Communication Ethics

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Course Time: W 5:30 –8:30

Course Description: Students will develop a systematic means of evaluating the ethics of human communication in all of its settings.

Class Contract: Grades for this course will be determined by student performance on the required assignments. There is no formal attendance policy other than it is expected that students will attend each class. All assignments are due at the beginning of class--late assignments will not be accepted. Class members will conduct themselves in accordance with the student handbook provided by Oklahoma City University. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for any student with a learning obstacle. Please see me individually if you need special arrangements to make the classroom and its environment as friendly as possible.


Course Schedule

May 29: Introductions
Overview of course content and assignments
Assign Discussion 1

June 5: Ethics presentations
Reading—Chapter 1: Ethical responsibility in human communication
Reading—Chapter 2: Political perspectives
Discussion 1
Assign Discussion 2

June 12: Ethics presentations
Reading—Chapter 3: Human nature perspectives
Reading—Chapter 4: Dialogical perspectives
Discussion 2

June 19: Class film
Assign midterm paper
Assign Discussion 3
Assign groups for group presentation

June 26: Ethics presentations
Reading—Chapter 5: Situational perspectives
Reading—Chapter 6: Religious, utilitarian, and legal perspectives
Discussion 3
Group topics due
Class Assignments: There are four main criteria for evaluating individual performance in class: Discussion assignments, ethics presentation, group project, and individual paper.

Discussion Topics: During the semester there will be five topics assigned for discussion. The week after the discussion topic is assigned, students will be required to turn in a one page, typed paper discussing the topic. The topic will also be discussed as a class, with each individual expected to contribute to the discussion. Topics may be case studies, historical treatises on ethics, or important ethical questions. The brief paper is expected to contain YOUR OWN thoughts on the topic under discussion. Citations and additional research are not expected, however, your answer should reflect an understanding of the topic and the topic’s relationship to ethics.

5 Discussions @ 10 points each 50 points

Ethics Presentation: Once during the semester each student will make a presentation on a specific period in the history of ethics. Students will sign up for a presentation topic and date on the first day of class. Students are expected to lead a thirty minute discussion on the ethics reading selected.

Ethics presentation 40 points

Individual paper: On June 19th we will watch a film in class. The film selected will address multiple ethical issues. On July 10th a two to three page paper which discusses the ethical dilemmas present in the film will be due. The student is expected to turn in a well organized, grammatically correct, and logically sound paper discussing the various ethical issues introduced by the film. This assignment will be discussed in more depth in the coming weeks.

Individual paper 50 points
Group Project: Groups of 3-4 students will be expected to analyze a current incident in which ethics have played a significant role. The group will conduct research and become an expert on the topic. Topics can be anything related to ethics that has appeared in the news. Examples—The Ford/Firestone controversy, the Enron scandal, presidential elections, etc. As you can see, there are many possible topics from which to choose. On the final night of class, each group will turn in a 5-7 page paper comprehensively analyzing your group’s topic. Each group will also make a 20 to 30 minute presentation to the class.

Group project 60 points

Grades for the course will be distributed as follows:

A  180 – 200
B  160 – 179
C  140 – 159
D  120 - 139