

## **UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO**

**UNIT:** School of Education

**DEPT:** Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations

### **ELC 661 Ethics and Education**

This course will survey historical and contemporary works in ethics, moral education, feminist ethics of caring, and--because so many of our educational concerns are based on relationships with community and negotiations of power-- political theory. We will attempt to grapple with questions of how to live a good life, how to have ethical relations with others, as well as simply analyzing what it means to be ethical. While we will consider classical ethical models (utilitarianism, deontology/duty-based ethics, consequentialism, subjectivism/egoism, social contract, respect for persons, virtue), this class will presume a strong connection between ethics and politics, especially those concerned with civil rights and gender equity. Thus a central theme of the class will be an examination, in a variety of contexts, of the feminist slogan the personal is political.Ó

We will attempt to grapple with questions of how to live a good life, how to share the world with others, and how to cultivate ethical communities. These are questions that have stimulated discussions for thousands of years and while many of us have some broad notion of what we take to be ethical we dont often engage in examination of our own beliefs or competing conceptions of ethics. Thus this class will be engaged in critical assessment of ethical theories that have come before, as well as critical engagement with our own ethical beliefs and practices, particularly as they pertain to education. While some contend that schools have stepped away from teaching values, it is clear that, on the contrary, values and ethics permeate every aspect of school from conduct, to curriculum, to the very assumptions underlying education. Therefore this class will also engage with contemporary school-related ethical dilemmas and debates.

Required texts:

Woolf, *Three Guineas* (Harcourt Brace),

Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights* (Oxford),

Paley, *You Cant Say You Cant Play* (Harvard),

Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Dover Thrift),

Morrison, *Sula* (New American Library)

Additional required articles are on on-line reserve in the library and can be accessed via the web (these articles may be printed for free in the reserve room of the library or downloaded at home (a slow process))

Course requirements and grade percentages:

**Attendance:** Because we only meet once a week, attendance is mandatory. You are expected to arrive on time and be prepared to participate in discussions on the readings and presentations. Absences will result in a full letter grade penalty.

Participation: Each student will be responsible for active participation (10%). You should read carefully for the main ideas of the article/reading and be prepared to engage in a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the authors argument. Please be careful to fully explain your ideas as we are a diverse class with different academic backgrounds and interests.

Written Assignments: At midterm you will submit (to me and your writing group) a 4 page prospectus for your seminar paper detailing your preliminary argument (10%). A full draft of the paper will be due one month before the final draft is due (10%). The seminar paper will be 12-15 pages in length on a specific ethical question regarding education or schooling or may engage with some of the texts we've read for your own purposes (70%). Late papers will not be accepted unless arrangements are made in advance .

ELC 661 Schedule of Readings:

(Aug. 24) Introduction, video Fires in the Mirror

(Aug. 31) responsibility: Shelley, Frankenstein

(Sept. 7) organically developed ethics and education: Paley, You Cant Say You Cant Play

(Sept. 14) friendship as ethical education: On-line reserve: Aristotle, Book VIII, Nicomachean Ethics, 214-244.

(Sept. 21) sharing the world with others: On-line reserve: Pratt, Identity: Skin, Blood, Heart, 9-64, video The Long Walk Home

(Sept. 28) caring: On-line reserve: Noddings Moral Education, 171-201, Diller, The Ethics of Care and Education: A New Paradigm, Its Critics, and Its Educational Significance, 89-104.

(Oct. 5) barriers to the ethical/political community: Chafe, Civilities and Civil Rights

Prospectus due in class on Oct. 12. Bring copies for your research group and me.

(Oct. 12) Prospectus due, research discussion. Chafe, continued

(Oct. 19) educational goals, politics and ethics: Woolf, Three Guineas

(Oct. 26) Woolf, continued

(Nov. 2) democracy as ethical life: On-line reserve: Gutmann from Democratic Education: Introduction, Chapter One: States and Education 3-48

(Nov. 9) criticism of impartiality: On-line reserve: Young, The Idea of Impartiality and the Civic Public, 96-121

(Nov. 16) First full draft of seminar paper due. ethics and power: On-line reserve: Nietzsche, "First Essay," On the Genealogy of Morals, 24-56

Thanksgiving Holiday, Nov. 22

(Nov. 30) Morrison, Sula

(Dec. 7) Paper presentations

Seminar papers are due 4 pm Dec. 13

On-line reserve reading list:

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Oswald, New York: MacMillan, 1989, 214-244.

Diller, Ann, *The Ethics of Care and Education: A New Paradigm, Its Critics, and Its Educational Significance*, in *The Gender Question in Education: Theory, Pedagogy, and Politics*, edited by Ann Diller, Barbara Houston, Kathryn Pauly Morgan and Maryann Ayim. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996: 89-104.

Gutmann, Amy, *Introduction*, *Democratic Education*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987: 3-18.

Gutmann, Amy, *One: States and Education*, *Democratic Education*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987: 19-47.

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage, 1989: 24-56.

Noddings, Nel, *Moral Education, Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984: 171-201.

Pratt, Minnie Bruce, *Identity: Skin Blood Heart*, in *Yours in Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism*, edited by Elly Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt and Barbara Smith, Brooklyn: Long Haul Press, 1984: 9-64.

Young, Iris Marion, *The Idea of Impartiality and the Civic Public*, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990: 96-121.