

Moral Values in Human Development SESP 225-316

School of Education and Social Policy

Northwestern University

Course Syllabus Fall 2009

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30AM to 10:50AM

Instructor: Carol A. Gaetjens Ph.D.

Office hours: before and after class, by appointment

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Course Description:

Moral Values in Human Development is designed to help students examine a number of important questions from the perspective of developmental psychology: What are moral values? What do we mean when we speak of someone as a person of “high moral values?” Are human beings born moral and if not, how and when do they become moral? What is the evidence, if any, that moral development can continue throughout the life course? Are there gender differences in moral thought and behavior? Is there a connection between moral reasoning and moral behavior? Are there personality characteristics common to moral leaders? Are there social environments conducive to promoting moral leaders? Philosophers, theologians, ethicists and educators have grappled with these questions since at least Plato and continue to debate the answers today.

In the past 100 years social scientists, including psychologists, psychiatrists, social psychologists, and sociologists have made important contributions to this ongoing discussion. To address these questions about moral values and moral behavior several major perspectives on the development of moral values across the lifespan will be explored: the psychodynamic understanding provided by Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, and Selma Fraiberg; the cognitive development theories of the psychologists Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan; and the clinical and research observations of Robert Coles, William Damon, Anne Colby, William Perry, John Kotre, Robert Wuthrow and others. Personal moral values as guides to behavior will be examined using Sissela Bok’s *Lying* and the film *Cider House Rules*. The course concludes by examining what factors contribute to moral courage and exemplary moral leadership in adulthood.

Course Rationale:

The realization that collectively we all have a responsibility to nurture moral development across the life span in both private and public settings is invaluable for all students as they prepare to assume various roles in adulthood.

Course Format:

This is a reading and discussion class intended for upper-classmen. Class size is limited to 25 students. Evaluation of student achievement will take into account attendance, careful preparation as evidenced by active and *informed participation* in class discussions, as well as the quality of papers based on the readings, class discussions, and self-reflection. It is *strongly* recommended that students who enroll in this course have completed either Child and Adolescence (SESP 225-201) or Adulthood and Aging (SESP 225-203).

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course students will have clarified their personal moral values and have evidenced respect for the values of individuals and groups whose ethical beliefs differ from

their own, both in face to face dialogue, and in response to divergent positions reflected in the assigned readings.

Required Books and the Course Packet: The books you are required to purchase and the readings posted on Blackboard provide a variety of perspectives on major themes concerning the topic of moral values in human development. The books may be purchased at Norris Bookstore.

1. Damon, W. (1988). *The moral child: Nurturing children's natural moral growth*. New York: The Free Press.
2. Bok, S. (1978). *Lying: Moral choice in public and private life*. New York: Vintage Books.

School of Education and Social Policy Academic Integrity Statement, March 2004.

Students in this course are expected to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide." All papers must be submitted in *hard copy as well as electronically* in the Digital Drop box. Your written work may be electronically tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern, visit: <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/>. If you need a copy of the brochure visit the SESP Office of Student Affairs on the 1st floor of Annenberg Hall.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. In compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Northwestern University is committed to providing equal access to all programming. Students with disabilities seeking accommodations are encouraged to contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 467-5530 or ssd@northwestern.edu. SSD is located in the basement of Scott Hall.

General guidelines for written papers:

Organization: All papers, whether short or long, should be well organized, with an *introductory paragraph* that states your general position and the points or ideas you will make in support of your position. Follow your introductory outline in the same order in the body of your paper. The tone of the paper should be academic (not folksy). Your name is on the paper so the reader knows that what you write is what you think, believe, or feel. In other words, avoid personal pronouns, "I" and "we" as much as possible. Cite and acknowledge readings in the text and with a reference section.

Formatting: All papers should be formatted as follows: double-spaced, size 12 font, with at least one inch margins on all sides. **Your last name and first initial, as well as the page number must be in the upper right hand header on each page. Papers without correct headers will not be graded!!** References may be cited in the text in American Psychological Association (APA) style or MLA and included in the reference list at the end of paper. Don't obsess about this, just follow the formatted examples in the syllabus.

Strong Advice: Take extra time *to read your paper in hard copy* for sentence fragments, misspellings, singular and plural mismatches, repetitiveness and general lack of clarity. If you have friend(s) who are willing to read the paper, have them do so. Two sets of eyes are *always* better than one. The spell-check on your computer is helpful but **does not** replace

proofreading hard copy. Careless errors in writing and presentation *detract* from good conceptual work and will be reflected in the grade.

Note: If a paper is due on a class date, *come to class whether the paper is done or not!* You may send me (c-gaetjens@northwestern.edu) your paper as a Microsoft Word.doc *attachment* any time until midnight of the same day without penalty.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Grading is based on participation and written assignments. There are a total of **170** possible points. The expectation is that in an upper-class seminar all students who participate and turn in all their assignments will earn an A or B depending on the quality of the work.

