

IS 204: Ethics and Global Service - Fall 2012

Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00 AM Rolvaag 420

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Office Hours MF 12:30-1:30, Th 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

"We are discussing no small matter, but how we ought to live" --Socrates

"When we meet the poor, the oppressed or the abused with our giving agenda in hand, we relegate them to the role of either receptacle-function or silent backdrop of our good deeds...there are so many opportunities to serve that we often get over-anxious to say yes. It's easy to get excited and then forget to ask some critical questions about what we're doing" --Aaron Ausland

"I remember coming home every night from the school community center, physically and mentally drained, with only \$5 for food, living in a beat-up, run-down apartment, but feeling better than I ever felt before because I was actually doing something meaningful" --Eric Lob, volunteer, Project Otzma, Israel

"What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" --Mary Oliver

Course description

Orphans, HIV/AIDS, migration, abuse, poverty; many Oles want to address these global issues directly. This course invites students to apply ethical reasoning to decisions about going abroad to "help" others. Service vocations involve virtue, motivation, values, needs, faith, and privilege. Through the lenses of Christian, deontological, virtue, and utilitarian ethics, students sharpen their thinking about service in another cultural context. Designed particularly for students interested in global careers in health, ministry, social welfare, education, and development. Open to juniors and seniors from any major who have completed the BTS-T. Offered Fall 2012.

Central questions for the conception of this course:

- (1) What are the moral grounds for global service (e.g., Christian agape love, utilitarian, Kantian) and how might those grounds compete with or be challenged by other ethical or philosophical considerations
- 2) What sort of moral issues, problems, conflicts, "dilemmas" arise in the context of on-site practice of global service (e.g., universal human rights vs. respect for other cultures), how are such conflicts to be comprehended metaethically, and how are such conflicts to be resolved in normative ethics?

Intended learning outcomes

Students completing the course will:

1. Understand the basics frameworks of deontological, utilitarian, virtue, and Christian agape ethics as normative perspectives
2. Understand the differences between universalism and relativism
3. Be able to see similarities and differences in the ethical reasoning of two or more normative perspectives
4. Have the ability to identify a moral challenge/dilemma
5. Be able to analyze a decision of whether and how to serve abroad using ethical reasoning
6. Know how to use a model of ethical decision-making to address real case situations

Readings

Consideration of Ethics

Carlsen, M. *Model of ethical decision-making* (handout)

Childs, J. (2006). *Ethics in the community of promise*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.

May, L., Wong, K. & Delston, J. (2011) *Applied ethics: A multicultural approach*. Upper Saddle River: New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Nussbaum, M. (Winter, 2004). Liberal education & global community, *Liberal Education*,

<http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-wi04/le-wi04feature4.cfm>

Pojman, L & Fieser, J. (2012). *Ethics: Discovering right and wrong, 7e*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Consideration of Service

Ausland, A (2005). *Staying for tea: Five principles for the community service volunteer*. The Global Citizen. The Krista Foundation.

McKnight, J. 1989. *Why 'Servanthood' Is Bad*. The Other Side, Jan-Feb 1989.

<http://housingministries.org/policyAssets/policy%20articles/The%20Other%20Side,%20McKnight,%201989.pdf>

Morton, K (Fall, 1995). *The Irony of Service: Charity, Project and Social Change in Service-Learning*. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, v2 p19-32.

Consideration of Global Service

Powers, W. (2005). *Blue clay people: Seasons on Africa's fragile edge*. NY: Bloomsbury.

Amateurs vs. Professionals: A complex issue...see blog discussions at

<http://goodintentions.org/staffing-or-employment/volunteers-vs-professionals-aid-debates>

Hartwig, S. (forthcoming). *Education of a Stranger. (excerpts)*

Hartwig, S. *Reflections of a stranger. (excerpts)*

Nussbaum, M. (2007) Human Rights and Human Capabilities. In *Harvard Human Rights Journal* vol 20;

<http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/hrj/iss20/nussbaum.pdf>

Illich, I. (April 20, 1968) To hell with good intentions. Address to the *Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects (CIASP) in Cuernavaca, Mexico* http://www.swaraj.org/illich_hell.htm

Rosenberg, E. Missions to the World: Philanthropy Abroad, in *Charity, Philanthropy and Civility in American History*, Cambridge, p. 241-251

Consideration of Ethical, Global, Service

A first person narrative or autobiographical account of service in a developing world context

Class requirements and guidelines

This is the second time I've taught this course, and I'm excited about it! Your authentic engagement and honest evaluation of the course will help me decide whether I teach it again, and if I do, what I'll change to improve it. Thanks for taking the risk with me!

Regular attendance and participation: "Respect for the dignity and worth of human beings" is a primary principle of social work ethics. Immanuel Kant held that human beings are to be treated as ends, never a means to another's end, worthy of respect in and of themselves. I expect you will respect classmates and me. You will demonstrate this by attending class unless you are ill or otherwise needing to miss, letting me know ahead of time of your absence, and coming prepared and ready to respectfully engage others with the questions, issues and controversies we will examine. Please be on time for class (it's early!) and stay until the end. In addition, I generally will invite you to turn electronic devices off during class. If you use a laptop or iPad in class, please discuss this with me at the beginning of the semester.

Late assignments: I generally do not accept late assignments; I will determine exceptions due to medical emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances after consultation with you and/or other involved parties.

Style of reference for papers: any references for papers should be written in *APA style*; consult library home page for reference guides.

