

FSHS 300 Topics: The Development of Ethical Reasoning In the Emergence of Caring and Integrity¹

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Charles A. Smith
R 343 Justin Hall
Phone: 532-5773
Email: casmith@ksu.edu

Catalog Description: The study of the developmental origins and evolution of ethical reasoning, caring, and integrity from early childhood to adulthood.

Expanded Description: Applying ethics in everyday life requires the ability to evaluate core principles of caring, do in-depth critical thinking, evaluate ambiguous and incomplete information, and to have the decision-making skills, willpower and integrity to implement moral choices. Ethical reasoning provides the foundation for moral citizenship in everyday behavior.

Required Texts

Charles Smith, *Raising Courageous kids: Eight steps to practical heroism* (Sorin Books, 2004).

Course goals

FSHS 300/708 Topics Ethical Reasoning In the Emergence of Caring and Integrity examines the origins of ethics, caring, and integrity in early childhood and their progression from those early stages through adulthood. The course will emphasize the application of course content to students' personal and professional lives. Students will learn:

1. The relationship between ethics, conscience, and integrity
2. The nature of ethical reasoning and decision-making
3. The developmental origins of ethics, conscience, and integrity
4. The neurophysiology of conscience
5. The relationship between integrity, responsibility, and accountability
6. The characteristics of sociopathic personalities and the "malignancy of malice"²

¹ The instructor would like to thank Sarah Archer, history instructor at KU, for her thoughts about creating an effective syllabus.

² Emmanuel Levinas, "Ethics and the Face," in Weston, A. *A 21st Century Ethical Toolbox*, pp. 130-133.

7. How to apply standards of caring and conscience to ethical dilemmas
8. To apply ethical principles and integrity to professional codes of conduct

Course websites

The *course Forum* is at KSOL. After registering for the course, you will be provided a link to the FSHS 300 KSOL website that provides contact with the instructor and other students through the Forum threads.

Content for the course can be found at:

<http://www.insightofcaring.com>

Look under the PUBS tab for primary videos, files and web links for each of the modules. Look under the VIDEOS tab for a separate single list of the primary module videos.

Important! Keep in mind that discussion is reserved for KSOL while content is available only at <http://www.insightofcaring.com>.

Course modules

This online course is designed around a series of ten modules. Most modules will consist of a short video and reference to online resources or the course text. The modules will be arranged in a logical order from the origins of ethical reasoning to the professional application of ethics.

Module 1 What is ethics?

What is "ethics" and the general approach to ethics in the course.

Module 2 Do animals have morality?

What can animal behavior tell us about human nature and what are its implications for ethical development?

Module 3 Is there a human nature?

What do infants teach us about human nature? Is human nature life affirming or life negating? Is human nature a blank slate?

Module 4 Origins of caring

How families invite children to care through attachment and compassionate relationships.

Module 5 Origins of conviction

How families shape core moral principles in their children through guidance and respect. How these core principles make a lifetime impact.

Module 6 The caring community

Beyond family: the responsibility of ethics for community development.

Module 7 Decision making and ethics

The relationship between ethical reasoning, intuition, and conscience: Introducing the ethical decision-making sequence.

Module 8 Willpower and emotion

Is self-restraint or emotional self-fulfillment the basis for ethical reasoning?
What is the importance of learning self-regulation in the management of fear?

Module 9 Courage and ethics

Courage is a critical element in ethical development. Making choices between either doing the right thing or choosing to avoid fear. The role of ethics in responding to bullying at school or the workplace.

Module 10 Does evil exist? The sociopathic personality

The origins of malevolence: Sociopathic personalities and the science of evil; can we mend broken hearts?

Course design

This is a true asynchronous course. Although course administration has to accommodate traditional semester periods, students are free to complete all course requirements according to their own personal schedule. Students can set their own pace to complete the 45-hour time investment and progression through the ten modules.

Each module includes a primary video, supportive resources links, readings from the textbook, and workbook entries. After completing the material for a module, students will participate in online forum discussion at the KSOL course website.

Course requirement summary

You can access the course forum through K-State Online and course content at <http://www.insightofcaring.com>.

1. Complete the ten course modules. This includes watching the videos and visiting the web links.
2. Make workbook entries for each module (for your own use).
2. Make the required number of *twenty* posts to the KSOL course Forum.

3. Submit an *Application Paper* (see Appendix 1) to the instructor within one week of the conclusion of the course. The purpose of the application paper is to apply course content to a profession chosen by the student.
4. Submit the take-home essay exam to the instructor by email or postal mail (same as address for paper) within one week of the conclusion of the course.
5. Complete a course evaluation within one week of the conclusion of the course.

Workbook

Your *Workbook* is a bridge between the online course content and your participation in the course Forum. You will not have to submit your workbook, **but your entries can be useful in your posts to the discussion forum.** The workbook is a personal resource you can reexamine in the future.

Grading

Forum messages (100 points)

Make a minimum of 20 posts at the *Discussion Forum* for the course at its KSOL website. The posts should be distributed across threads for all ten modules.

The instructor will grade each post on a 0-5 scale. You may post more than 20 times. *If so, your top twenty scored posts will be calculated.*

Courtesy posts (those of a very short nature that consist of a simple acknowledgment or question) will not be counted or included in the average.

How are messages graded?

The instructor will reply to every post with a comment and a 0-5 grade.

Your score will be *improved* (in order of their importance):

- If your response to another student's message contributes to the discussion
- If you are making a thoughtful, insightful analysis or contribution
- If your message shows insight into your personal experience, current events or books, movies, or news items

The point is to show that you are internalizing and digesting the information from your workbook, readings, video modules, and the online discussion, and then applying and relating that information to particular questions or comments.

Exceptional posts will receive one bonus point that will be added to the final total.

