

LDST 450: Leadership Ethics
The Purpose Project

Fall 2022

Dr. Jessica Flanigan
Mondays at 9am

Email: flanigan@richmond.edu

Content Overview: In this course, we will learn about ethical theory, historical examples of ethical and unethical leadership, current events, and hypothetical cases to gain new insights into the ethics of leadership in our own lives.

This class is focused on learning philosophy as a way of life. This means that each week, students will first learn about some aspect of ethics on Mondays, and they will apply these lessons in their own lives throughout the week. At the end of each week, students will submit detailed reflections on their experiences applying the philosophical readings to their own lives (*Purpose Projects*). In addition to these projects, students will also write an original philosophical essay about a topic that they personally care about.

In Part 1 students learn about philosophical methodology. We will discuss prominent ethical theories, such as consequentialism and Kantianism. These readings will provide a foundation for understanding ethics, and we will reference these theories throughout the class.

Part 2 is about the specific challenges that leaders and followers face when they deliberate about their moral obligations. For example, we will discuss the temptations of power, the challenges of acting against one's moral convictions, the ethics of making decisions that involve luck or chance, and whether reasons of partiality conflict with moral obligations.

In Part 3, we discuss the basis of leaders' authority, whether followers have duties to obey, and whether bystanders have duties to intervene when they witness injustice. In this part of the course, we focus on political leadership, which provides the foundation for a discussion of justice and leadership. We will address questions about social and economic justice, such as whether leaders are required to promote distributive equality, and whether leader's obligations to others change in the global context.

Finally, in Part 4, students will reflect on the development of their character and career plans, in light of the previous lessons. In this final part of the course, we discuss the challenge of balancing self-interest against the duty to assist others, and the relationship between morality and a meaningful life.

Throughout the class, students will also complete group or individual projects where they apply the lessons of the class to create something that will add value to the world (*The Ethics Project*). Each student or group will receive a small grant to get them started on this project. This project encourages students to develop their entrepreneurial abilities and to reflect on the difficulties leadership when one's goal is make the world a better place.

Objectives: This course is the capstone class for a leadership studies degree. Students are encouraged to reflect on the moral dimensions of leadership in light of their Jepson education and their plans going forward.

- Students will **discover** philosophical perspectives that change the way they think about leadership, work, politics, and the meaning of life.
 - o Students will develop skills that enable them to develop and evaluate moral arguments. For example, students will learn to assess the soundness and validity of an ethical argument.
- Students will also **create** original philosophical essays that address the ethics of leadership.
 - o Students will think in a clear and systematic way about the normative dimensions of their career or personal choices going forward.
 - o Students will learn to develop and write an original philosophical argument.
 - o Students will learn to revise papers in response to counter-arguments.
 - o *Students will write the best papers they've ever written in their lives.*
- Students will also **apply** ethical theories to contexts beyond the classroom.
 - o Students will critically evaluate ethical questions in the real world in order to better understand how ethics applies to their own lives.
 - o Students will work together on an entrepreneurial project that adds value to the world.

Schedule

Part 1: Normative Ethics and Leadership

August 22 Week 1: How should we reason about moral problems?

Shafer-Landau, Eleven Arguments Against Moral Objectivity

Brennan- The Ethics Project

August 29: Week 2: Moral Methodology

Thomson- Killing, Letting Die, and the Trolley Problem

Singer - Would you save a drowning child?

LaGuin- The Ones who Walked Away

September 5: Week 3: Should leaders promote the greatest good?

Chappell- Arguments for Utilitarianism

Nozick- The Experience Machine

Williams- Consequentialism and Integrity

September 12 Week 4: Kantianism: Are leaders constrained by moral rules?

Pallikkathayil- The Possibility of Choice

Schapiro- Kantian Rigorism and Mitigating Circumstances

Part 2- Moral Deliberation

September 19 Week 5- When is partiality justified?

Velleman- Love as a Moral Emotion

Scheffler- Relationships and Responsibilities

September 26 Week 6- Self-Scrutiny

Hill- Bystanders and the Duty to Resist Oppression

Joshi- What are the Chances You're Right About Everything?

