

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

New “Graduate Course Proposal from the Department of Communication Studies”

Establishment of a Graduate Course in Communication Studies, COMM 6103
Communication Ethics

A. Proposal Summary and Catalog Copy

1. Summary

The Communication Studies Graduate Program proposes to add a graduate level class “Communication Ethics” The class will be a required course in the M.A. in Communication Studies Program.

2. Proposed Catalog Copy

COMM 6103. Communication Ethics (3G). Discussion and analysis of inherently ethical elements of communication praxis in public, community, institutional and organizational domains. Exploration of practical, philosophical and theoretical concerns that affect everyday matters of moral choice and judgment. (*Spring*).

B. Justification

1. This will be a required course in the M.A. in Communication Studies program. Specific coursework in communication ethics will strengthen graduates of the program by systematically investigating the relationship between the practice of communication and ethical decision-making. The issue of communication ethics transcends contextual boundaries within the discipline, and the specific study of communication ethics will provide students with a stronger introduction to the graduate study of the field.
2. No prerequisites. Graduate Standing.
3. Students earning a M.A. degree in Communication Studies should have a strong theoretical foundation leading to disciplinary mastery. This course will better prepare Communication Studies graduate students for advanced graduate work or practice in their respective fields.
4. The proposed course will improve the scope and quality of the offerings in the Communication Studies M.A. program by providing a comprehensive curriculum with disciplinary breadth and depth. The course proposed is of interest to Communication Studies students representing a range of specializations. Additionally, this curriculum change aligns our graduate program more competitively with our aspirant, as well as peer programs.

5. By adding this course, we are aligning our curriculum to reflect courses in the broader communication studies discipline.

C. Impact.

1. The proposed course will regularly serve graduate students enrolled in the M.A. in Communication Studies program. It will be a required course in that curriculum.
2. The course will be offered yearly.
3. It will not affect the content or frequency of other course offerings.
4. This proposal will increase the number of required course currently offered for the M.A. in Communication Studies.
 - a. We anticipate 10-12 students to be enrolled per section.
 - b. It will have a minimal effect on the enrollment of other courses.
 - c. The course has not been taught as a topics course.
 - d. The course will be a required course for students enrolled in the M.A. in Communication Studies and an elective course for the Graduate Certificate Program in Communication Studies. Other areas of catalog copy are not affected.

D. Resources Required to Support Proposal

1. Personnel
 - a. No new faculty positions are needed.
 - b. Dr. Dan Grano, Dr. Richard Leeman, Dr. Alan Freitag, and Dr. Jonathan Crane
2. Physical Facility.

The current facility is adequate for the proposed curriculum.
3. Equipment and Supplies.

Current equipment and supplies are adequate for the proposed curriculum.
4. Computer.

Current computer resources are adequate for the proposed curriculum.
5. Audio-Visual.

Current audio-visual resources are adequate for the proposed curriculum.

6. Other resources.

No additional resources are required.

E. Consultation with the Library and Other Departments or Units

1. Library Consultation
Date of Library Consultation: April 2, 2008
Holdings: adequate
2. Consultation with other departments or units
Department of Philosophy

F. Initiation and consideration of the proposal

1. Originating Unit: Communication Studies
 1. In a graduate faculty meeting on December 6, 2007 the Department of Communication Studies graduate faculty endorsed this proposal.
2. Other considering units.
 1. None.
3. Council on General Education
 1. Not applicable.

