

Human Communication 213: Introduction to Communication Ethics
Spring, 2014
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TEXTBOOK:

Makau, J., & Marty, D. (2013). *Dialogue and deliberation*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Additional instructional resources will include a reading packet with excerpts from essays and books. Participants will also be asked to secure information and insights through the Internet, Library Learning Complex, and other sources.

COURSE PURPOSE:

This course focuses on the ethics of communication in interpersonal, professional, and civic contexts. We will explore diverse ethical frameworks, principles, and guidelines for help discerning what rights and responsibilities, if any, communicators have to themselves, to their families and communities, and to the broader global community.

The course fosters development of the knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with statewide general education requirements in oral and written communication and critical thinking skills, as well as CSUMB's requirement in Ethics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (General Education Requirements A-2 and A-3):

Outcome 1 - Comprehend and Interpret Controversies: Students demonstrate the ability to understand multiple perspectives on significant controversies presented by diverse authors on the authors' own terms and to explain the intent, purpose, and underlying values of the advocates of these perspectives at an intermediate collegiate level.

Outcome 2 - Identify and Understand Ethical Dimensions of Controversies: Students demonstrate the ability to recognize, understand, and effectively explain the ethical dimensions of significant controversies.

Outcome 3 - Use Diverse Ethical Frameworks to Analyze Controversies: Students demonstrate the ability to effectively apply diverse ethical frameworks to analyses of multiple perspectives on significant controversies.

Outcome 4 - Identify and Evaluate Potential Options for Responding Ethically and Effectively to Controversies: Students demonstrate the ability to recognize, understand, accurately represent, and effectively evaluate multiple options for responding responsibly to significant controversies.

Outcome 5 - Communicate Orally and in Writing: Students demonstrate the ability to use written and oral communication ethically and effectively at an intermediate collegiate level.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Personal case narrative:** For this assignment, you will be asked to provide a reflective narrative regarding an ethically complex situation in which you made the decision to deceive someone close to you. This assignment is worth 10 points.
2. **Essay exams:** You will have **two** such opportunities to demonstrate your ability to understand the content covered in the course readings, lectures, and discussions, as well as to apply the knowledge and skills you've acquired to concrete, "real-world" cases. Each exam is worth 10 points.
3. **Group Forum and Collaborative Written Report:** In collaboration with others, you will develop a creative means of conveying findings regarding options available to decision makers confronted with representative "real-world" communication ethics challenges within an interpersonal, professional, or civic communication of special interest to you. Following the forum, you will work together to prepare a written report articulating the group's findings. These assignments are worth a total of 10 points (up to 5 for the group's performance as a whole and up to 5 for the individual's contributions).
4. **Forum Response Essay:** For this assignment, you will identify a group forum you found especially engaging and illuminating and explore what made the selected forum especially helpful to fulfillment of our shared goals. This assignment is worth up to 10 points.
5. **Final Essay:** This assignment calls upon you to prepare an argumentative essay articulating and thoughtfully supporting a reasonable and responsive proposal for how best to address one of the communication ethics challenges explored during our work together. In preparation, you will be completing a **Position Paper** and **Draft Argumentative Essay**. You will also be provided peer feedback on these assignments. Worth 20 points.
6. **Critical Review:** This in-class assignment affords you the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to discern and thoughtfully convey strengths and areas for improvement in a peer's draft argumentative essay. Worth 10 points.
7. **Portfolio:** This assignment affords you the opportunity to demonstrate fulfillment of the course learning outcomes. You will be asked to include a reflective essay, all preliminary drafts of assignments (with instructors' comments), and peer reviews of your Position Paper and Draft Argumentation Essay. Only scores received on "final" drafts will be used to determine your final grade.
8. Students will complete ungraded **Impromptu Essay Assignments** throughout the term. Additionally, due to the nature and purposes of this course, the quality of your **Participation and Contributions** will play a significant role in assessing your overall performance. See the notes below for details.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week One:

