

Phil 2200: Ethics
Spring 2014
Drafts: 3 x 20= 60 points
Final: 5 x 40= 200 points

Civic Engagement Project and Grading Rubric
Due: April 28th, 2014

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 pick an issue you feel passionate about and try to make a change in the lives of those in your community. How can you work on making the world a better place?

You will write a draft of the project introduction, and at that time (or before) I will let you know if your project is appropriate for our class. Don't overestimate how much work you can get done, but try to pick something interesting and challenging. You may work in a group or alone. And remember that I am here to help you accomplish your goals.

Pick a project that:

- you can work on during the time this class is in session
- shows that you can take initiative
- shows that you have (or are working on your) organizational skills
- allows you to use campus and/or community resources to accomplish your goals
- impacts others
- allows you to **get something done, to make a difference. This is NOT a research project.**

Time

This project is worth a large portion of your grade. I expect you to be working on it throughout the semester. You should expect to work about two hours each week on this project (about 15-20 hours total). You may work in groups, but groups will be expected to accomplish more and have a more complete portfolio. You will need to pick a project that you are passionate about, or this project will be very difficult for you.

Project Objectives

- Make a difference.
- Engage the public in an issue that is important to you.
- Learn some ways in which the ethical theories learned in class relate 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 topic you are addressing, and be in a better position to have and defend your own views on this topic.
- Take a project from start to finish: 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.

Ideas for Projects

Students have done a variety of projects. The most important thing is that you do something you feel passionate about. This is an opportunity for you to make the world a better place. Here are some successful past projects:

- Build a trailer for aluminum can recycling at a church.
- Plan a fun activity to build community (for example, a Dodge ball tournament, Fourth of July party, community garden). This could be in your neighborhood, community center, building association, or place of worship.

- Plan a party or event to raise money for a cause you want to support. (For example, plan a pancake breakfast and charge friends \$3 each. You could donate the money to support a group working to end discrimination).
- Work with a pro-life or pro-choice group (or any cause you pick) to lobby for your cause.
- Plan a neighborhood, school, or community coat and mitten drive.
- Work with your child's school to volunteer in the classroom. Work with your child's Parent/Teacher Association to help the school.
- Go Green: start a carpool, start a bike group, or develop systems within your own house (or workplace) to live (or work) in a more environmentally sound way. Go beyond simply recycling at home.
- Start an activity group at a local nursing home as a way to help residents be more active and engaged with others.
- Start a letter writing campaign to a store or a politician about an issue you care about. For example, join activists who are pressuring Gap to adopt safety standards in factories after the building collapse in Bangladesh. Or, get a group together to write your legislators about gun control or preserving gun ownership.

Project Portfolio

The main purpose of the portfolio is to help you document what your project is about, what steps you took when you worked on it, and apply our in-class learning to your work. Your final portfolio will include all the following materials in this order and be turned in on July 17th :

- **Title and Your Name(s)**
- **Introduction (from Ch 1& 4)** **Draft due date: 2/10**
 - Give a summary of your project. Describe what you plan to do and what you hope to accomplish.
 - Give some background or factual information to explain the importance of your project. Why should someone else care about your project? How does your project affect others? How could it make the world a better place?
 - How is your project related to ethics? Here, you need to define ethics. Look up what Weston says. Now, think about what you believe "ethics" is all about. **Explain how your project is related to ethics as you define it.**
 - What ethical values do you hope your project demonstrates? Be sure to explain what ethical values are. **Explain why these values are related to your project and why they are important to you.**
- **Research (from Ch 9 &13)** **Draft due date: 3/5**
 - Here, you should begin to think about the logistics of your project and how you will actually do it. You should research what other people have done in similar situations. You will need to include citations and sources. You can use any style of citation, but you must include them for full points. This means you need to do real research rather than just asking friends. You may use online sources like websites or blogs, but be careful (see page 240 of your text).
 - Analyze how what others have done is related to what you want to do. For example, if you don't have as much time or resources, how can you be successful in your plan?
 - How can you open up possibilities in your project? Show that you are thinking creatively. For example, work on getting a fuller picture of the problem on which you are working (see page 344 of your text).
 - How will your project make the world a better place?

