**LDSP 450 01: Leadership Ethics**

Monday 3:00-5:40, Jepson Hall 101  
Fall 2012  
Prof. Joanne B. Ciulla

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Hours: by appointment  
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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 or 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 identifying and solving ethical problems
- To reflect on the moral challenges of leadership and power
- To serve as a capstone for leadership majors and minors

**Course Description**

Ethics is about good and evil, right and wrong, justice and injustice in us 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 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
Requirements

Exam I February 20 25%
Exam II April 2 25%
Case Study Due April 4 before 5:30PM 25%
Case Presentations April 9 or 17 5%
Class Participation 20%

Policies: Regard this syllabus as a contract.

Grading: All grades are entered as numbers that are equal to the following grades:

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Due Dates: Papers are due at the time indicated in this syllabus. Since you know about the assignments in advance, late papers will not be accepted, even if they are the result of a computer problem. Do not wait until the last minute and back up your work! Please do not email your papers without permission from the instructor.

Attendance: Lateness and unexcused absences will be deducted from your participation grade. (Illness or death in the family are excused absences, job interviews and early flights to or from home for spring break are not.)

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. The best way to do well on your participation grade is to know what the readings say. 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; cooperating with your case partner, and playing an equal role in writing and presenting your case study; adherence to class times, due dates, and
other conditions and instructions laid out in this syllabus and the attached course assignments. 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 a pressing need to get up during class, students should not leave the room until the class is over. All of the above conditions will affect your participation grade.

**Part One: Leadership and Power**

*I. January 9 Introduction*

Course Description

*II. January 16 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


**Case:** Plato, “The Ring of Gyges,” from the *Republic* Bk. II pp. 28-30

**Part Two The Self and Others**

*III. January 23 The Problem of 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:** Ayn Rand, “Why Self-Interest is Best,” pp. 44-52

Dean Ludwig & Clinton Longenecker, “The Bathsheba Syndrome: The Ethical Failures of Successful Leaders,” pp. 70-81

*IV. January 30 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 tell us about the job of a leader?

**Read:** Introduction pp. 53-54


**Case:** Joanne B. Ciulla, “Sleazy or Stupid?” pp. 63-64

*V. February 6 The 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, “On Women and Girls,” p. 111
**Case:** Joanne B. Ciulla, Case: “Is a Lie Always a Lie?” p. 118

**VI. February 13 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
**Case:** Joanne B. Ciulla, “Prejudice or Preference?” p. 152
**Case:** Joanne B. Ciulla, “Corneas in the Congo,” p. 153
**Case:** Ursula Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas,” pp. 161-166

**VII. February 20 Exam I**

**Part Three: Followers and Feelings**

**VIII. February 27 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 leader like 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

**IX. March 5 Spring Break**

**VIII. March 12 The Morality of Followers**
Can followers be held accountable for their leader’s actions or the bad morality of a society? 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”

**Part Four: Ethics and The World**

**X. March 19 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)

XI. March 26 Tradition and Morality
How would the Confucian leader/follower relationship differ from the Kantian one? 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 (Blackboard)
(Blackboard)
Case: Joanne Ciulla, “The Oil Rig”

XII. April 2 Exam II

April 4 Case studies due by 5:30

XIII. April 9 Free Will (and case presentations)
To what extent do we control our 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, does this novel tell you about yourself?

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

XVI. April 16 Case Presentations

Case Assignment

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 involved in it 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, at 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 and the background of that 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 5000-6000-word case (around 20-24 pages, including endnotes) about an ethical problem facing a leader that has taken place in this country or abroad in the year 2011. **The case may have begun last year, but it has to have come to a head in 2011 or 12.** The instructor must approve your case before you write it verbally or via email. 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.

*The key question that your case should attempt to answer is: **What is it that made this event or situation possible?** Use this question to guide your research.*

Your case should tell the story and 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 also 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, periodicals, or reputable on-line sources.

You will be required to use footnotes for your citations. To create a footnote go to “insert footnote” on the top bar of Word. Make sure that you use regular numbers and not small Roman numerals to number your footnotes. The citation style will be Chicago/Turabian. There is a Chicago/Turabian style sheet on Blackboard and on the UR library site. Follow the instructions for R. I will also talk about how to properly cite and footnote in class. 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. With this form of footnoting, you will not need to add a reference list, unless you use references that you do not cite. You should also make sure to put page numbers into your paper. **Failure to properly cite sources or include page numbers will result in point deductions from your grade.**

Half of your paper grade will be based on the quality of the topic, description of the problem and research and the other half of your grade will be based on your analysis. Your class presentation will receive a separate grade. Students will be asked to assess their group at the end of the assignment. There will be no free riders on this project!

**Late cases will not be accepted. Papers are due on April 4 on or before 5:30 PM.**

2. **Paper Presentations**

Paper presentations will be on **April 9 and April 16.** Each pair will have 20 minutes to present and, if there is time, take questions. Presentations will be graded on the basis of the clarity, creativity (originality of their topic), quality of research and analysis, and ability to present their case in the time allotted.