Philosophy, Ethics, and Education

Credit hours: 3.0 - (graduate)  
Course Number: ED 5010

Instructor: Dr. Kimberly Williams  
Office Location: available online  
Office and/or Online Availability  
PSU E-mail: kmwilliams3@plymouth.edu  
Term and Year: Fall 2013

Course Delivery (Times, Days and Locations, and/or Online in Moodle, including information for access to and expectations in Moodle):

Online in Moodle—this course is asynchronous—students are expected to post assignments and respond to peers a minimum of 2 times per week. This course does not have regularly scheduled online meeting times, but students are expected to read posts daily. Download the syllabus from the syllabus link and go to the discussion forum for regular posting of papers/assignments. Much of the course content is located on the main page as you log into the Moodle class page. Please be sure to check Moodle regularly and examine the links within each module.

Instructions for Online/Moodle part of the course:

1. Please use the syllabus as your guide to papers and assignments. It spells out what is due when.
2. Below are some general rules:
   a. As a general rule, please try to post papers by Sunday at midnight EST
   b. Please try to post your review/reflection/discussion/responses of your classmates’ papers or discussion postings for a given discussion week no later than Wednesday the following week by midnight EST.
   c. Comment/reply publicly to at least 2 of your classmates’ papers.
   d. I am pretty flexible about these times, but for those of you needing structure, these serve as a guide as long as you do not get more than a couple of days behind your classmates. It is VERY difficult to get caught up as this class moves very quickly!
3. On Moodle, you will be checking the discussion forums regularly:
   a. You will check the board regularly for postings and respond to discussions you feel compelled to join
   b. My comments are designed for EVERYONE to read. Much like in a class discussion, my comments are meant to facilitate learning for everyone. Please do read all postings.
   c. The expectation is that every week/module, you will post a minimum of 2 public responses to your classmates’ papers/thoughts/blogs/discussion forum postings.
d. I will be grading your papers on the assignment board—only you can see my reviews and those of your classmates—please post papers on both the discussion forums as well as the “assignments” space so we can all learn from each others’ papers and I can privately grade each of your papers.

e. If you have any “private questions” please email me at kmwilliams3@plymouth.edu, but if you have a general question or comment post it in the section called “announcements”

4. For videos and other supplemental material:
   a. The expectation is that you will be reviewing the content in the learning modules for each week/module. Failure to incorporate the content of the modules into your papers every other week will result in your paper grade being reduced.
   b. The content in the learning modules will require that you are able to stream video and audio online. If you have an issue with technology, you may want to see if you can gain access through your school and watch clips together. Generally folks do not have a problem with the audio and video clips.

5. Have fun—this course is really about you and your own learning in ways that are meaningful and connect to your classroom practice. I hope that we will have a lot of lively on-line discussions that really help inform your own learning and reflection on your practice in the classroom.

Catalog Description

A study of the historical, philosophical, and social philosophical foundations of education. Emphasis placed upon the ideas of the classical, medieval, Enlightenment and post-enlightenment periods that have influenced types of American educational systems relative to their mission and purpose. Analysis of how these systems have defined ethics and the characteristics of the virtuous person.

Course Overview

Essential Questions:

What are some of the controversial historical and contemporary ethical issues that face educators today?

What are some of the models for dealing with ethical dilemmas in education?
What are the historical and philosophical foundations of educational ideas and practices in the United States today?

What are some of the major issues and areas of conflict and controversy in American education, historically and in the present day?

Who are the major philosophers contributing to our modern day ways of thinking about education and what were/are their perspectives?

Textbook List/Bibliography/Recommended Reading/Resources

Required Texts:


Please make sure you get the most recent and expanded edition.

Be sure to get the most recent edition as much has changed since the last one.
Justice Talking Website with Shows on Controversial Education Topics
http://www.justicetalking.org/ShowArchive.aspx

Nel Noddings Ethics of Care. Article available at
http://www.infed.org/thinkers/noddings.htm

Recommended (but not required) additional readings. But if you didn’t take an undergraduate philosophy course or would like a refresher on the famous philosophers, their time periods and philosophies take a look at one of these:


*Articles and readings will be made available on Moodle*

*Here is a good FREE place to start: [http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/education-philosophy/](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/education-philosophy/)*

**Professional Standards, Course Goals/Objectives, and Assessment Objectives:**

While successfully completing this course, you will:

* Examine ethical dilemmas in education using models for addressing them.*
✓ Describe some ways for preparing future generations of youth to ethically engage into a global marketplace.
✓ Gain an appreciation of the interrelationships of ethics, philosophy, culture, and the purpose and content of education throughout history into the present day;
✓ Apply the philosophical foundations of education to the ideas and practices of the United States today;
✓ Discuss some of the major controversial issues and areas of conflict in American education, both historically and in the present day;
✓ Reflect on the purpose of education including what it means to be an ethical professional educator today

Content of Course Which Addresses Technological Standards/Competence

Students must engage with the Moodle software and online environment, streaming videos and posting electronically.

Evaluation Plan/Grading Scale

Course Requirements and Assessment:

Assignment 1: Philosophers (20 points)

Who are the key philosophers in Education? Find 2 of the most influential philosophers from the classical, medieval, Enlightenment and post-enlightenment periods and two from the present day (10 total) who have influenced American educational systems relative to their mission and purpose. Analyze how these philosophers may have defined ethics and the characteristics of the virtuous person. Defend why you chose this person, what their influences were in Education, and his/her views on what it means to be a virtuous person. (One paragraph on each addressing these issues AND include your sources of...
information and why you think these sources are credible. There are multiple sources of credible information on the Internet, the challenge is to figure out which ones are credible and which ones aren’t. This will require some research and reflection upon what constitutes “credible information.”

There are a couple of good places to start:


Some of the philosophers pictured on this syllabus are fair game (although do try to branch out) and here is a non-exhaustive list of suggestions in alphabetical order:


**Assignment 2: Controversies in Education and Contemporary Philosophers (20 points)**

Choose what you consider to be the 10 most significant controversies/conflicts presented in Noll and write the following in a paragraph for each one:

1. Why did this controversy make your “Top 10 list?”
2. What are the key arguments on each side
3. Then choose what you consider to be the most important/significant issue/controversy/conflict facing education and explain the following:
   a. Why do you consider this to be the most significant?
   b. What do you think 2 of your philosophers (from assignment 1) might argue on this issue?
   c. Find one research article (where the authors conducted a study about the topic) OR listen to the “Justice Talking” segment (if there is one) on this topic and include this with your discussion.
**Assignment 3: Ethical decision-making in Education (20 points)**

Describe and carefully define the key characteristics (e.g., justice, care, critique and profession) of the Shapiro and Stefkovich model and apply it to what you consider to be the most compelling ethical dilemma in each chapter in Part II. Be sure to incorporate aspects from the other dilemmas in the chapter into your discussion. (CHOOSE ONE FROM EACH CHAPTER TO EXAMINE IN DEPTH—BE SURE TO APPLY THEIR MODEL).

**Final Educational Philosophy Statement (20 points)**

Read and consider chapter 11 in Shapiro and Stefkovich carefully and consider your own views on education and what has shaped them. Consider all of the key ideas you’ve read about and written about throughout this course and craft your own personal education philosophy statement. This should be about 2-3 pages long and describe what you consider to be the major issues facing education today, your views on how best to approach these issues, grounded in the readings and course content.

*I would like you to self-assess your performance on this task. How many points do you think it deserves out of 20 points? Why? Be sure to consider the aspects of the assignment. I do not have a rubric for this assignment because I want to allow the flexibility for you to explore aspects of your own philosophy you find most compelling. However, I do ask that you try to incorporate key ideas from the course as much as possible and your ability to do that should be considered for part of your assessment.*

*PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THIS IS WORTH 20% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE, SO PLEASE MAKE YOUR WORK AND EFFORT REFLECT THAT.*

**Online discussion and participation (ongoing) (20 points)**

This course takes place exclusively online using the moodle discussion feature. There are 8 weeks of intense work to complete this course. The expectation is that you will check the postings daily and respond with substantive reactions to at least 2 postings per week (sometimes 3) for a total of at least 20 responses/reflections for the term (1 point each).

1 point=reflection/response/reaction shows a depth of analysis and consideration of the content covered in the readings

.5 point=reflection/response/reaction is thoughtful but lacks consideration of the reading content

0=no response
RUBRICS AND GRADING

Just so there is no “mystery” to my grading/assessment in this course I have developed very detailed rubrics. You may use these same rubrics to “self-assess” your performance in this class.