Class attendance and participation: The success of this course depends largely on the conscientious preparation, regular attendance and *informed participation* of all its members. Without this commitment, the quality of individual class discussions and the value of the course as a whole will be seriously compromised. **(25 points)**

Assignment 1: Identify *your most important moral values*. When (at what age), where (setting, e.g., home, school, religious training, scout troops, sport teams), and from *whom* (a mentor, teacher, coach) or from what (an incident, a turning point, a book, a spring break project) did you learn these values. Make every sentence count and avoid repetition.

Length 2 pages. September 29 (15 points)

Assignment 2: Moral development

As an expert in moral development in children, you have been asked by an elementary school district serving children from preschool (age 3) to 8th grade (age 13-14) to address a group of interested parents and teachers about what they can do to promote moral development at home and in the classroom. Address gender differences in the moral development of boys and girls if you think they are pertinent. You must demonstrate familiarity with the course readings and include a reference list.

Or

As an expert in the moral development of adolescents and young adults, you have been asked to make a presentation to a group of high school and college educators addressing the issues of what they can do to promote moral development in this age group. Gender differences need to be included if relevant. You must demonstrate familiarity with the course reading and include a reference list.

Or

Think of an adult role that you might assume in adult life as a preschool or elementary teacher, camp counselor, coach, principal, religious leader, counselor or parent. Be sure to clearly identify your role, the age group you are working with, and the audience for this presentation. Again you must show familiarity with readings.

Length 4-6 pages October 29 (40 points)

Some guidelines: Assume your audience is college-educated but not familiar with this material. They do not want to listen to a “professorial lecture” nor do you have time to summarize entire theories. You must narrow your focus, make fewer points but explain them well, and whenever possible, provide applied insights. What does this mean for me as a teacher, coach, parent, counselor, etc.

PS: You will be expected to present the highlights of your paper orally in class.

Assignment 3: Watch the movie *Cider House Rules* in DVD/VCR format and then write a paper addressing the following questions. One good paragraph for each question will be sufficient although you are welcome to try a more integrated paper. Incorporate Kohlberg's stage theory. Be prepared to share your paper with your classmates in discussion. Note: There is no need for an introductory or concluding paragraph.

Dr. Larch: Was he performing a needed service? How does he justify performing illegal abortions to himself and to others? Did his addiction to ether interfere with his functioning as a doctor? Did he use Homer for his own ends? Was Dr. Larch a megalomaniac who thought he could run his own little world, however benign? Does the end justify the means in this story?

Homer: Is it possible that Homer matured morally by performing the act of abortion on Rose after having been adamantly against abortion earlier in the movie? When he decides to return to the orphanage to be "of use" is he acting immorally in that he is not a certified doctor or is he acting morally by carrying on the role of Dr. Larch and serving as a father figure to orphans forgotten by society? Which is of higher value in the big picture?

Mr. Rose: Was Mr. Rose a good man, that is, a man who knew the difference between right and wrong? Did he have a well-developed conscience or was he morally bankrupt for committing incest with his daughter? Could a case be made for his behavior by the circumstances of his life that permitted little contact with women? Did his self-injuries and death atone for his earlier behavior?

Candy: How do you explain her behavior? At what level was she reasoning in Kohlberg's scheme? Was she simply an opportunistic woman?

Cider House Rules: What was the point of the rules posted in the migrant shack? What did they mean symbolically and in reality? **Length 2-3 pages. November 5 (20 points)**

Assignment 4: Present a real or hypothetical moral dilemma in which lying might be an appropriate response. Explain how Bok would respond (using Lying as your source) and how you would respond. You don't have to agree with Bok nor do you have to disagree with her. But you do have to explain what you would do and why.

Length 4-5 pages November 24 (30 points)

Assignment 5: After reading the articles by Colby and Damon (1995), Kotre (1999), Wuthrow (1991) and Tornstam (1999), choose a specific moral exemplar (a case study) of either someone in the readings, a famous/public person living or deceased, or some "unsung" moral exemplar that you may know about. Then use the list of contextual and life factors to see how they apply and help explain the moral development of your nominee. This paper must demonstrate serious biographical research as well as familiarity with the course readings. A complete reference list is required.

