DPLS 745 Leadership & Personal Ethics

Summer 2012    2 Credits
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6-10 PM
Tuesdays (June 19, 26, July 3, 10, 17)

Booklist

General Description of the Course’s Content
The personal ethics of a leader determine not only the moral character of the leader as an individual, but also influence the ethical character of the organization and those with whom it interacts. Moral character is, of course, a consequence of personal moral decision-making. But moral character has an influence on others in many ways, including influence on the values others choose out of emulation of those shown by leadership.

This course focuses on personal moral character by examining happiness from several points of view. Stefan Klein summarizes some of the latest work in neuroscience and psychology in his discussion of the neurological development and biological functions of happiness as well as the conditions under which happiness prospers. Sissela Bok provides a thorough survey of the insights into happiness from a variety of philosophers, leaders, artists, writers, and social scientists. Derek Bok examines how governments could use happiness research in a variety of policy areas to improve the quality of life. Anthony Appiah provides a multidisciplinary approach to the traditional goal of personal ethics - a well-lived life.

We explore some scientific, psychological, literary, artistic, philosophical, and anecdotal accounts of happiness. The goal is to arrive at a useful and theoretically rich notion of the role of happiness in good leadership.

The Course’s Anticipated Outcomes
The primary outcome of the course is a thorough understanding of each of the four author's perspectives on personal moral character. While the authors do not contradict one another, they offer different emphases and insights in regard to the nature as well as the moral value of happiness. The secondary outcome is an appreciation of proper analysis, criticism, and communication of ideas.
How the Course Reaches its Anticipated Outcomes
Our first meeting will be a general discussion of happiness; how we see it in our own lives, how social science describes it, and how philosophers have thought about it.

In subsequent meetings, the class reads, reflects, and discusses each of the four texts we study in the course (Klein, Sissela Bok, Derek Bok, and Appiah). The goal here is to achieve the secondary outcome by analyzing, criticizing, and communicating the specific concepts and insights regarding happiness and moral character in each book.

Each student is assigned one or more chapters in each book to summarize and critique every meeting. The summaries/critiques are required to be written and turned in during the discussion. Please provide a written copy for each member of the class. Our discussions delve into each text in detail, and this is accomplished by your work on your summaries/critiques. Take into consideration that our time is limited in class, so your summary/critique needs to be appropriate in length as well as in insight.

Your final paper satisfies the primary outcome of the course. It should demonstrate that you have a thorough appreciation of each book, and that you can explain your own perspective on the role of personal happiness in good leadership.

Class Assignments
Summaries/Critiques
Each week (except for the first week), every student is responsible for a summary and critique of an assigned page range in the reading assignment. The assignments are made the week prior to the week they are due. The summary should concisely and accurately identify the primary ideas in the text. The critique should point out items of agreement, disagreement, confusion, and/or perceived enlightenment. The summary/critiques are required to be written, double-spaced, and turned in during the discussion. Please provide a copy of your summary/critique to each participant. You will present your summary/critique orally. These assignments - including your discussion contributions, written work, and oral presentation - are weighted 25% of your final grade.

Final Paper
A successful final paper describes the main focus of each of the four books. It concludes with a discussion of personal happiness and good leadership. You are free to take any approach to the discussion that demonstrates your understanding and appreciation of the relationships between happiness and leadership. The paper is fifteen to eighteen pages in length (APA). The final paper is due to the email address on this syllabus by August 1, attached as a Word document. The final paper is weighted 75% of your final grade.