Rubric for Assignment 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Philosophers</th>
<th>Credible evidence</th>
<th>Influence on education</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classical</td>
<td>Chooses 2 seminal philosophers from the period and makes the case for each ___/2</td>
<td>Provides credible evidence from credible sources and cites appropriately ___/1</td>
<td>Makes a good case for why this person is important by explaining clearly the impact on education ___/1</td>
<td>___/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medieval</td>
<td>Chooses 2 seminal philosophers from the period and makes the case for each ___/2</td>
<td>Provides credible evidence from credible sources and cites appropriately ___/1</td>
<td>Makes a good case for why this person is important by explaining clearly the impact on education ___/1</td>
<td>___/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightenment</td>
<td>Chooses 2 seminal philosophers from the period and makes the case for each ___/2</td>
<td>Provides credible evidence from credible sources and cites appropriately ___/1</td>
<td>Makes a good case for why this person is important by explaining clearly the impact on education ___/1</td>
<td>___/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Enlightenment</td>
<td>Chooses 2 seminal philosophers from the period and makes the case for each ___/2</td>
<td>Provides credible evidence from credible sources and cites appropriately ___/1</td>
<td>Makes a good case for why this person is important by explaining clearly the impact on education ___/1</td>
<td>___/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary</td>
<td>Chooses 2 seminal philosophers from the period and makes the case for each ___/2</td>
<td>Provides credible evidence from credible sources and cites appropriately ___/1</td>
<td>Makes a good case for why this person is important by explaining clearly the impact on education ___/1</td>
<td>___/4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total ___/20
### Rubric for assignment 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2 points</th>
<th>3 points</th>
<th>4 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Includes 10</td>
<td>Fewer than 7</td>
<td>7-9 included</td>
<td>All 10 are included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation of why chosen</td>
<td>Fair explanation lacking supportive details</td>
<td>Solid explanation of why controversy was chosen</td>
<td>Strong explanation of why each controversy was chosen—why this is a significant issue today—using supportive evidence from reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key arguments on each side of controversy</td>
<td>Lacks good supportive evidence</td>
<td>Some supportive evidence—lacking important points from one side</td>
<td>Supportive evidence for both sides included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most significant issue discussion</td>
<td>Lacking solid explanation of supportive evidence</td>
<td>Supportive research or evidence is minimally included</td>
<td>Includes additional research and/or Justice Talking segment, Gives solid explanation why this is the most significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophers’ reactions to the issue</td>
<td>Provides minimal perspectives from philosophers</td>
<td>Provides some perspectives from philosophers</td>
<td>Provides accurate representation of 2 philosophers’ views on the most significant topic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assignment 3 Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2 points</th>
<th>3 points</th>
<th>4 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describes the model</td>
<td>Gives a very brief overview of model</td>
<td>Gives a limited explanation of the model</td>
<td>Gives a thorough explanation of the model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explains most compelling ethical dilemma in each chapter (x2=8 possible points for this)</td>
<td>Provides most compelling dilemma but lacks explanation or lacks 2 or more</td>
<td>Provides most compelling dilemma, lacks some supportive details or lacks one for each chapter</td>
<td>Provides most compelling dilemma in each chapter in section 2 and why s/he found it most compelling with supportive details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applies the model to the dilemma</td>
<td>Applies model to some dilemmas</td>
<td>Applies model to nearly all dilemmas</td>
<td>Applies model to each one to contemplate the best ethical course of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates to other dilemmas in the chapter</td>
<td>Relates only a few ideas from other dilemmas of the chapter</td>
<td>Incorporates good ideas from other ethical dilemmas—lacking some key ideas</td>
<td>Incorporates ideas from other ethical dilemmas in the chapter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All assignments combine to total 100 possible points. The final grade will be computed as follows. Out of 100 points:

A=96-100
A-=90-95
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D=67-69
D-=64-66
F=below 64

Course Timeline

The course timeline is structured as follows (Note that there are weeks of flexibility built in to take as needed):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks 1 and 2: Starts September 1</th>
<th>Introductions and start reading and taking notes and writing paper 1—post responses to introductions, any questions, comments, reflections on the reading and audio/video clips in Moodle to discussion forum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 3: Starts September 15</td>
<td><strong>Paper 1 is due September 17</strong> by midnight posted to the discussion forum and the assignments page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4: Starts September 22</td>
<td>Respond to at least 2 papers on the discussion forum— the paper posted right before yours and the paper posted right after yours so that everyone has comments. Start reading next book (Noll) and post any comments, questions, etc. about that book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5: Starts September 29</td>
<td>Continue reading and working on paper 2—post any comments/questions/thoughts on readings and other material on Moodle so far</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Week 6: Starts October 5    | **Paper 2 is due October 7**
Respond to at least 2 papers on the discussion forum— the paper posted right before yours and the paper posted right after yours so that everyone has comments. |
| Week 7: Starts October 12   | Start reading next book (Shapiro and Stekovich) and post any comments, questions, etc. about that book. |
| Week 8: Starts October 19   | Continue reading and thinking about paper 3—post any comments/questions to additional materials posted to moodle |
| Week 9: Starts October 26   | **Paper 3 due October 28** |
| Week 10 November 3          | Comment on your classmates’ third paper. Continue to develop your final paper. Respond to at least 2 papers on the discussion forum— the paper posted right before yours and the paper posted right after yours so that everyone has comments. |
| Week 11 November 10         | Final paper due November 12 (at the latest) |
| Week 12 November 17         | All final postings—course is concluded |
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

You are expected to access the course web site at least once daily for updates, assignments, discussions, feedback, and resources. You should use the course web site and/or e-mail to communicate with me and with each other. If you are unable to download materials from the course or other web sites, you are expected to communicate that to me as soon as possible.

It is your responsibility to seek help if you are having trouble understanding the material. Don’t be afraid to ask for help—that is the mark of a responsible learner! I am here to facilitate your learning. I am available online via email or the announcements features, and I will also be happy to speak with you on the phone if necessary. If you are a student with disabilities and have any special needs for accommodations, please contact me privately via email—thanks.

You are expected to abide by Plymouth State University’s Academic Integrity policy, outlined in the university catalog. If you have questions and/or need clarification regarding academic integrity, please ask. Violations of the academic integrity policy will not be tolerated.
Pictured throughout this document are some famous educational philosophers—past and present—can you identify them and the period during which they were influential?