**LDSP 450 01: Leadership Ethics**

Monday 2:40-5:20, Jepson Hall 102  
Fall 2008  
Dr. Joanne B. Ciulla

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**Purpose**
The purpose of this course is to examine the moral responsibilities of leadership in a variety of contexts. It brings together what students have learned in the leadership program about good leadership, which is leadership that is both ethical and effective. The course has the following objectives:

- To broaden students’ moral perspective and enlarge their moral imagination
- To develop students’ ability to present and critique moral arguments
- To practice ethical problem solving
- To reflect on the moral challenges of leadership and power

**Course Description**
Ethics is about good and evil, right and wrong, justice and injustice in individuals and in our relationships to people and all living things. In this course, we will learn about leadership by studying ethics. The course rests on the assumption that leadership is a subset of ethics rather than ethics being a subset of leadership studies. We will examine the ethics of what leaders are, what they do, and how they do it. Students will assess the public and private morality of leaders, the moral obligations of leaders and followers, the ways in which leaders shape the moral environment of institutions, and the temptations of power. We will examine ethical issues related to leadership though case studies concerning leaders in a variety of contexts and cultures. The course looks at how leaders convey values through actions, language, and as role models. It aims to expand students’ moral point of view by first considering personal ethics, then moving on to look at leadership and the common good, and finishing with an examination of ethics in a global community. Since this is an applied ethics course, students will discuss and write case studies where they will apply philosophic concepts of ethics to real problems and stories of real leaders.

**Required Texts**


Blackboard Readings
Monday

Requirements

Exam I (20%) Exam II (20%) 40%
Application Paper 15%
Short Paper 5%
Case Study 20%
Case Presentation 5%
Class participation 15%

Policies: Regard this syllabus as a contract

Grading: All grades are entered as numbers. The number values of letter grades are:
A 100-93  A- 92-90  B+ 89-87  B 86-83  B- 82-80
C+ 79-77  C 76-73  C- 72-70  D+ 69-67  D 66-63

Due Dates: Papers are due at the time indicated in this syllabus. Late papers will not be accepted, even if they are the result of a computer problem. Don’t wait until the last minute and back up your work! Please do not email your papers unless you get permission form the instructor.

Attendance: Lateness and unexcused absences will be deducted from your participation grade.

Participation: Participation is an important part of your grade and the success of this seminar. Think about what you read and come to class prepared to discuss the ideas in the readings. You will be graded on the quality of your participation, which will also include homework assignments. Exemplary participation consists of specific and insightful discussion of the readings, good questions concerning the readings, and your overall contribution to the class’s learning. It also includes integrity in the way you do your assignments, adherence to class times, due dates, and other conditions and instructions laid out in this syllabus and the attached course assignments. Also, note that all electronic devices must be turned off at the beginning of class. There will be a break in the middle of this class, so unless there is an emergency, students should show consideration for others by not leaving the room during class. All of the above will be taken into account in your participation grade.

Part One: Leadership and the Self

I. August 25 Introduction

Course description

Case: The Parable of the Sadhu

II. September 1 The Moral Challenges of Power

What is the paradox of ethics and effectiveness? What is it about power and success that creates ethical challenges for leaders? Why should a leader be ethical?

Read: Introductions, pp. xi-xv & pp.1-2
Dean Ludwig & Clinton Longenecker, “The Bathsheba Syndrome: The Ethical Failure of Successful Leaders,” pp. 70-81

III. September 8 Virtue and the Morality of Leaders
What are the distinctive qualities of virtues? How do Aristotle’s ideas on ethics apply to situations in organizations? How do they apply to the way that we select and judge leaders? What do Buddha’s four noble truths? What virtues have the two presidential candidates shown so far in the campaign?

Read: Introduction pp. 53-54
Case: Joanne B. Ciulla, “Sleazy or Stupid?” pp. 63-64

IV. September 15 Duties of Leaders and Followers
What is a duty and how does it differ from a virtue? What does Kant mean by a categorical imperative? What ideas are central to Kant’s theory of ethics? What would a Kantian leader be like? Why is the issue of moral luck important for understanding leadership as well as ethics?