G. Attachments

Appendix A: Library Consultation
Appendix B: Department of Philosophy consultation
Appendix C: Sample Syllabus

Appendix A: Library Consultation



Consultation on Library Holdings

To: Richard Leeman, Department of Communication Studies
 From: Judith Van Noate, Humanities Librarian
 Date: April 2, 2008
 Re: COMM 6103

Date of initiation of consultation with Library Reference Personnel: February 2, 2008

Proposal No: COMM 12-10-07c

Request to add new Graduate course: COMM 6103: Communication Ethics
 Course proposal attached

SUMMARY OF REFERENCE LIBRARIAN'S EVALUATION OF HOLDINGS:

Evaluator: Judith Van Noate Date: April 2, 2008

Check one:

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Holdings are superior. | _____ |
| 2. Holdings are adequate. | _____ XXX _____ |
| 3. Holdings are adequate only if department purchases additional holdings. | _____ |
| 4. Holdings are inadequate. | _____ |

Comments: This course has been not been taught as a topics course. Students will have a required text and will also use a course pack. Library research will likely be required for the final paper. The library provides access to the following databases which contain relevant holdings for advanced Communication Studies curriculum: *Communication and Mass Media Complete, Academic Search Premier, Business Search Premier, Philosopher's Index, Project Muse, Science Direct, Blackwell, Sage, Kluwer, JSTOR, Springer, Emerald.* It also has significant monographic holdings in the general area of ethics. Overall, the library holdings are adequate.

_____**Judith Van Noate**_____
Evaluator

_____**April 2, 2008**_____
Date

Appendix B:

March 21, 2008

Dear Richard Leeman,

The Philosophy Department heartily supports the Department of Communication Studies' proposed new graduate course in "Communication Ethics" (COMM 6103).

This course is clearly important for your program, for reasons you articulate well in your proposal. It would also be a welcomed addition to our M. A. in Ethics and Applied Philosophy program. We focus on a variety of forms of applied ethics yet, currently, do not have a course on the ethics of "communication praxis in public, community, institutional, and organizational domains." At the same time, your proposed course will complement our "Language and Violence" course, which involves a critical analysis of uses of language. So we anticipate that some of our own M.A students will be interested in your new course, creating an opportunity for new intellectual exchanges among our students and yours.

There is emerging interest within philosophy in journalism ethics, communicative ethics, and other approaches to the range of ethical issues that arise in various communication venues. Given the widespread interest in information technology, which has a communication dimension, we imagine that your course would also be of interest to students in the College of Computing and Informatics.

The syllabus you attached to your proposal allows us to get a concrete and clear sense of the content of this course, which involves a significant number of philosophical texts.

This is of course appropriate since the topic is ethics.

We are especially pleased to see that COMM 6103 will be a required course in your M.A. in Communication Studies program because students are more likely to give such a course the attention it deserves when it is required.

We appreciate the initiative that you have taken by developing this graduate course, and we are open to further discussion about how best to develop and strengthen exchanges between Communication and Philosophy graduate students and faculty, which will important additions to our respective programs.

Thank you for your initiative.

Yours,

Michael Kelly, Chair

Department of Philosophy

Appendix C:

COMM 6103: COMMUNICATION ETHICS

Dr. Dan Grano
Office: 5011 Colvard
687-2855
dgrano@email.uncc.edu
Office Hours:
MW, 1:00-3:00,
or by appointment

Class Location & Time:
Colvard 1018
W, 6:00-8:50 PM

REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS

- Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory (2nd ed)* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984)
- David Bohm, *On Dialogue* (New York: Routledge, 1996)
- Course Packet, available for purchase at *Gray's Bookstore*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will be an attempt to grapple with issues of ethical practice and evaluation relevant to contemporary public argument and institutional/organizational life. While we will quickly discover that ethical dilemmas are never “solved” in any final way, communication ethics does provide a map through the human barnyards of moral reason, interminable argument, and incommensurable value. This is the case, in part, because moral theories of communication have traditionally been grounded in *phronesis* (practical wisdom), an idea that directs us toward the management of moral choice within communal and cultural settings. To develop our own practical wisdom we will call upon theories of virtue and dialogue that have influenced contemporary moral thought. We will take up several timely questions: how can we evaluate the competing claims and values of cultural groups in public debates, and how can these same evaluations be applied to organizational and institutional practices?; how can we discern standards for ethical practice, when advice on “being ethical” is often so vague?; what influence do public moral debates and institutional discourses have on cultural systems of value, and what ideologies do these discourses reflect and produce?

