Phil 1110: Ethics

Dr. Janzen

Fall 2016

**Experiments in Ethics**

**An Ongoing Project in Civic Engagement**

**Project Description**

This project is an investigation of the relationship between applied ethics and issues affecting the community in which we live. As we learn about ethics, you will explore various issues you feel passionate about and try to make changes in your own life and in the lives of those in your community. These experiments will take many forms and will be graded based on specific criteria for each experiment. However, the overarching goal of these experiments will be to find answers to this question: how can you make the world a more ethical place?

###### Project Objectives

* Make a difference.
* Engage the public in issues that are important to you.
* Connect ethical theories learned in class to your own life and the lives of other people.
* Learn some ways in which your own life and the lives of other people raise questions about the ethical theories learned in class.
* Learn more about the topics you are addressing, and be in a better position to have and defend your own views on these topics.
* Define, plan, and carry out social action and activities.
* Develop civic engagement and leadership skills.
* Practice your organizational skills and ability to delegate tasks.
* Attain experience and skills to act on social problems.

**Grading:**

1. Letter 5% of your final grade for the class

2. Personal Change Mini-Project 5% of your final grade for the class

3. Research an Organization 2.5% of your final grade for the class

4. Two Volunteer Activities 5% of your final grade for the class

5. Organize an Activity 10% of your final grade for the class

6. Two Small Experiments 5% of your final grade

7. Presentation to the class 2.5% of your final grade for the class

Experiments in Ethics (Total) 35% of your final grade for the class

**What will you do?**

This project consists of a series of activities that you will complete individually or in groups throughout the semester. Each experiment has different guidelines, and sometimes you can choose one experiment rather than another. Sometimes, we will start an experiment in class. Sometimes, you will start an experiment on your own and share it with the class. When you complete an experiment, it will be followed up with a reflection and, if appropriate, documentation of what you did. I will give you specific assignment requirements as the due dates approach. However, here is an overview of what you can expect to do this semester:

**1. Letter (5%)**

Writing letters can be a powerful way to get to the root cause of a problem. For this assignment, you will write a short letter to someone in power. I will give more specific guidelines for this experiment in class. You will write a draft, and we will go over it in class. You may be able to earn bonus points if you further revise your letter in light of my feedback and send it to the person in power.

* 9/15: Draft of your letter due in class
* 9/22: Completed letter uploaded to your electronic portfolio

**2. Personal Change Mini-Project—Cultivate a habit (5%)**

For this experiment, you will need to reflect about one aspect of your own character that you would like to change. For 7 days, you will try to cultivate a new habit (although—you should know—research shows you need 21 days to truly change a new habit). You will need to take pictures on at least 5 different days (showing the date by holding up your phone in the picture or taking a screenshot) to document what you did. If you can’t document your project—don’t do it! Is there a habit you would like to change? Think creatively!! You can eat vegetarian or vegan, do a helpful act each day, watch the news each day to learn about current events, practice gratitude, exercise more, complete environmental actions that help the earth, …or more! You will then write a reflection (see reflection guidelines) on this experiment, making sure to connect your reflection specifically with our readings on the ethics of virtue. Upload your reflection and any pictures/videos showing your work to your e-portfolio.

* Due: 9/29

**3. Research an Organization (2.5%)**

Compare one organization you are familiar with (for example, your place of worship) with one of the organizations on Singer’s list (<http://www.thelifeyoucansave.org/Causes>). Be sure to indicate which organization you think people should donate to. Write a reflection comparing these organizations. Be sure to draw explicitly on our readings related to Peter Singer.

* Due 11/1

**4. Volunteer Activities (5%)**

You must volunteer your time and energy to a group that makes change in our world (either by doing charity or seeking justice). You are asked to volunteer a minimum of 4 hours in total, and I encourage you to pick 2 different locations at which to volunteer your time and talents. If you are currently volunteering somewhere, please speak to me or the CE mentor about whether or not this would work for our class. You will provide documentation (pictures, videos, and/or signed confirmation by the organization) that verify you have completed your volunteer work (however, please do not upload pictures of those who have not consented and minors or vulnerable adults without their permission).

You will also write a reflection about each volunteer activity (see reflection guidelines). These reflections will help you connect your time volunteering with the theoretical ideas we are discussing in our class. Feel free to work with other students in the class and participate in other students’ “organize an Activity” events as volunteers!

* 2 Deadlines: 10/18 and 12/13 (½ of the class will do each date—we will sign up for dates at the beginning of the semester) You must stick to the deadline that you signed up for.

**5. Organize an Activity (can be done individually or in groups of 2-4) (10%)**

What would you like to do to make the world a more ethical place? This is your chance to organize an action to make a positive change in our world. Here are some ideas: collect shoes for people who are experiencing homelessness, organize your own Giving Game (do a search online for guidelines), give out leaflets to people about an issue you feel strongly about (organizations will often happily mail you free pamphlets), organize a vegan food giveaway or bakeoff, organize a volunteer opportunity (think about Feed My starving Children), organize a small fundraiser, or teach kids a new skill. For many more ideas, see the website: [www.engagedphilosophy.com](http://www.engagedphilosophy.com)/project

* 2 weeks before your deadline: Meet with the CE mentor to go over your plan (see worksheet to help you think about this)
* Provide documentation of your activity (by making a one-minute video). You may also wish to include posters, emails, FB, Twitter, Instagram, or other media about your activity.
* You will present your work to the class by showing your video and answering questions.
* 2 Deadlines: 10/18 and 12/13 (½ of the class will do each date—we will sign up for dates at the beginning of the semester) You must stick to the deadline that you signed up for. These are the deadlines for when you will TURN in your reflection and documentation. But, you will sign up for a week in which you will try to hold your event.