Read: Introduction, pp. 93-94
Immanuel Kant, “Good Will, Duty, and the Categorical Imperative” pp. 94-109
Bernard Williams, “Moral Luck,”” pp. 112-117
Case: Joanne B. Ciulla, Case: “Is a Lie Always a Lie?” p. 118

Part Two: Leaders, Followers, and the Common Good

V. September 22 Leadership and The Greatest Good
How does utilitarianism differ from ethical theories based on duty and virtue? What are the practical implications of this difference? To what extent is the greatest good part of a leader’s job description? What price are we willing to pay for the greatest happiness?

Read: Introduction, pp. 141-142
John Rawls, “Distributive Justice,”” 154-161
Case: Joanne B. Ciulla, “Prejudice or Preference?” p. 152
Case: Joanne B. Ciulla, “Corneas in the Congo,” p. 153

*September 24 Application Papers due on or before 5:30

VI. September 29
Exam
Altruism and Self-Interest
Are all human actions self-interested? Is it immoral to be self-interested? Does an action have to altruistic to be moral? Is it necessary for leaders to be altruistic?

Read: Thomas Hobbes, Self-Interest and Human Nature,” pp. 31-37
Ayn Rand, “Why Self-Interest is Best,”” pp. 44-52

VII. October 6 The Morality of Followers
Can followers be held accountable for their leader’s actions? What is the relationship between feelings and morality? What is wrong with Eichmann’s interpretation of a Kantian duty? Did Eichmann see any difference between his duties as a leader and his duties as a follower?

Hannah Arendt, “The Accused and Duties of Law-Abiding Citizen,” pp. 119-123
Case: George Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant” (Blackboard)
Video Case: “The Trial of Adolph Eichmann”

October 13 Fall Break

Part Three: Ethics and The World

VIII. October 20 Ethical Relativism
Are there standards of right and wrong that apply everywhere, regardless of cultural practice? How do we make ethical judgments in and about foreign cultures? What are our ethical obligations to people in other cultures? What moral characteristics should apply to leaders and leadership everywhere?

Read: Introduction, pp. 229-231
Ruth Benedict, “Anthropology and the Abnormal,” pp. 231-239
Mary Midgley, “Trying Out One’s New Sword,” pp. 239-244
F.G. Bailey, “Values, Beliefs and Leadership,” pp. 244-253
Case: “Cannibalism Near and Far” (Blackboard)

October 22 Short Paper due on or before 5:30

IX. October 27 Tradition and Morality
How would the Confucian leader/follower relationship differ from the Kantian one? Would Annan’s virtues be practiced and respected in all cultures? Is morality that comes from tradition superior to other ways of thinking about morality? How much is leadership determined by a person and how much of it is determined by culture? Why is reverence a central virtue for leaders?

Read: Confucius, Selections from the Analects, pp. 123-139
Dalai Lama, Selection from Ethics for the New Millennium (handout)
Paul Woodruff, “The Reverent Leader,” from Reverence, pp. 163-185. (handout)
Case: Joshua Cooper Ramo, “The Five Virtues of Kofi Annan,” pp. 268-276

X. November 3 Visiting Lecturer Teaching Ethics in Other Places
Dr. Chloe Schwenke has international experience in public policy, teaching, project and team management, and project application in a wide range of international development, democracy, conflict, and governance issues, for USAID, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and NGOs. She has particular expertise in applied ethics, procurement, leadership training, integrity strengthening, and local governance. Schwenke earned her Ph.D. at the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, with a research focus on normative aspects of urban governance. She has written extensively on the topic of development ethics – including issues of leadership, integrity and anti-corruption, conflict, education, procurement, and codes of ethics. She is Adjunct Professor at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of the Johns Hopkins University,
Georgetown University’s Public Policy Institute, and the University of Maryland where she currently teaches a course on the moral dimensions of public policy. Dr. Schwenke was a Fulbright professor of ethics at Makerere University in Uganda and has lived in Kenya for and South Africa.