EMAIL CONTACT

I will be in touch through email on a regular basis with announcements and reminders concerning the course. You are expected to regularly check your 49 Express email account for those announcements. Some important course materials may also be distributed by email. In addition, there is a WebCT home page for the course (accessible through 49er express) that will be updated throughout the semester as needed; please access that regularly as well.

LECTURES/CLASS MEETINGS

The course will be run as a seminar. For most meetings part of the class will be devoted to an introductory lecture, and the rest will be an open format for student-led discussion, media examples, etc. (see graded assignments below). Though we will have discussion leaders for each class, it is expected that everyone will come to class having read all of the assigned material, ready to contribute in criticisms and analyses. We will all share the responsibility of creating a comfortable and open environment for participation.

ATTENDANCE

The course has no formal attendance policy. All students are expected to attend every meeting, especially with the once a week schedule. If an emergency arises that will cause you to miss class, I will need notification at the earliest possible time.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Critique/Reaction Papers

The point of critique/reaction papers is to develop critical reading and writing habits. The papers are composed of two basic parts. First, you will need to select a central claim within your chosen reading and offer a brief summary/description of it (just a few lines). This claim may come from the author's premise, stated argument, or justifications, for example. Selecting a claim central to your chosen reading is important; if you write a critique/reaction paper on a peripheral claim your paper will lack relevance and will likely be based on a misunderstanding of what the author is up to. Second, critique or respond to the selected claim. Thinking about this critique or response as a simple agreement or disagreement with the author is too limited, and will not produce anything interesting in your writing. Your level of involvement should be more nuanced than that.

You may decide, for example, that there are issues with the claims, justifications, or applications in a given reading. If so, be clear about what you believe the basic claims/justifications/applications are, and any emergent problems. This will normally involve grappling with the authors' uses of evidence, analysis, applications, definitions, descriptions, and so on. While your critique may certainly be "critical," this is not your only option. Even if you agree with the author and find the arguments compelling, your enthusiasm can be directed into a reaction. For example: are there any critical or practical applications the author did not see?; are there any opportunities the author did not exploit?; does the article have a trajectory or set of implications the author didn't uncover? Your critique/reaction should be limited to the materials made available within the specified reading (the author's examples, illustrations, applications, implications, conclusions, etc.). No outside materials should be used, and no syntheses with other theories/authors should be attempted. The point of the assignment is to critique the readings on their own terms. Synthesis and expansion will be reserved for the final paper. Finally, the critique/reaction paper should *not* be a simple summary of the reading, or primarily descriptive.

You are required to write a total of eight (8) critique/reaction papers for the semester. A minimum of four of these papers will be due by the March 1st class meeting (one week before Spring Break). Failure to turn in the minimum total of four papers by March 1st will result in a grade of zero for each missing paper. The remaining four papers are due by April 19th; the

same deadline penalties apply for the final four papers. You are free to select any readings, with the limitation that *only one paper per week is allowed*. Critique/reaction papers must be 2 pages in length, double-spaced (and no more; this will be held to strictly).

Discussion Leaders

Discussion leaders will be assigned for each class period (to be scheduled at the beginning of the semester). Discussion leaders will be required to do the following on their assigned days: 1) provide an outline of the relevant reading that highlights what they see as important theoretical themes/problems/arguments and 2) offer two or three related questions that draw out major themes for class discussion. These are the basic requirements, though discussion leaders are free to expand/elaborate the first part by bringing in media examples, cases, or other illustrations that help us to see the applicability of relevant theories. Discussion leaders will be required to turn in their outlines and questions at the end of class, and will be given credit based on how well-written and in-depth those materials are (specific advice on writing questions will be given in class). It is required that each student participate **three times** (in three separate classes) as a discussion leader.

Final Paper

The most significant assignment for the semester is a research paper that calls upon theoretical perspectives from the course. Students will have the opportunity to raise or address a larger theoretical question relevant to communication ethics, or to apply communication ethics theories/perspectives to a public, institutional, or organizational context/problem/case. A separate handout will detail the expectations for the final paper. The paper is due on **May 3rd**.