Price- Ethical Failure in Leadership

October 3 **Week 7- Risks and Small Effects**

Guerrero- *Don't Know, Don't Kill*

Gregory- *The Sorrow and Shame of the Accidental Killer*

Parfit- *Five Mistakes in Moral Mathematics*

Week 8- Fall Break

Part 3- Leadership and Justice

October 17 **Week 9- Choosing and following political leaders**

Nozick- *The Principle of Fairness*

Klosko, 'Presumptive Benefit & Political Obligation'

Huemer *The Psychology of Authority*

Huemer- *What if there is No Authority?*

October 24

Week 10: Equality

Lowe: "Privilege: What Is It, Who Has It, and What Should We Do About It?"

Case- *White Privilege: A Conservative Perspective*

Frankfurt- *Equality as a Moral Ideal*

October 31 **Week 11: Ethics and Distant People**

Zwolinski- *Sweatshops, Choice, and Exploitation*

Beckstead- *Duties to the Distant Future*

Part 4: Meaningful Leadership: Self-Interest and Character

November 7 **Week 12: Moral Exemplars**

Cherry- *Forgiveness, Moral Exemplars, and the Oppressed*

Preston-Roedder- *Faith in Humanity*

November 14 **Week 13: Meaning and Morality**

Wolf *Moral Saints*

Langton- *Duty and Desolation*

November 21 **Week 14: Meaning and Religion**

Scheffler- *The Afterlife*

Siderits -*Freedom, Caring and Buddhist Philosophy.*

November 28 **Week 15: Meaning and Absurdity**

Setiya- *The Midlife Crisis*

Nagel- *Birth, Death, and the Meaning of Life*

Grading:

Grade	Weight
Class Participation	10%
Perusall	10%
Top 10 Purpose Projects	35%
Essay	25%
Ethics Project	20%

All grades are entered as numbers.

The numerical values of essay grades are:

A+	A+/A	A	A/A-	A-	A- /B+
98.5	97	95	93	91.5	

					90
B+ 88.5	B+/B 87	B 85	B/B- 83	B- 81.5	B- /C+ 80
C+ 78.5	C+/C 77	C 75	C/C- 73	C- 71.5	C- /D+ 70
D+ 68.5	D+/D 67	D 65	D/D- 63	D- 61.5	D-/F 60

A+ 100-97	A 96.99-94	A- 93.99-90
B+ 89.99-87	B 86.99-84	B- 83.99-80
C+ 79.99-77	C 77.99-74	C- 73.99-70
D+ 69.99-67	D 66.99-63	D- 63.99-60

The numerical values for final letter grades are:

Participation (10%)

Your participation grade is based on how well you contributed to class discussions and activities and how often you attended class. I posted participation guidelines online to give you a rough sense of the standards for each grade.

Perusall (10%)

Your perusal grade is based on whether you completed the assigned reading and engaged in conversation on Perusall before class.

Purpose Projects (35%)

- Every week will include two purpose projects. You can choose which one to do.
- Your grade will consist in the top ten highest scores for your purpose project submissions.

Further instructions for this assignment are posted on Blackboard.

Essay (25%)

One of our goals in this course will be to further develop your writing abilities. Specifically, I want you to write the best paper you've ever written. For that reason, **You can rewrite your essay as many times as you want** for a higher grade, but I will only re-grade your essay once every two weeks. Further instructions for this assignment are posted on Blackboard.

The Ethics Project (20%)

The Registrar sets the final exam time and date. During the exam period, you or your group will present your ethics project.

Academic Integrity:

Students may not use course materials from previous versions of this course and students may not distribute the course materials without authorization.

Students must complete every assignment on their own with the exception of the Ethics Project.

Students must comply with the UR honor code.

Students may not submit work from previous courses for this course.

Materials:

All readings are on Perusall. You can print the readings and bring them to class. Laptops and iPads are not permitted in class without authorization.

This syllabus may be revised throughout the semester.