Disabilities: If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Connie Ford (ford@stolaf.edu) in the Academic Support Center (x3288) located in Tomson Hall. If you already have documentation on file with Student Disability Services in the Academic Support Center please give me your letter within the first two weeks of class.

Other Concerns: If you have other concerns that you think may affect your performance in this class, please let me now ASAP so that we can work together to find a solution.

Maybe it goes without saying in an ethics course, but here’s a reminder that St. Olaf (and the social work profession) takes very seriously any ethical violations, including plagiarism. See policies at: <http://www.stolaf.edu/stulife/thebook/academic/integrity.html>
<http://www.stolaf.edu/stulife/thebook/academic/honor.html>

Assignments and Evaluation (I will post additional details on Moodle)

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Date Due</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>
1. Service autobiography	September 11	5 points
2. Discussion questions for Hartwig	September 27	5 points
3. Mini quiz	September 29	5 points
4. Essay exam	October 11	25 points
5. Unpacking “dense facts”	October 25/30	10 points
6. Book critique	November 6	10 points
7. Book annotation	November 13	5 points
8. Organization ethical assessment PowerPoint	December 6/11	5 points
9. Organization Presentation	December 6/11	10 points
10. Normative reflection paper	December 15	20 points

Attendance and participation are not graded, but are very important, and can make the difference when you sit on the border between grades!

Grade	Percentage		Grade	Percentage
A	96-100		C	73-77
A-	92-95		C-	70-72
B+	88-91		D+	68-69
B	83-87		D	63-67
B-	80-82		D-	60-62
C+	78-79		F	less than 60

Guest speakers

Our speakers will address what value conflicts/ethical issues they faced when engaging in their service work, what preparation from St. Olaf in ethics might have better prepared them, what knowledge/skills/values (that is, normative perspectives!) helped them navigate the human relationship/ethics issues, and what advice they have for our students who consider service abroad.

Schedule

(subject to change as new learning opportunities arise; check Moodle for updates)

Date	Topic	Reading you need to have done	Assignment(s) Due
Sept 6	Introduction to Course Diversity of perspective matters	How do you define service?	
Sept 11	What is ethics?	Pojman & Fieser, Chap 1; Nussbaum (2004)	Service autobiography
Sept 13	Ethical relativism	Pojman & Fieser, Chap 2	
Sept 18	Moral objectivism & absolutism; ethical humility	Pojman & Fieser, Chap 3	Hartwig excerpts
Sept 20	Deontological ethics/ duty-based	Pojman & Fieser, Chap 8	Be reading Powers' book...
Sept 25	Deontological ethics/ duty-based Social contract theory	May, et al 39-43; Pojman & Fieser, 64-72	
Sept 27	Utilitarian ethics; guest: Dr. Shoonie Hartwig, '57	Pojman & Fieser, Chap 7 <i>Shoonie excerpts</i>	Bring questions
<i>Sept 29</i>			<i>Complete mini-quiz on Moodle</i>
Oct 2	Utilitarian ethics; helping as privilege models of ethical decision-making	May, et al, pp. 31-38; Powers 1-168; Carlsen	
Oct 4	Virtue ethics helping as cultural imperialism	Pojman & Fieser, pp.146-157; May, et al pp. 52-59; Illich	
Oct 9	Christian agape ethics	Childs chapter 1-7	
<i>Oct 9 @ 7:30 PM</i>	<i>Mellby Lecture: Dr. Jeanine Grenberg</i>	"But That's Wrong! Kantian Reflections on the Conflict Between Happiness and Morality"	<i>Please attend this lecture or stream it</i>
Oct 11	Essay Exam		Plan October work in groups
Fall Break	Saturday-Tuesday	October 13-16	
Oct 18	Christian agape ethics (ref: Nance, K. "Role models and the problem of goodness")	Childs chapters 8-10	
Oct 23	Ethics of care; feminist/feminine ethics special relations/obligations vs. universalism	Powers 169-end; Pojman & Fieser, pp. 165-168; May, et al, pp. 66-74, May et al, pp. 315-336	
Oct 25 & 30	Unpacking "dense facts": mission trip, international adoption, teaching English abroad, child sponsorship, etc		Group presentation & handout posted on Moodle
Nov 1	Models of charity, projects, social change/justice compared; Rawls' veil of ignorance	May, et al, pp. 44-51; Ausland; McKnight, Morton	

Nov 6	First person accounts of ethical dilemmas in service; group by region		Book critique
Nov 8	History of Christian missions; Guest: Dr. DeAne Lagerquist	Rosenberg	
Nov 13	Human rights	May, et al, pp. 75-150; Nussbaum (2007)	Annotation due
Nov 15	Hunger & poverty	May, et al, pp. pp. 203-258	
Nov 20	Challenges and rewards of global service	Panel of alums; reflect on your service autobiography and how your thinking has developed	
Nov 21-25	Wednesday-Sunday Thanksgiving Break		Rest, renew, relax
Nov 27	Ethics assessment of global service organizations: defense and critique	Codes of ethics; Nussbaum 2009	
Nov 29	Global health ethics; Guest via Skype: Dr. Tim Holtz, ,86 in Bangkok		
Dec 4	Palliative care and euthanasia	May, et al, pp. 484-494 & 525-562; Childs chapter 11	
Dec 6 & 11	Where do we/YOU go from here?		Organization Presentation & PowerPoint
Sat Dec 15	Final Examination/reflection	2:00-4:00 PM	Normative Reflection paper