Paper Presentations (Panel)

On the last day of class, everyone will present their final papers in a research panel format. Details on structuring the paper presentations and the form of exchange in the panel will be offered later in the semester. The panel presentations will give you a chance to summarize your work and present it to an audience.

GRADING

Critique/Reaction Papers (20 pts each)	160
Discussion Leadership (10 pts each)	30
Final Paper	200
Panel Presentation	10

TOTAL

400

Grading Scale (percentage out of 400 points)

100-90%	A	exceptional work
89-80%	B	good work
79-70%	C	average work
69-60%	D	below average work
59%-0	F	insufficient, failing work

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students have the responsibility to know and observe the requirements of The UNCC Code of Student Academic Integrity. The code forbids cheating, fabrication, falsification of information, multiple submission of academic work, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials and complicity in academic dishonesty. Any special requirements or permission regarding academic integrity in this course will be stated by the instructor, and are binding on the students. Academic evaluations in this course include a judgment that the student's work is free from academic dishonesty of any type, and grades in this course therefore should be and will be adversely affected by academic dishonesty. Students who violate the code can be expelled from UNCC. The normal penalty for the first offense is zero credit on the work involving the dishonesty and further substantial reduction of the course grade. In almost all cases the course grade is reduced to F. Copies of the code can be obtained from the Dean of Students Office. Standards of academic integrity will be enforced in this course. Students are expected to report cases of academic dishonesty to the course instructor.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

(reading assignments indicated for each day)

I. VIRTUE IN PUBLIC ARGUMENT & INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

JANUARY

- 11 Course Introduction
- 18 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Chapters 1-5
- 25 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Chapters 6, 9-12

FEBRUARY

- 1 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Chapters 14-18
- 8 Farrell, Thomas B. "Practicing the Arts of Rhetoric: Tradition and Invention;" Herrick, James A. "Rhetoric, Ethics, and Virtue;" and Frenz, Thomas S. "Rhetorical Conversation, Time, and Moral Action"
- 15 Fisher, Walter R. "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument;" Condit, Celeste Michelle. "Crafting Virtue: The Rhetorical Construction of Public Morality;" and Wallace, James D. "Ethics and the Craft Analogy"

II. THEORIES OF DIALOGUE

- 22 Johannesen, Richard L. "The Emerging Concept of Communication as Dialogue;" Poulakos, John. "The Components of Dialogue;" and Stewart, John. "Foundations of Dialogic Communication."

MARCH

- 1 Buber/Friedman - "Chapter 10: All Real Living is Meeting;" "Chapter 11: The World of *It*;" and "Chapter 14: The Life of Dialogue."
- 8 *Student Recess – No Class*
- 15 Arnett, Ronald C. "Toward a Phenomenological Dialogue;" and Cissna, Kenneth N. and Rob Anderson. "The Contributions of Carl R. Rogers to a Philosophical Praxis of Dialogue."
- 22 Mikhail Bakhtin (readings to be made available electronically)

III. DIALOGIZING PRACTICE: APPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC ARGUMENT, INSTITUTIONS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

- 29 Readings on Bakhtin's Socrates (to be made available electronically); Plato, *Socrates' Defense (Apology)*; and Johannesen, Richard L. "Nel Noddings's Uses of Martin Buber's Philosophy of Dialogue."

APRIL

- 5 *SSCA Convention – No Class*
- 12 David Bohm, *On Dialogue*, chapters 1 and 2
- 19 Hammond, Scott C., Rob Anderson, and Kenneth N. Cissna. "The Problematics of Dialogue and Power;" Barge, J. Kevin and Martin Little. "Dialogical Wisdom, Communicative Practice, and Organizational Life;" and Black, Laura W. "Building Connection While Thinking Together: By-products of Employee Training in Dialogue"
- 26 Paper Presentations (in class)