Your score will be *reduced*:

- If your posts are perfunctory and crammed into one or two days to “get it over with” (therefore, make posts over time to allow for discussion between you, the professor and other students)
- If your posts are unprofessional (misspelled words, Internet acronyms, or text abbreviations (wat u no lyk dis?))

Application paper (125 points)

See the appendix for criteria and scoring guidelines.

Note! Students must submit a proposal (a 1-page outline) and gain instructor approval before writing the paper. Such approval submissions are acceptable by email to casmith@ksu.edu.

Exam (25 points)

Ten (open book) short-answer essay questions.

Course evaluation

You must complete a course evaluation for grade to be submitted. I will not see your evaluations until grades are submitted.

The grade will be determined by multiplying the final tally of x/250 by four to receive a percentage. For example, receiving 90 (forum posts), 120 on Application Paper and 20 on the exam equals $230 \times 4 = 920 = 92\%$ (B). Remember that your top 20 graded posts are counted so keep track of your progress.

A = 94-100%

B = 80-93%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

Be attentive to grammar and spelling in your forum posts at all times and in your paper; developing good discipline as a writer now means that it will come naturally and effortlessly when college is over.

Bibliography

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Academic Honesty

Kansas State University has an Honor System based on personal integrity, which is presumed to be sufficient assurance that, in academic matters, one's work is performed honestly and without unauthorized assistance. Undergraduate and graduate students, by registration, acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Honor System. The policies and procedures of the Honor System apply to all full and part-time students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses on-campus, off-campus, and via distance learning. The honor system website can be reached via the following URL: www.k-state.edu/honor. A component vital to the Honor System is the inclusion of the Honor Pledge which applies to all assignments, examinations, or other course work undertaken by students. The Honor Pledge is implied, whether or not it is stated: "On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work." A grade of XF can result from a breach of academic honesty. The F indicates failure in the course; the X indicates the reason is an Honor Pledge violation.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who need classroom accommodations, access to technology, or information about emergency building/campus evacuation processes should contact the Student Access Center and/or their instructor. Services are available to students with a wide range of disabilities including, but not limited to, physical disabilities, medical conditions, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, depression, and anxiety. If you are a student enrolled in campus/online courses through the Manhattan or Olathe campuses, contact the [Student Access Center](http://www.k-state.edu/accesscenter) at accesscenter@k-state.edu, 785-532-6441;

for Salina campus, contact the [Academic and Career Advising Center](#) at acac@k-state.edu, 785-826-2649.

Expectations for Classroom Conduct

All student activities in the University, including this course, are governed by the [Student Judicial Conduct Code](#) as outlined in the Student Governing Association [By Laws](#), Article V, Section 3, number 2. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment may be asked to leave the class.

Appendix 1 Application Paper Guidelines

Timing

The instructor receives your paper within one week after you complete all modules, the twenty posts, and the take-home exam. Take into account mailing time to Olathe Kansas. This means you should be working on your paper during the course. Do not delay.

Length

The *Application Paper* should integrate both your views as well as reference to the text and other bibliographic references (review the bibliography below for suggested but not required reading). The paper should be at least 15 pages and double-spaced.

Style

APA or Chicago Manual of Style (consistency is critical)

Paper

8.5 x 11 white

Black print from quality inkjet or laser print

12 point font—Arial, Helvetica, or Times New Roman

1.25" margins top/bottom/sides

Stapled or spiral bound (must lay flat so no bulky 3-ring notebooks)

Topic Approval form as the first page

Topics

The application paper can consist of the study of ethics, integrity, or conscience (and possibly the importance of courage) and should apply course concepts to a profession of your choice. This profession could be a parent, teacher, coach, pastor, parent educator, youth worker, scientist, or some other profession of interest to you. The topic does not have to focus on young children. The paper should be original.

You must submit an *Application Paper Topic Approval* form (Appendix 2) at least three weeks before the conclusion of the semester. You may submit this information to the instructor at casmith@ksu.edu.

Topic examples:

- Philosophy and conscience: Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas
- Surveying attitudes of beliefs about human nature
- Conscience in the preschool classroom
- An ethical approach to statistical design
- Forgiveness and conscience
- Ethical reasoning in Sunday school
- Portrayals of conscience and integrity in children's literature
- Ethics, integrity, and leadership
- Courage and risk management in ethical decision making

- Character education in schools: does it have an ethical impact on students?
- Ethical dilemmas in the medical profession
- Does evil exist?
- Ethical challenges across the life span
- The challenges of ethics in sports

Submission

Mail the paper to:

Charles A. Smith, Ph.D.
15262 S. Greenwood St. Unit 2402
Olathe, Kansas 66062

Alternatively, you can email the paper as a .doc file to casmith@ksu.edu.

Grade criteria

The *Application Paper* is worth 0-125 points

80 points: Substance

Your paper will be evaluated for quality of reasoning, insight, and references. References can be from the course, the text, or from library books. Your paper should demonstrate creativity and be original. Your personal experiences could be relevant to the topic and serve as examples of the points you make but should not be the primary emphasis. Your paper should demonstrate your knowledge about ethics, caring, and integrity based on knowledge gained in the course.

20 points: Organization

Are the ideas assembled in an easy, logical style, with headings and subheadings that flow from one to another?

25 points: Quality of writing

Is there a consistency in style? Has the work been carefully proofed? Is it grammatically correct?

Return

I will return your paper with my comments if you include a self-addressed and stamped envelope with your submission.

Appendix 2 Application Paper Topic Approval³

Date:

Suggested title for paper

Brief summary of what I propose to examine

Student name

Instructor approval

Date

³ You may email the information approval to casmith@ksu.edu or by postal mail to his Olathe address (see address above)