

**CST 632: Seminar in Communication Ethics**  
**Section 1 Spring 2008 TTh 3:30 – 4:45 p.m. Graham 203**

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Office Hours: 1:30 – 3:30 T/TH and by appointment

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**Required Texts**

- Anderson, R., Baxter, L. A. & Cissna, K. N. (2004). *Dialogue: Theorizing difference in communication studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
  - Bakhtin, M. M. (1993). *Toward a philosophy of the act*. (V. Liapunov, Trans., V. Liapunov & M. Holquist, ed.). Austin, TX: University of Texas.
  - Bracci, S. L. & Christians, C. G. (2002). *Moral engagement in public life: Theorists for contemporary ethics*. New York: Peter Lang.
  - Murray, J. W. (2003). *Face to face in dialogue: Emmanuel Levinas and (the) communication (of) ethics*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
  - Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed, 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed.* New York: Continuum.
  - Phillips, Christopher (2001). *Socrates Café*. New York: W.W. Norton.
  
  - Additional readings may be placed on e-reserves in the Jackson Library
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**Course Description**

This course is intended to provide students with the opportunity for deep discussion about communication ethics and dialogue. We will survey the discipline for current perspectives, investigate the philosophical roots of the varying perspectives, and explore the practical implications of the variety of views.

**Course Objectives**

1. Develop an understanding of current communication theories of ethics and dialogue.
2. Demonstrate a grasp of the importance of communication ethics in constructing our experience of everyday life.
3. Employ an extensive vocabulary of terms connected with the study of communication ethics.
4. Understand how philosophies of dialogic and communication ethics apply to the communication field, relate to other theorists, and inform other communication articles and texts.

## Class Environment and Expectations

1. In the classroom, we will be discussing our readings, your observations at various worksites, and questions that you have about the nature of work. Since this is a communication course, it is important that together we create the conditions where dialogue can flourish by recognizing the value of frankness, open-heartedness, honesty, responsibility, freedom, exploration, and critical reflection.
2. You are expected to attend class sessions fully prepared to discuss the material corresponding to the date on the syllabus.
3. All assigned work is due on the dates designated in a professional form (e.g., typed, free of spelling and grammatical errors, and demonstrating creative use of ideas).
4. Late assignments may be accepted at the discretion of the instructor, but expect that your grade will be substantially lower as a result. If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from completing an assignment on the designated date, be sure to contact me in advance.
5. If you have questions regarding feedback on an assignment or your grade, please discuss it with me within a week.
6. Be sure to keep electronic and hard copies of everything you turn in for a grade.
7. All students are expected to adhere to the University's Academic Integrity Policy (<http://saf.dept.unch.edu80/studisp/Honor.html>).
8. Writing is a process, not a one-time event. Engaging in the rewriting process enables you to polish your content as well as your style. Be sure to take advantage of the campus Writing Center if you need assistance in organizational structure, flow, and paper development. I expect that you will check carefully for spelling and grammatical errors *prior* to handing in your work.
9. Full acknowledgment using the American Psychological Association (APA) style manual must be made when you quote, paraphrase or use the ideas of others.
10. If you have special needs that require accommodation, please let me know early in the semester so that we may develop a plan to meet your learning needs. If you have a disability, you will need to provide documentation to the Disability Services Office (334-5440).

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## Assignments

Classroom Participation and Assignments	10%
Socrates Café Discussions (4)	10%
Seminar Discussion Papers (6)	20%
Midterm Paper	20%
Final Paper	40%

## Socrates Café Discussions

During the Spring 2008 semester, Al Brilliant will be hosting weekly seminars through the Free University located at the HIVE (History, Information, Vision, Exchange), 1214 Grove Street on Thursday evenings, 6:00 p.m. beginning January 17. Plan to attend one of the weekly events monthly in January, February, March, and April. Following your discussion there, write a 2-3

page response linking the insight you gained with our course readings. These responses are due the Tuesday following your participation.

### **Seminar Discussion Papers**

You will write a question that the reading for that week inspires (six times), and then draft a response (not an answer). I recommend that you focus on a particular passage, theme, claim, or sentence that you find particularly revealing, confusing, or both. The intent of these short papers (two to three typewritten pages) is to facilitate your understanding of the readings, generate class discussion, and examine the practical implications of the authors' arguments.

### **Midterm Paper**

Here is your opportunity to write a structured response and critique of an idea, concept, theme, or issue connected to ethics and dialogue based on the readings to date.

Terms: Cite all readings to date PLUS 3 outside, academic sources; paper length 8-10 pages.

Overview: Organize your essay into three sections:

- a. Participation/observation--Here, you will need to include your observation of some moment of ethical or dialogic concern. Describe what you see, hear, feel, etc. as you encountered others in this episode. Offer specific and concrete observations and examples.
- b. Interpretation--In this section, offer a clear, concise, and compelling assessment of the connections between the readings in class and your observations of or participation in the episode described in (a). How are the texts relevant to our lives as communicators? What special insights do the authors offer? Explore relevant and/or significant passages or sections of the text. Be sure to quote, extend, and critique the readings.
- c. Reflection--Draw some preliminary conclusions, questions, or insights. Consider questions such as:
  - What does this idea/concept/theme/issue mean for you or society?
  - Why do you think scholars consider ethics and dialogue important focal points for academic study?

### **Final Paper**

Terms: 20-25 pages; cite all class readings and 7-10 additional academic sources.

Overview: Select a critical event, rhetorical artifact or field research project upon which you can build your scholarly paper. Organize your final paper as follows:

- a. Select a communication issue such as acknowledgement, hope, answerability, etc. as a context for your paper (otherwise known as a statement of the problem).
- b. Provide the theoretical/philosophical understanding on that issue (consider this a review of the literature).
- c. Discuss a case study involving real data and application or suggest a new claim to refute previous ways of conceptualizing the idea (this is your research project).
- d. Include a brief discussion of method.
- e. Conclude by addressing how this paper is significant for communication scholars.



Week XI: March 25 & 27    Read: Bracci & Christians, Chapters 10-12 (T)  
Read: Anderson, et al., Chapters 12-14 (Th)  
DUE: Reading Response #6 & Socrates Café Experience

Week XII: April 1 & 3    Read: Bracci & Christians, Chapter 3 & Afterword (T)  
Read: Anderson, et al., Chapters 16 (Th)  
DUE: Reading Response #7

## **V. Dialogue, Liberation, Answerability**

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Week XIII: April 8 & 10    Read: Freire, Forward, Introduction, Chapter 1 (T)  
Read: Bakhtin, Forward, Preface, Introduction (Th)  
DUE: Reading Response #8

Week XIV: April 15 & 17    Read: Freire, Chapters 2-3 (T)  
Read: Bakhtin, pp. 1-25 (Th)  
DUE: Reading Response #9

Week XV: April 22 & 24    Read: Freire, Chapter 4 (T)  
Read: Bakhtin, pp. 26-56 (Th)  
DUE: Reading Response #10

Week XVI: 4/29 & 5/1    Read: Bakhtin, to end of book  
DUE: First draft of final paper with bibliography (T)  
& Socrates Café Experience

FINAL EXAM PERIOD    DUE: Final papers