➤ **Theoretical Applications** (from Ch 5-9) Draft due date: 4/7

- Pick **one** ethical theory that we have studied in class (Kantian Ethics, Utilitarianism, Virtue Ethics, Care Ethics) and explain how it relates to your project. Once you pick the ethical theory, use the questions below as a guide.
 - **Kantian Ethics** promotes respecting people (not treating them as a means) and doing actions that everyone can do (not making an exception for yourself or treating yourself as special).
 - In your project, how are you showing respect for others? Did you inadvertently treat anyone merely as a means? For example, did you treat someone as a way to gain skills or get a better grade or even to feel good about yourself rather than meet another's needs?
 - How are you doing something everyone could do? Are you making an exception of yourself? Are you tempted to do something because you believe the ends justify the means? For example, did you violate a rule about noise because you wanted to have a concert to raise money for your cause? Did you lie or exaggerate to make your project sound better?
 - Evaluate the demands of Kantian ethics and how your project measures up to these demands. What more could you do either now or in the future?
 - **Utilitarian Ethics** asks us to create the greatest good for the greatest number over the long term.
 - In your project, how are you maximizing happiness for the greatest number? Explain how many people you hope to impact with your project.
 - How does your project create happiness not just in the short term, but also in the long term?
 - What might be some harm that happens as a result of your project? For example, if you have an event, could it create environmental harm by making trash? Or, if you send food to another country, could it create dependence or lower food values in that country?
 - Do you feel you are doing more good than harm? Why or why not?
 - Utilitarians are demanding. They want to create the **most** good. Have you done this? Why or why not? What limited you from doing more? Was it partly your own selfish desires? Explain.
 - **Virtue Ethics** promotes the development of a character and habits that embody certain virtues.
 - What virtues does your project help you develop? Be sure to define the virtues you mention and explain how they are developed. Do these virtues help you or others or both? Could others develop virtues through your work?
 - What habits are you cultivating? Or, is this just a one time activity? What more could you do to create a habit?
 - Has your character changed or is it in process of changing?
 - Are you falling short of really changing yourself or others? Why or why not?
 - If you put in more effort, could you develop more virtues or habits?
 - **Care Ethics** promotes attention to the creation of new relationships as well as existing relationships. It promotes attention to our community and the value of caring.
 - Are you developing relationships through your work on this project? Are these relationships with others like you or with a diverse group of people? Are you developing relationships with those your project aims to help? Why or why not?
 - In Care Ethics, all relationships are important. How does this project impact your existing relationships? For example, does it involve your family or

friends? Do they enjoy the project or resent it? How are you sharing information about your project?

- How does your project manifest care? For whom are you caring? Is your care genuine or is it forced? For example, if you are working with homeless people, is it hard to actually care for the individuals themselves? If you work with someone difficult, do you really *care* about that person?
- What does it mean to care? Do you have to *like* someone to *care* for that person?
- Are you meeting the demands of Care Ethics? Are you taking all relationships seriously and considering the community with care?

➤ Actions Taken

- Use bullet points to list all the steps you took. Be sure to explain what each step entailed. For example, don't just list "asked my friends to help" as one of your actions. Explain how you contacted your friends, who specifically you asked, and who ended up helping. Give details.
- Remember that many projects run into "dead ends", despite lots of hard work. Explain why or why not something you tried worked or didn't turn out as you had planned.
- During our class, we defined charity as "meeting the direct needs of others." We also defined justice as "working to change the root source of the problem."
 - What actions did you take to affect the community?
 - Did your actions make a difference in the lives of those around you by doing charity? Why or why not?
 - Did you get at the root of the problem by doing justice? If so, which actions did you take to do justice? If not, why not?
 - How could your project be changed so it included aspects of both justice and charity?
- Be sure I understand everything you have done. Show me that you worked hard on your project. **I should be able to tell from looking at your list how you spent 15-20 hours working on this project.** This should be one of the *last* things you write up.