**XI. November 10 The Problem of Charisma**
What is charisma and why are some people so obsessed with it as a quality of leaders? What is the difference between a leader and a celebrity? What are the dangers of charismatic leaders? Where did Jones go wrong? Where did his followers go wrong? What makes a Jim Jones possible?

**Read:** Charles Lindholm, “The Only God You’ll Ever See: Jim Jones and the People’s Temple,” pp. 192-202

**Video Case:** Jim Jones and the People’s Temple

**XII. November 17**

**Exam**
Case: Joanne B. Ciulla, “The Oil Rig”

*November 19 Case Studies Due on or before 5:30*

**XIII. November 24**

Case Presentations

**XIV. December 1**

Case Presentations Continued

**Free Will**
To what extent do we control our own lives? What does Coelho’s novel teach us about self-leadership? What does the novel tell us about universal values and human aspirations? What, if anything, did this novel tell you about yourself?

**Read:** Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist* (all of it)
Assignments

Application Paper
In this 3-4 page (about 1000-1100 words) double-spaced paper you will pick out a short news article about a leader that has ethical implications. Then write a discussion of the article from the point of view of Aristotle, Kant, and Mill. Pretend that each philosopher has just read the article and write using “I” as if each philosopher were discussing what he read. The philosophers do not have to disagree with each other, but they will each take a different approach to discussing the problem. You must attach a copy of the article to your paper. This way you do not have to spend too time summarizing the article.

The paper should consist of a short introduction, then headings for each philosopher. The point of this assignment is to see if you understand these three ethical theories and if you are able to apply them. DO NOT paraphrase the philosophers. Put their ideas into everyday language. Make sure that what they say is directly applied to the problem at hand, and not simply a restatement of their theories. If you want to site where you got an idea from our text, simply put the page number in parentheses. You will get a separate grade for each philosopher. Again, you must attach a copy of the article to your paper or the paper will not be accepted. Late papers will not be accepted. Papers are due on September 24 on or before 5:30 PM.

Short Paper
To be announced.

Case Study (written in pairs)
In this course, case studies help us think about the moral obligations of leadership. When we analyze a case, we look at the reasoning of the characters and explore the options available to them. We can also use a case study to assess the moral character of the leader based on his or her goals, policies or decisions. Sometimes cases challenge us to determine the culpability of leaders, followers and various groups of people, other times cases focus on the moral obligations of followers. When you analyze a case, you take it apart and look at a situation in terms of moral beliefs, principles, and values. When you construct a case, you put the facts of a situation together so as to elicit a meaningful dialogue about ethical issues that are inherent in the case. This is a somewhat circular process of first doing research about a particular situation, identifying the ethical issues, and then choosing the information necessary to write a case that will convey the complexity and ambiguity of the issue.

There is no shortage of stories about unethical behavior in the newspapers. You will pick a partner and write a 15 to 17-page (4000-4500 words) case about an ethical problem facing a leader that has taken place in this country or abroad in the year 2008. The case may have begun last year, but it has to have come to a head in 2008. Your case has to be approved by me before you write it. You may email me with your idea, talk to me after class, or make an appointment to talk to me about it in my office. Either way, you must get your case approved. The case should focus on the behavior of a leader, several leaders and/or the dynamics of groups of people within the organization. Remember, this is a course on leadership ethics not medical ethics (no “should we pull the plug cases,” please). Your case
should be about leaders in business, government or politics, non-profits, or social movements.

About one half of your case should tell the story and the rest should be an analysis of what went wrong and why. You may analyze your case as you tell the story or tell the story and then analyze it. You may use readings from the text to analyze your case. You are required to do research on your case and use minimum of 10 references to write it. References may come from books or periodicals or reputable on-line sources. Make sure that you use endnotes and include a bibliography. If you use citations from on-line sources, please give the full web address of the site along with the name of the site or publication, and author of the article.

Half of your paper grade will be based on the quality of the topic, description of the problem and research and the other half will be based on your analysis. Your class presentation will receive a separate grade. The paper is worth 20% of the grade and the presentation will be worth 5% of it. Late cases will not be accepted. Papers are due on November 19 on or before 5:30 PM. Presentations will be on November 24 and December 1.