

# COMM 215: 001 Ethics and Communication

Spring Semester 2016

TuTh 2:30PM-3:45PM

Crown Center - Room 210

## Scope of Course

A fundamental premise of this course is that every intentional act of communication involves ethical choice. In turn, each choice has ethical implications; sometimes minor and sometimes quite significant. Further, this course assumes that most people making these choices generally intend to be ethical but that they are not always aware of the choices they make, the other options available to them, or of the many possible consequences of their communication behavior. This course is designed to heighten that awareness as well as give students analytic tools that they can use to help themselves with ethical decision making.

We will discuss models for ethical deliberation and a range of ethical perspectives. We will grapple with concrete cases of decision making in order to

- Sharpen our discernment of ethical communication issues
- Refine our understanding of how various moral principles “play out” in actual situations, and
- Improve our ability to articulate our thinking about such matters as well as understand the thinking of others.

This course is designed to provide guidelines in critical thinking but it does not purport to give final answers to ethical dilemmas. Instead, it uses lecture, reading, writing and informed discussion to help us become more conscious and in control of what we do. It should also enable us to engage others in constructive dialogue about various ethical perspectives and their consequences.

## Faculty

Dr. Bren Ortega Murphy  
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SOC 217 – 312.915.6907

LSC Office Hours: T/TH 11am-1pm  
or by appointment  
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## Texts

- *Applying Moral Theories*, Harris [H]
- *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, Bok [B]
- *Cases and Moral Reasoning*, Christians et al. [C]

Course FB Page:

**Participation is required.** Much of the learning in this class occurs as a result of discussion. Failure to participate deprives all students of potentially beneficial interaction. It also deprives the individual student of certain assignment experiences. Thus, lack of substantive participation in in-class group activities, whether through absence or ill-preparedness will be penalized.



## Community Service

All students wishing to receive an A in this class must complete an average of 2 hours/week community service for a total of 24 hours. A list of approved sites will be made available or student may get approval of additional sites. Reflections on the community experience should be written weekly and used to write a final reflection paper [along with notes] to be turned in at the end of the semester.

## Evaluation

### **10 Weekly quizzes** **30% [3% each]**

- Brief In-class quizzes on the reading material assigned for that day.
- Criteria for evaluation: accuracy; lowest grade will be dropped, NO make-up quizzes
- Purpose is to encourage consistent reading and enable classroom discussion

### **3 examinations** **36% [12% each]**

- In-class or take home written examinations based on reading and lecture; format includes short answer, definitions, and T/F justify
- Criteria for evaluation: accuracy and coherence
- Purpose is to ascertain student understanding of basic principles and concepts

### **2 case analyses** **20% [10 % each]**

- Short [3-5 pages], structured [see hand out] analyses of cases developed by students
- Criteria for evaluation: feasibility, coherence, reasoning, & application of principles
- Purpose is to refine critical thinking regarding situations that students are likely to encounter

### **Service Reflection** **14%**

- Weekly ½ page reflections on your community service and final integration paper
- Criteria for evaluation: clarity of explanation, soundness of reasoning, overall coherence, & effectiveness of original analysis; appropriateness and diversity of articles.
- Purpose is to gain some in-depth knowledge of ethical decision-making in major social contexts [e.g., new media, mass media, personal relationships, organizations, politics]

**Late work will be penalized** unless *prior* arrangements have been made. I can be contacted through phone, voice mail email, office hours and appointment.

**Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable** and will be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines stated in the undergraduate studies handbook. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism. Penalties range from a grade of zero for the specific assignment involved to failure in the course and notification of the appropriate dean[s] with the possibility of further action



## Proposed Schedule

Week/Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments
1. 1/19-21	Introduction & Overview Community Service discernment	C Introduction
2. 1/26-28	Nature & Scope of Morality Case Study Approach	H 1, Quiz 1
3. 2/2-4	Moral Theory & Decision-Making	H 2-3, Quiz 2
4. 2/9-11	Egoism & Natural Law	H 4 -5, Quiz 3
5. 2/16-18	Utilitarianism Respect	H 6-7, Quiz 4 case idea
6. 2/23-25	Virtue Feminist Ethics	H 8, Quiz 5 <b>Case#1</b>
7. 3/1-3	Harris Review Harris exam Community Service discussion	<b>Exam #1</b>
<b>3/6-13</b> <b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
8. 3/15-17	Exam discussion, case study discussion Nature & Scope of Lying	B 1-4, Quiz 6
9. 3/22-24	Justifications for lying	B 5-10, Quiz 7
10. 3/29-31	Lying in Professional Contexts Bok review; take-out exam distributed	B 11-15, Quiz 8 case idea
11. 4/5-7	Bok exam due Ethical foundations of civility Barriers to ethical discourse Community Service discussion	<b>Exam #2</b>
12. 4/12-14	Case Studies: Ethics and News	Quiz 9 C, Part 1
13. 4/19-21	Case Studies: Ethics & Advertising/PR	Quiz 10 C, Parts 2 & 3 <b>Service Reflection</b>
14. 4/26-28	Case Studies: Ethics & Entertainment	<b>Case #2</b> C, Part 4
15. Saturday 5/7 @ 4:15 -6:15		<b>Exam #3</b>

### **The Loyola Mission**

We are [Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University](#)-- A [diverse community seeking God in all things](#) And [working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity](#) through [learning, justice](#) and [faith](#).

### **The Loyola Promise**

Our Jesuit Catholic tradition of education prepares students for extraordinary lives that will reflect the following characteristics:

- **Commitment to excellence:** Applying well-learned lessons and skills to achieve new ideas, better solutions and vital answers
- **Faith in God and the religious experience:** Promoting well-formed and strongly held beliefs in one's faith tradition to deepen others' relationships with God
- **Service that promotes justice:** Using learning and leadership in openhanded and generous ways to ensure freedom of inquiry, the pursuit of truth and care for others
- **Values-based leadership:** Ensuring a consistent focus on personal integrity, ethical behavior in business and in all professions, and the appropriate balance between justice and fairness
- **Global awareness:** Demonstrating an understanding that the world's people and societies are interrelated and interdependent

### **Four Themes of a Jesuit Education**

Joseph Appleyard, SJ

- God is the hermeneutic horizon of our culture; a constant referent to our pilgrimage....not to be confused with fundamentalist, black and white certainty
- Knowledge and action are intertwined. The test of our knowledge is action and the wisdom of our action is measured against knowledge. We have a responsibility to both dimensions of life, with ethical inquiry as a constant consideration.
- Education must be derived from and aimed back at experience. Education is an experiential dialogue; the mutual inquiry of student and teacher. A teacher, then, does not dictate knowledge but facilitates and mentors its evolution.
- The outcome of this educational process is inevitably aimed at changing the world along lines of social justice.