**6. Small experiments (You choose 2—can be done individually or in groups of 2-4)) (2.5% x 2= 5%)**

As we progress through the semester, we will start many activities in class that you can then polish, and complete as small experiments. However, I also want to give you the freedom to explore what “civic engagement” means to you. So, you may select 2 of the following. You can work on them individually or in groups of 2-4. You will have 2 different deadlines at which time you will turn in a reflection. I will also give more directions on specific options in class. If you have creative ways in which to complete these experiments, please discuss your ideas with me.

At the top of your reflection paper, type (or copy and paste) the prompt you chose. Do not count the prompt towards your total word count.

* First Small Experiment due: 10/18
* Second Small Experiment due: 12/13

**Reflection Grading Rubric and Explanation**

In your Experiments in Ethics assignments, you can find information regarding specific guidelines for each experiment. Here are some general guidelines that each reflection should contain. For each reflection you should answer these general questions:

* **What did you do?**
* **How does what you did relate to course materials?**
* Your answer should be a minimum of 300 words and no more than 500 words. Include a word count at the end of your initial post.
* An “A” reflection will be between 300-500 words. But, it will not be full of filler/fluff. Your reflection will be concise but also in depth. It will also contain no grammar errors and be written clearly. Please use single spaced, double sided printing to help our environment.
* Draw from our text and reading, using quotes and showing your knowledge of the readings. You can give page numbers from the text, and if you use any additional sources (which is not required), you should give a full citation.
* An “A” reflection will do more than just quote the text. It will create connections between course materials. It will provide clear analysis of course materials explaining in your own words what textual support means.

In short, “A” reflections exceed my basic expectations and are exceptional.

* The author’s own analysis and ideas are original, clear, relevant, well-organized, and substantial.
* The author correctly uses a number of relevant and instances of textual support (including page numbers from the text).
* The author makes unique and sophisticated connections between the course materials and the assignment.
* The reflection is completed with exceptional insight with no noticeable lapses throughout.
* The reflection provides a clean read that is completely free of distracting errors.

A “B” reflection is strong with a few lapses.

* The author’s own analysis and ideas are clear, relevant, well-organized, and substantial with only minor lapses.
* The author correctly uses relevant instances of textual support (including page numbers from the text).
* The question is fully answered with great insight with only minor lapses for any single point.
* The reflection provides a clean read that is free of distracting errors.

A “C” reflection has as many strengths as weaknesses.

* The author’s own analysis and ideas are noticeable but not substantial.
* The author correctly uses the expected portion of textual support (although page numbers may be missing) and the assignment has the expected word count.
* The reflection attempts to address the assignment but the attempt is not entirely correct, clear, well-organized, or substantial.
* The reflection exhibits a few errors that are distracting.

A “D” reflection has weaknesses that begin to overwhelm strengths.

* The author’s own analysis and ideas are limited or not consistent.
* The author uses minimal textual support (although page numbers may be missing) or does not connect the textual support well to the assignment.
* The reflection attempts to address the assignment requirements but it is unconvincing, unclear, not well-organized or/and not substantial.
* The reflection has numerous distracting errors.

An “F” reflection does not offer enough to effectively evaluate, is off-topic, or is late

* The author’s own ideas and analysis are not evident or insubstantial in quality or quantity.
* The author does not use any meaningful textual support or uses this incorrectly.
* The reflection does not address the assignment or does not do so in an adequate enough amount to assess.
* The reflection has numerous distracting errors.

OR

The reflection is late. Note that a late reflection is still worth turning in. You can earn up to 50% on the assignment, which is much better than 0%.

**Electronic Portfolios (e-portfolio)**

**How do I make an electronic portfolio?**

Creating your own e-portfolio may seem scary at first. So, my best advice is to be confident—lots of students have done this and you can too!

**Follow these electronic portfolio instructions:**

1. You must have a gmail account. If you don’t have one, create one. Remember your password.

2. Follow this link to a template for your e-portfolio:

<https://sites.google.com/site/experimentsinethicstemplatef16/>

3. At the top of the screen, you will see a blue text box. It says “This site is in the Template Gallery. Any changes you make will be visible to all users. Use this template.”

4. Click the underlined words “Use this template”

5. You will now be redirected to a site that allows you to create your own site.

* First, name your site. You will type in the title of your site. This is the title as it appears on your page—so use spaces and capital letters.
* Stay on the page!!
* Scroll down and pick a theme that matches the goals of your project.
* You can also “select more options” and give your site a description.
* Now, select “save page”

6. Google will now create your e-portfolio.

* Right now, it has all the words I typed in.
* To edit your page, select the **pencil icon** in the right corner.
* The **wheel icon** helps you manage your page.
* You’ll need to copy your edited and completed parts of the Experiments in Ethics and paste them into the correct page.
* DO NOT ADD ATTACHMENTS!
* Be sure to add your photos and videos. Follow the directions on the assignment sheet.
* Delete the Technical Help tab when you are done.

7. Need help?

* Ask the CE Mentor or Mo
* Check out this site:<https://sites.google.com/site/amslerclassroom/the-basics>
* More examples at: <http://www.engagedphilosophy.com/project/>