesto Guide**

- Take the survey on pp 8-10.
- Read the rest of the book paying particular attention to where you are most aligned as well as where you have the most resistance. (You may want to skip the discussion questions and bio essays).
- **Description**: Articulate your essential position, and include the context of how you arrived at this position.
- **Analysis and Synthesis**: Provide a nuanced and critical analysis of the theory, limitations and its relationship to mainstream ethical theories.
- **Personal Reflection**: Articulate how this theoretical lens affects you and your leadership theory and praxis.

**Reading Presentation Guide***

Include the following in your presentation:

1. **Description / Context**. Provide a sophisticated introduction to the context or underlying question addressed by the author/theory, and socioeconomic or cultural context; succinctly focus on elements of the context relevant to critical thinking about theory.
2. **Explanation / Experience**. Paraphrase the theory holistically; demonstrate curiosity about relationships between theories and exiting knowledge; illustrate understanding with affective reaction "How do you feel about this?"
3. **Analysis / Reflection**. Consider critiques of the theory; examine implications for self and others.
4. **Application / Action**. Articulate the perceived usefulness of the theory; fluently transfer knowledge and apply content to direct practice.

*With gratitude to Dr. Kristine Hoover for these adapted guidelines.*

**Reading Reflection Guide**

Write an 8-10 page paper due the week after your working group’s presentation of the readings. Describe and analyze the theories/authors the group presented.

- Provide a cogent critique of the theory/author
- Reflect on the impact, if any, the theories had on you
- Articulate your ‘new’ position, if any, or defend your previously held position in light of the theory explored.
- Reflect on your praxis in interacting with the group as you planned and executed the presentation.
- Use both your experience and affective responses as well as citations from the texts as applicable.
**Final Group Presentation Guide**

You will be part of a working group which will present a contemporary ethical issue that emerges from your group discussions in class. The presentation will be between 30-45 minutes long with time for questions and comments. This presentation will:

- Frame the issue
- Present the moral and ethical questions through a feminist ethics lens
- Provide a clear understanding of the difference between traditional ethics and a feminist ethics
- Articulate the implications for leadership in addressing the issue

You may be guided by the format below (Source: Lawrence M. Hinman, *Ethics: A Pluralistic Approach to Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Harcourt Brace, 1998):

- *Show why the issue you are considering is interesting and important.*
- *State the thesis you are defending.*
- *Present the initial arguments in support of your thesis.*
- *Present the major possible objections to your thesis.*
- *Give your replies to those objections, refining your thesis in the process.*
- *Conclude with a more refined version of your thesis and an indication of its significance.*

**Final Paper Guide**

Final Reflection paper of no more than 15 pages. This paper will be due no later than April 14. Email to behrend@gonzaga.edu.

- Revisit your manifesto based on Hinman’s survey which articulated your own self-understanding of how you perceived ethics, feminist ethics and the questions it raised
- Describe whether and how that stance evolved, demonstrating your understanding of both mainstream and current feminist ethics and how they interact, intersect and challenge one another
- Drawing specifically on your experience of working in your group and using the premises of feminist ethics, reflect on:
  - The challenges you faced;
  - How you addressed them; and
  - What you learned about how and whether a feminist ethics impacts your leadership praxis.
- Conclude with a revised ethical manifesto.
- Use both your experience and affective responses as well as citations from the texts as applicable.
**Grading**

This class is highly collaborative, and your grade is contingent on your participation both in class discussions and in your group presentation as well as in your turning in your assignments on time and in the proper academic format.

I assume that:

- Students in this and any other doctoral level class have the required expertise to comply with Gonzaga’s and the Doctoral Leadership Studies Program grading and honor system.
- Students are able to write cogently, accurately and in accordance to the APA guidelines and the DPLS Academic Papers Rubric.
- I follow departmental policies regarding absences. Since we only have five sessions, it is crucial that you attend each class, not only for your own learning but also because other students will be dependent on you for their work as well.
- If an emergency arises, please advice me as soon as possible about any conflict with attendance.
- Students know whether they are putting forth their best, good or mediocre efforts in terms of attendance and participation.
- We all know what excellent work looks like (A), what good work looks like (B), and what more marginal work looks like (C). Failure to turn in your work in a timely manner will affect your grade.
- I am available to discuss students’ progress at any time during the course.