Day 1&2: Introduction to the course & to each other
Communication, Agency, and Related Issues
Ethical Reflection and Practice in Everyday Life
Preliminary exploration of potential group project topics

Week Two:

Day 1: Diverse approaches to communication across differences
Adversarial individualism and related communication models
Communication Ethics Across Contexts
Continued exploration of group project topics

Reading: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 1-19

Day 2: Communication, interdependence, and ethics
Case study: Focus and group selections

Reading: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 21-37

Week Three:

Day 1: Introducing and applying diverse ethical frameworks, including (but not limited to) Consequentialist perspectives (such as Utilitarianism), De-Ontological Perspectives, Virtue Ethics, Cultural and Individual Relativism, Interdependent Ethics, Ethnic Ethics, Natural Law Theory, and Ethics of Care.
Exploring case studies related to truthfulness
Exploring the Principle of Veracity

Readings: **Reading Packet: “Ethical and Unethical Communication” Essay, Adrienne Rich “Telling it Slant” excerpt, and “Methods of Analysis” excerpts from Michael Pritchard and James Jaksa**

Day 2: Deliberative inquiry and communication ethics
Deliberative questioning skills
Introducing different types of knowledge, insight, and information
Facts, values, and beliefs
Assessing source credibility and information reliability
Ethics, Deliberation, and Narrative framing

Reading: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 39-58

Week Four

Day 1: Dialogue and civility
Truthfulness, deception, and civility

Reading: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 61-82

Day 2: Dialogic skills and sensibilities
Moral Development
Emotional Intelligence
Constructive confrontation
Personal Case Narrative Due

Readings: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 83-108
Reading Packet: Sandra Cisneros excerpt
Reading Packet: “Ethical and Unethical Communication”

Week Five:

Day 1: Listening

Reading: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 109-124

Day 2: Understanding
Dispositions and Moral Maps
Applying moral frameworks to cases
Developing responsible and responsive case narratives

Reading: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 125-140

Week Six:

Day 1: Deliberative framing
Belief Systems
Individual, family, and communal influences

Reading: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 143-163

Day 2: Group Work
Complete research contracts

Week Seven:

Day 1: Review and Preparation for Exam
Research contracts due

Day 2: In-Class Exam #1

Week Eight:

Day 1: Cultural Relativity and Cross Cultural Values
Applying ethical frameworks to cases

Reading: Packet: “Ethical and Unethical Communication” essay and excerpts from Clifford Christians essays

Day 2: Discernment and Communication Ethics

Reading: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 165-186

Week Nine:

Day 1: Cross Cultural Ethical Presumptions

Readings: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Reading Packet: “Ethical and Unethical Communication” essay
***Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 165-186**

Day 2: Exploring Group Topics
Finding Common Ground
Finalizing roles and responsibilities
Identifying and exploring issues involving communication ethics
Exploring and giving voice to diverse stakeholders and perspectives
Anticipating (likely) consequences
Applying diverse ethical frameworks
Review of guidelines and assessment criteria for oral presentation

Weeks Eleven & Twelve:

Forum Presentations

Week Thirteen:

Day 1: Group forum reflections
Preparation for Exam #2

Day 2: In-Class Exam #2

Week Fourteen

Day 1: Deliberative Argumentation
Exploring issues related to communication ethics for final essay
Shared criteria

Reading: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 187-208

Day 2: Deliberative Advocacy

Reading: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 209-228
Response Essay Due

Week Fifteen:

Day 1: Evaluating deliberative arguments

Reading: *Dialogue and Deliberation*, pp. 229-248

Day 2: Preparing the final essay
Assignment guidelines
Exploring ethical issues
Position Paper Due

Week Sixteen

Day 1: Reflections
Preparing for Final Submissions and Critical Review

DAY 2: Draft Final Essay Due
In-Class Critical Review

**FINAL SUBMISSIONS: PORTFOLIOS & REFLECTION ESSAYS
DUE DURING ASSESSMENT WEEK**