Length 5-6 pages Monday December 7, 2009 (40) points

Tentative Class Schedule

- Class 1: September 22 Review of course syllabus, expectations**
- Class 2: September 24 What are Moral Values?**
- Kidder, R. (1996). Core values. Chapter 4 (pp. 77-109) *How good people make tough choices: Resolving the dilemmas of ethical living*. New York: Fireside Book.
- Lewis, C.S. (1996). The law of human nature and objections to it. *Mere Christianity*, pp. 17-26.
- Class 3: September 29 Personal Values Statement is Due.**
- Damon, W. (1988)/ Preface and Chapter 1 & 2 in *The Moral child: Nurturing children's natural moral growth*. pp. ix to 29.
- Coles, R. (1998). *The moral intelligence of children: How to raise a moral child*. New York: Penguin Books. Section II, Chapter 1 The early years, pp. 63-97.
- Class 4: October 1 Toddlers and Pre-school age children**
- Fraiberg, S. (1959). Education towards reality. Chapter 5, pp. 146-158. In *The Magic Years*. New York: Charles Scribner & Sons.
- Fraiberg, S. (1959). Education of conscience. Chapter 8, pp. 242-282. In *The Magic Years*. New York: Charles Scribner & Sons.
- Class 5: October 6 School-aged Children**
- Damon, W. (1988). Preface and Chapters 3, 4, and 5 in *The Moral child: Nurturing children's natural moral growth*.
Developmental theories in review
- Class 6: October 8 School-aged children: Intro to Kohlberg**
- Reimer, J., Paolitto, D., & Hersh, R. (1983). Piaget: A conceptual introduction to Kohlberg. In *Promoting moral growth: From Piaget to Kohlberg*, 2nd Ed., Chapter 2, pp. 17-42. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Reimer, J., Paolitto, D., & Hersh, R. (1983). Kohlberg: The development of moral judgment. In *Promoting moral growth: From Piaget to Kohlberg*, 2nd Ed., Chapter 3, pp. 43-82. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Class 7: October 13 Gender Differences in Moral Development**
- Gilligan, C. (1982). Images of relationships. Chapter 2 pp. 24-39 in C. Gilligan's *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gurian, M. (1999). What does it mean to have a son? Chapter 1&2 (pp.2-55) *The good son: Shaping the moral development of our boys and young men*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Damon, W. (1988) Culture, gender and morality. Chapter 6 (pp. 95-114) in *The Moral child: Nurturing children's natural moral growth*.
- Damon, W. (1988). Chapter 7, pp. 115-130. Fostering Moral Growth *The Moral child:*

Class 8 October 15 Adolescence

Hart, D. & Carlo, G. (2005). Moral development in adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 15(3), 223-233.

Damon, W., Menon, J., & Brook, K. (2003). The development of purpose during adolescence. *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol. 7 (3), 119-128.

Reimer, K. (2003). Committed to caring: Transformation of adolescent moral identity. *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol.7 (3), 129-137.

Class 9: October 20 College-aged and young adulthood

Perry, W. (1968). Excerpts from *Forms of Intellectual and ethical development in the college years: A scheme*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers. (pp.1-16).

Knox, P., Fagley, N.S., & Miller, P. (2004) Care and justice moral orientation among African-American college students. *Journal of Adult Development*, Vol. 11(1) 41-45.

Schrader, D. (2004). Intellectual safety, moral atmosphere, and epistemology in college classrooms. *Journal of Adult Development*, Vol. 11 (2), 87-101.

Schrader, D. (1999) Justice and Caring: Process in college students' moral reasoning development. Chapter 3, pp. 37-55 in M. Katz, N. Noddings & K. Strike (Eds.). *Justice and caring: The search for common ground in education*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Class 10: October 22 "Catch up" day**Class 11 October 29 Assignment 2 due in class/oral presentations****Class 12 November 3 Assignment 3: Paper and Discussion of Cider House Rules in class.****Class 13 November 5 Adulthood and later life**

Kotre, J. (1999). What is generativity? Chapter 2, pp. 11-27, and Never too soon, never too late, Chapter 9, pp. 157-183. In *Making it count*. New York: The Free Press

McAdams, D., & Logan, R. (2004). What is generativity. In Ed St. de Aubin (Ed). *The Generative Society* pp. 15-31. Washington: American Psychological Association Press

Loyola Generativity Scale Blackboard

Generative Behavior Checklist Blackboard

Class 14 November 10 Adulthood and later life

Wuthrow, R. (1991). The case for compassion. In *Acts of compassion: Caring for others and helping ourselves*, Chapter 10, pp. 282-310. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Optional)

Tornstam, L. (1999). Transcendence in later life. *Generations*, pp. 10-13.

Class 15 November 12 Bok, S. (1979) *Lying*. Pages. Prefaces, introduction and pages 2-89.

Class 16 November 17 *Lying*. Pages 90-164.

Class 17 November 19 *Lying*. Pages 165-249.

Class 18 November 24 Assignment #4 on Lying due in class.

November 26 Thanksgiving NO CLASS

Moral Exemplars

Class 19 December 1 Moral Exemplars

Colby, A. and Damon.W. (1995). The development of extraordinary moral commitment. In M. Killen & D. Hart (Eds.) *Morality in everyday life: Developmental perspectives* (pp.342-370). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Class 20 December 3 Moral Exemplars continued. Last class