➤ Accomplishments

- First, in two or three sentences, *summarize* what your project was, how much time you spent, and what you accomplished. Here's an example for you to follow:
I spent about 40 hours working with middle school students to do an energy audit of their school. The students found leaky windows and broken thermometers. We found out that fixing these would save the school \$30,000 over 5 years.*
- Second, *reflect* on your experience with your civic engagement project, answering the following questions (not necessarily in this order):
 - Review the project objectives (see below). Which objectives did you reach or make progress toward? Which did you not reach or make progress toward? Carefully explain your answers.
 - Did your project accomplish what you hoped for? Explain.
 - What would you do differently next time?
 - What would you recommend to others if they wanted to continue your project?
 - Should I assign civic engagement projects again?
 - Project Objectives:
 - Make a difference.
 - Engage the public in an issue that is important to you.
 - Learn some ways in which the ethical theories learned in class relate 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 topic you are addressing, and be in a better position to have and defend your own views on this topic.
- Take a project from start to finish: 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.

Important Details:

- Each section should be at least 1-2 double spaced pages (12 point font).
- Draft due dates:
 - Draft of Introduction: Due 2/10
 - Draft of Research: Due 3/5
 - Draft of Theoretical Applications: Due 4/7
- After you turn in a draft, I expect you to revise that section based on the feedback I give you. Each draft is worth 20 points.
- The final Civic Engagement Project is due April 28th. It will include the revised drafts (1.Introduction, 2.Research, 3.Theoretical Applications) as well as the last two sections mentioned here: 4. Actions Taken and 5. Results and Reflections. The final versions of the five parts of the project will be worth 40 points each for a total of 200 points.
- You will create an efolio to display your final project. In order to get an A, you will need to create a video and include pictures of your project.

Tips for Good Writing

- Proofread and edit your papers. In addition to spellchecking your writing, ask a trusted friend to see if your writing makes sense. Or better yet, visit the Learning Center on campus for help.
- Find your voice. Don't try to write in a fancy way using big or complicated words. Use your "natural" voice. (But be careful **not** to write too casually using texting abbreviations!!)
- Be honest. If something you tried didn't work, say so. You will not be graded on your "success" but rather on your writing and your effort.
- If you need help writing, get it. You know you have a big project due at the end of the semester. You also have chances to draft parts of your paper. Don't leave this to the last minute. Turn in quality work. If you need help to do this, plan ahead and give yourself plenty of time to visit the LRC or Writing Center.

Learning Resource Center

Brooklyn Park Campus

Room G241

Monday-Thursday 8am - 6pm

Friday 8am - 4:30pm

763-488-2451

Learning Resource Center

Eden Prairie Campus

Room E150

Monday-Thursday 8:00am - 5pm

952-995-1548

Civic Engagement Project Portfolio Rubric

1. Title and Your Name(s) (no points)

2. Introduction	Possible	Earned
a. Summary of Project	8	_____
b. Background/ importance of project	8	_____
c. How is the project related to ethics?	8	_____
d. Ethical values related to project	8	_____
e. Writing/clarity	8	_____
Total:	40	_____
3. Research		
a. Facts and figures related to your project	8	_____
b. Who is affected by your project and what have others done?	8	_____
c. How your project makes the world better and opening possibilities	8	_____
d. Sources/citations included	8	_____
e. Writing/clarity	8	_____
Total:	40	_____
4. Theoretical Applications		
a. Shows understanding of theory	10	_____
b. Applies theory to project	10	_____
c. Honest examination/analysis	10	_____
d. Writing/clarity	10	_____
Total:	40	_____
5. Actions Taken		
a. Explains actions taken to complete project	10	_____
b. Explains how actions relate to justice/charity	10	_____
c. Shows that you have worked hard	10	_____
d. Writing/clarity	10	_____
Total:	40	_____
6. Results and Evaluation		
a. Summary of Project	10	_____
b. Skills developed	10	_____
c. What you learned/ reflections	10	_____
d. Writing/clarity	10	_____
Total:	40	_____
Portfolio Total:	200	_____

Notes: