COM 400: Communication Ethics
Fall 2013
W – 12:00 – 2:50
CCB 248

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Course Overview:
This course examines different ethical approaches to communicating. Students will investigate motives for choice-making among what may appear to be equally compelling or attractive choices. The assumption of responsibility for communication choices by communicators will highlight class assignments. This is a core course required of all communication majors. Prerequisites: COM 300, COM 301, and senior status.

In this course section, we will consider not just the relationship between communication and ethics, but also how to discover ethics within the structures of human communication itself. It is about working to develop ourselves as ethical communicators alongside Pepperdine's commitments to knowledge and scholarship, faith and heritage, and community and global understanding. The course is committed to a mixture of theory and practice. Half of our sessions will be devoted to dialogue and conversation about ethics in life, both experienced and observed. There we will try to work as closely as we can with ethics in our own lived experience. In the other half, we will explore theory, philosophy, and communicative grounds of ethics.

Pepperdine Mission Statement and Affirmations:

Mission Statement: Pepperdine is a Christian university committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and Christian values, where students are strengthened for lives of purpose, service and leadership.

Core commitments: Knowledge and scholarship, Faith and heritage, Community and global understanding
Institutional values: Purpose, Service, and Leadership

(For more on Pepperdine's Institutional Learning Outcomes, visit http://services.pepperdine.edu/oie/learning-outcomes/ieos.aspx)

Pepperdine University Affirms:
> that God is
> that God is revealed uniquely in Christ
> that the educational process may not, with impunity, be divorced from the divine process
> that the student, as a person of infinite dignity, is the heart of the educational enterprise
> that the quality of student life is a valid concern of the University
> that truth, having nothing to fear from investigation, should be pursued relentlessly in every discipline
> that spiritual commitment, tolerating no excuse for mediocrity, demands the highest standards of academic
>   excellence
> that freedom, whether spiritual, intellectual, or economic, is indivisible
> that knowledge calls, ultimately, for a life of service

Link to Seaver and Pepperdine Mission:
At the core of both Seaver College's and Pepperdine's missions are concerns for values, ethics, morality and behavior. This course fits into those missions by examining closely the relationship between communication in its many forms and ethics. More importantly, it offers the opportunity to consider our own communication ethics behaviors in our everyday lives, both now and in the future.

Communication Core Learning Outcomes:

Students completing the Communication Core classes will:

1) Describe the essential nature of communication as a field of study and recognize its significance in interpreting human behavior.

2) Acquire foundational skills in academic and professional research, writing, analysis and presentation necessary to excel in the major courses.

3) Demonstrate the ability, through practice and performance, to clearly and effectively express messages through multiple mediums.

4) Construct a statement of ethics (which includes considerations of diversity and faith) as it relates to student's personal lives and the manner in which they will conduct themselves in their chosen careers.

Student Learning Outcomes:
A student who successfully completes COM 400 should be:
1. Be introduced to the knowledge and skills necessary to identify ethical dilemmas in communication while learning an array of approaches to ethical analysis from religious and philosophical thinkers over the centuries;
    o *This relates to Core learning outcomes #1, #3, and #4 as students will see the importance of ethics to the field of communication and in interpreting others' behaviors, will learn how to clearly and effectively discuss and deliberate on ethics in communication, and will construct a statement of ethics related to personal development and future goals.*
2. To encourage you to practice evaluating ethical dilemmas and their consequences using these diverse patterns of moral reasoning;
    o *This relates to Core learning outcomes #1 and #4 as students will see the importance of ethics to the field of communication and in interpreting others' behaviors and will understand the role and importance of ethics to your personal and professional life.*
3. To allow you to demonstrate competence in rational and decision-making through concise written and oral explanations of the rationale for those decisions.
    o *This relates to Core learning outcomes #2 and #4 as students will use written and verbal explanations and discussions of personal ethics case studies as well as consider the importance of ethics to your personal and professional life.*

Required Texts:

Neher, W. W., & Sandin, P. J. (2007). *Communicating ethically: Character, duties, consequences, and relationships.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Other required readings are available on Sakai.

Course Policies:
Since this is a class about communication ethics, we need to achieve a high standard of ethical communication in our classroom behavior and conversation. This goes for all of us, including the instructor. This should include, at minimum:
- Treating each other with care and respect
- Listening carefully to each other
- Respecting confidentiality and anonymity

Professionalism and Communication Ethics – This course has a participation grade based on your professionalism and communication ethics. It is important that you take your learning and this class seriously, treating the class, instructor, and peers with respect. This grade is based on your punctuality, in-class behavior, attendance, attentiveness, responsibility for your learning, respect for others, attitude toward this class and others, and overall demeanor.

What hurts this grade are behaviors like texting in class, using your laptop or other electronics for something other than taking notes (like Facebooking, messaging, or watching movies), listening to music during class, showing up late, leaving

early, returning from breaks late, more than 2 absences, interrupting others, insulting material or others' opinions, or other behaviors that demonstrate poor character, lack of professionalism, and not taking responsibility for your learning. This does not preclude disagreement with me or others, but it does encourage you to engage in disagreement in a civil, respectful, responsible, and professional way.

If any of these are going to be an issue for you or if something comes up during the semester that makes meeting these standards challenging, I encourage you to discuss it with me as soon as possible so that I have an understanding of your behavior and can consider your individual situation when awarding this grade. I will not accept explanations after the fact or at the end of the term. At any point in the term if you would like to discuss my perception of your performance in this area, I encourage you to come to me. In addition, if either professionalism or poor ethics become a significant problem in your course performance, I reserve the right to excuse you from the course at any time. As the instructor, I have final say and discretion over the quality of your professionalism, behavior, and participation grade.

Attendance: Your PUNCTUAL attendance is REQUIRED for all class meetings, including work days. I maintain a record of class attendance. In general, I allow you two excused absences to use as you choose. However, if issues arise, you must speak with me as soon as possible so we can make appropriate arrangements and so I am aware of your circumstances.

I also maintain a record of when you show up late, leave early, or take extended breaks. It is disruptive and disrespectful to me and to your classmates when you show up late, leave early, or take extended breaks. Frequent absences (more than 2), showing up late, or other disruptive behaviors is taken directly out of your participation grade, ranging from, at minimum, one letter grade deduction on participation up to one letter grade deduction in your overall course grade per infraction (i.e., absence, tardy, leaving early, etc.). In short, show up to all classes, on time, and be respectful and engage in class.

Late Enrollment: Students who fail to attend a course within the first 100 minutes of scheduled class meeting time may be dropped from the course by the instructor. For those of you who are not enrolled and want to enroll, you will not be considered for enrollment in the course unless you attend the first 100 minutes. If you wish to enroll in the course after the first day, you must meet with me first. As a note, the add/drop 100% refund period ends on Friday, August 30, 2013.

Submission of Assignments: All assignments must be submitted AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS on the due date as indicated in this syllabus. Late submissions (which means after class begins) will be a 10% deduction for each day late, including non-class days and weekends. In the event of medical emergencies or other special circumstances, students should contact the instructor AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to make special arrangements and/or provide documentation. Documentation does not guarantee a release from the late penalty. You may email assignments to me.

Grade disputes: Any grade disputes or disagreements must wait 24 hours before they are discussed with me. At that time, you may set up a time to meet with me to discuss your concerns. You may ask clarifying questions about my feedback (or handwriting) at any time, but you may not express your position, dispute, or disagree until after the 24-hour period.

Assignment format: All assignments should be typewritten, double-spaced and free from spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors. I prefer double-sided printing (both sides of the page) to save paper. This is an academic course; I expect assignments to meet those standards. I accept papers in both hard copy and email.

Saving Assignments: Save your assignments in your computer or through other secure means and keep all written assignments that are graded and handed back to you until your final course grade is posted. As a note, any grade disputes after the semester ends must be taken care of by the end of Spring 2014.

Respect and diversity: Communication in the classroom naturally requires another human being and this class will encourage us to communicate with care, respect, and concern for others. Because Pepperdine University is a Christian institution, it is expected that all course participants act in accordance with Christian principles and ethics in their treatment of one another and the ideas presented in this course.

In other words, you are expected to treat fellow students and your instructor with respect and conduct yourself ethically in class and during dyadic and group work. Please do not interrupt others. Please be inclusive and keep discussions and assignments free from sexism, racism, discrimination, insults, personal attacks, and offensive topics.

A dialogical and community approach . . . My teaching philosophy is a dialogical one where I view our shared classroom experience as collaborative and as a community. Because of the interdependent nature of the course, I encourage you to become involved and take risks. You are an integral part of this course; you will help shape its culture and the learning environment. Your learning is your responsibility, not mine. I want to help you learn, but I cannot do that unless you advocate for your own education in this class and at Pepperdine. I encourage you to ask questions and seek out help on assignments, preparation, and in-class activities from me. I encourage you to take ownership of this class and help construct its "culture" to help others and yourself to learn. How you behave will impact yours and others learning.

Note for students with disabilities: Any student with a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Main Campus, Tyler Campus Center 264, x6500) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit http://www.pepperdine.edu/disabilityservices/ for additional information.

Code of Academic Integrity: Academic Integrity is the expression of intellectual virtue in human beings as a result of their creation in God's image. It represents the convergence of the best of the human spirit and God's spirit, which requires personal, private and community virtue. As a Christian institution, Pepperdine University affirms that integrity begins in our very created being and is lived out in our academic work.

In order for the code to be effective, the community must maintain its health and vitality. This requires a genuine sense of maturity, responsibility, and sensitivity on the part of every member. In particular, each member of the Seaver College community is expected to pursue his or her academic work with honesty and integrity.

Unfortunately, students do, on occasion, violate Academic Integrity, and this provides a need for discipline and an opportunity for restoration. The following pages (http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/academicintegrity/policies/code.htm) describe the various forms of violation recognized by Pepperdine University and the resulting steps that both the student and the institution must take.

Contractual Note on Syllabus: This syllabus represents a contract between me, the instructor, and you, the student. Violations of class policies are perceived as a breach of contract and provide me the right to discipline any student for any reason, including but not limited to repeated violations of course policies, character and professionalism, poor attendance/lateness, disrespectful or rude behavior, and poor grades and/or work ethic on assignments and in class.

Further, I reserve the right to change the syllabus, assignments, or schedule after in class consultation with all of you and with appropriate notice in class, via email, and on Sakai to better accommodate fulfillment of class learning outcomes. You should be using your Pepperdine assigned email as this is the primary means whereby changes and/or announcements will be made. That you did not receive an email is not a valid excuse for not receiving notice of a change and/or announcement.

Copyright Notice: This syllabus, all lectures, and all course materials prepared by the instructor are the property of the instructor, copyright 2013. They are my own original expression. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions, either digital or in writing (i.e. your handwritten notes) may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, including others in class. Whereas you are authorized to take notes in class thereby creating a derivative work from my lectures and/or discussions, the authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. You are not authorized to record my lectures, to provide your notes (including any presentations, handouts, guides, outlines made available to you in this class) to anyone else or to make any commercial use of them without express prior written permission from me. Students shall not sell notes (or receive remuneration for taking notes) during this course to or by any person or commercial entity without the express written permission of the professor teaching this course.

Course Assignments:
1. **Quizzes (15%)** – For every day a reading is assigned, there will be a quiz on Sakai. The quiz must be completed PRIOR to class and the quiz will close half an hour before class begins. The quiz will cover major ideas and concepts (usually bolded or the headings) from the chapter. It will also include 1-2 questions from any additional readings related to the main ideas of the article. <u>Only the top 10 quizzes</u> will be counted in your grade. However, you can earn extra credit if you take additional quizzes.

2. **Discussion Question and Case Studies (10%)** – Each week for class, you will hand in <u>one</u> discussion question based on the readings and <u>two</u> case studies. Here is more detail:

   - <u>Discussion question:</u> Based on the readings assigned for the day, you will hand in one question written as if you were the instructor and trying to help get to the "heart" of the readings. <u>Seek understanding</u> over criticism or opinion.
     - o Example of a good question: If Aristotle's virtue ethics are formed through habit, what does that say about his view of human nature? Good? Bad? Neutral? Does Aristotle believe in a spiritual aspect of humans or are virtue ethics all about the practical?

       This is a good question because it promotes an understanding of the course reading and facilitates discussion about the content material. It provides enough substance for prolonged discussion.

       Not so good questions: "What are virtue ethics?" or "What are your virtues?" These are not so good questions because they are simple and lack substance and complexity or they are asking for personal experiences and do not facilitate an understanding of the material. They do not provide for prolonged discussion of the material.

   - <u>Case Studies:</u> For each class, bring <u>two</u> ethical case studies to share. Write out a paragraph (<u>3-4 sentences)</u> for each dilemma that briefly describes it.
     - o You will bring <u>two ethical case studies</u> each week:
       - ▪ One that is personal and experienced by you directly, either in the past or currently.
       - ▪ One that is occurring currently in the public, such as in the world/media/news/at Pepperdine. It must have relevance to you or the class in some way.
     - o A good case study involves concerns over what one "ought" to do, where the answers are not easy or clear. Communication ethics will involve questions such as "How do I respond?," "What is the ethical thing to say?," "What is the right thing to do?", "How do I choose between two 'right' options?", "How can communication help me understand and make sense of what is happening?," or "How can communication behavior impact the kind of person/relationship/community I want to be/be a part of?"
     - o These dilemmas can occur in a variety of contexts – personal, family, work, romance, friendships, social, organizational, cultural, political, societal, global, faith, spirituality, social media, and so on. Use of popular culture (music, books, films) or current events (politics, news) is welcomed, but ideally the case should be relevant to you personally and to the class. Be specific about your case.
     - o Some possible ideas:
       - ▪ Ethical dilemmas I have faced/am facing and good/ethical decisions I have made or poor/unethical decisions I have made.
       - ▪ Ethical issues in relationships, such as lying, disclosure, strategy, or conflicts of interest.
       - ▪ Ethical concerns over the kind of person you want to be, the kind of relationship you want to be a part of/construct, or the kind of life you want to lead.
       - ▪ Ethical or unethical communication in the public sphere, marketing, promotion, or news.
     - o They are graded on whether or not you have identified an appropriate case study for discussion. Sharing will be at your discretion and these are written for me and held in the strictest confidence.
     - o The question and the two case studies can be submitted on one page.

3. Summary Papers (15%) – For each ethical perspective, you will turn in a one half/three-quarters page summary of the perspective <u>the week after</u> the perspective has been presented in class. Your summary should include the following:
   - o Title of perspective
   - o Person or persons associated with the perspective

- o   Main idea of the perspective
- o   Key characteristics of the perspective
- o   Key question the perspective asks (some of these will not have one)

Summary papers should be single-spaced and free from grammatical and spelling errors. I have placed a table on Sakai to help guide you in this assignment. You are welcome to complete the table and hand in or submit a separate summary for each and hand in. Please note that some days you will hand in summaries on multiple perspectives, with one half/three-quarters page for each perspective.

The goals of this assignment are so you can better differentiate between the many different perspectives we will be looking at, reinforce your learning, and have a "catalog" of different ethical perspectives for your final paper and for ethical dilemmas you will encounter in life.

4. Ethical Development and Philosophy Term Paper (25%) – On Tuesday, December 10th at 1:30 pm, you will hand in an ethical development term paper that traces your personal development in communication. The paper will be between 15-25 pages long and will be comprised of five parts:

- Introduction (approx. ½ page) – introduces the reader to your paper giving a preview of what the paper covers. I suggest you write this last.

- Watershed event (approximately 2-5 pages) – provides a detailed, ethnographic, narrative style description of one watershed ethical moment in your life. Here you provide enough detail for the reader to "feel" and "experience" the ethical dilemma with you. Include the dilemma, the context, the people involved, the possible options, your feelings, and why this was so important in your ethical development. Do not analyze here – just tell and describe. The event should end raising the questions you were facing in the midst of the dilemma.
    - o   Watershed event check-in – On October 30th, you will hand in a rough draft of your watershed event and select two of relevant perspectives. You do not have to summarize or explain the perspectives at this point. This draft will not be graded, but is a check in for you to ensure you are on the right track. I will provide you feedback on your direction.

- Relevant perspectives (approximately 4-6 pages) – based on the watershed event you have chosen, you need to choose two philosophical perspectives from the course to analyze your ethical event. Summarize the perspective and provide a justification for why these perspectives are relevant to your event. The weekly summaries you wrote should aid you greatly in choosing your perspectives and writing the summaries, but recognize that you will have to expand substantially from your one-page weekly summaries to three pages for each perspective in this section of the paper.
    - o   Relevant perspectives check-in – On November 6th, you will hand in a rough draft of your relevant perspectives. This draft will not be graded, but is a check in for you to ensure you are on the right track. I will provide you feedback on your direction.

- Analysis (approximately 6 pages) – using your two relevant perspectives, you will analyze your watershed event. The analysis should illuminate the different ethical options, lenses, and outcomes of your watershed event dilemma. Here, I will be looking for how your analysis reveals something about the ethics of your communication behavior.
    - o   Analysis check-in – On November 13th, you will hand in a rough draft of your relevant perspectives. This draft will not be graded, but is a check in for you to ensure you are on the right track. I will provide you feedback on your direction.

- Conclusion (approximately 3-6 pages) – synthesize what you learned from the analyses of your watershed event (about 1 page) and the impact of the dilemma on your ethical development. Do this by summarizing the paper, mentioning the outcome of the dilemma (or if not yet resolved, where the dilemma currently is at), and making an ethical judgment about your decision based on the relevant perspectives. Close by reflecting on how influential the watershed event dilemma has been on your personal ethical development.

- Format: Double-spaced, 12 pt. font, 1 inch margins. A rubric will be provided at a later date.

5. Communication Ethics Personal Philosophy Presentation (10%) – For the final, you will present your personal philosophy of ethics to the class. The personal philosophy should provide a statement of what is important to you in regards to communication ethics going forward in your life. It should include the following:

- How you approach/respond to ethical dilemmas
- Issues of responsibility related to ethical dilemmas
- Issues of diversity and faith
- 3-5 ethical perspectives you draw on in your personal philosophy. Use of specific quotations and citations are important.
- Usefulness and application of your philosophy to your personal and professional life.
- You DO NOT need to disclose or discuss your watershed event or other personal dilemmas if you do not want to.

Use of a power point or other presentation software is strongly advised. Use of graphics, photos, and creative designs is strongly encouraged. The presentation should be about 5 minutes in length. I will be evaluating these based on the clarity of your philosophy, how the perspectives influenced you, and how useful you expect your philosophy to be.

6. Participation and Communication Ethics (25%) – Given that this is a communication course, much of the focus is on *actual* communication with others face-to-face in class. You cannot do this unless you are present *and* participating in discussions. Additionally, you need to *substantively* and *ethically* participate in discussions. You have the opportunity to provide a self-assessment to me twice during the term to assist me in evaluating your participation, professionalism, and communication ethics. Consult the professionalism and character policy above for further details.

Your self-assessments should be 1-page in length and address the following:

- How have I demonstrated professionalism, communication ethics, and contributed substantively in this course so far?
- How could I improve my professionalism, character, and contributions going forward?
- Give yourself a grade for participation.
- Use ethical perspectives to justify and explain both what you have demonstrated and how you can improve.
- I will provide you feedback at the midterm.

Grading Breakdown:
- Quizzes   15%
- Discussion Question and Case Studies   10%
- Summary Papers   15%
- Ethical Development Term Paper   25%
- Final Personal Philosophy Presentation   10%
- Participation and Communication Ethics   25%
                                          100%

Course Schedule:

Date	#	Topic	Reading (* = on Sakai)	Assignment
8/28	1	Introduction to course and communication ethics		
9/4	2	Character/Virtue Ethics	Chs. 1 & 2 Applying Virtue Ethics: The Rajat Gupta Case*	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies

9/11	3	Duty Ethics	Ch. 3 On a Supposed Right to Lie*	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies Summary of previous week's perspective(s)
9/18	4	Consequentialist Ethics *(Founder's Day)*	Ch. 4 General Motors Bailout and Utilitarianism*	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies Summary of previous week's perspective(s)
9/25	5	Relational / Dialogical Ethics	Ch. 5 Stewart & Zediker*	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies Summary of previous week's perspective(s)
10/2	6	Reciprocity	McKenna Golden Rule* Vogel evolution of golden rule* Dialogical Approach to Forgiveness*	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies Summary of previous week's perspective(s)
10/9	7	Levinasian Ethics	Jovanovic & Wood*	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies Summary of previous week's perspective(s)
10/16	8	Feminist Ethics	Ch. 6 (pp. 117-132) Applying feminist ethics to nursing practice*	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies Summary of previous week's perspective(s)

10/23	9	Interpersonal Communication	Ch. 7 Gendered communication*	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies Summary of previous week's perspective(s) 1st participation assessment due
10/30	10	Intercultural Communication	Ch. 8 Managing ethical behaviour in Asia*	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies *Term paper check-in:* Watershed event
11/6	11	Organizations and Organizational Communication	Ch. 12 Unethical behavior ethical culture*	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies *Term paper check-in:* Relevant perspectives
11/13	12	Communication Technologies	ch. 13 Brey values disclosive*	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies *Term paper check-in:* Analysis
11/20	13	Mass/Mediated/Persuasion Ethics – Guest Speaker TBA *NCA 11/20-11/24*	TBA	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies
11/27	14	*No class – Thanksgiving holiday*		
11/29 (5 pm) – 12/9 (3 am)		*Online course evaluations open*		
12/4	15	Religious Perspectives	Burnor & Raley* TBA	Online quiz Discussion question and case studies *Term paper check-in:* Conclusion

Tuesday, 12/10, 1:30 – 4 pm		Final		Final Ethical Term Paper due Presentation on personal ethical philosophy 2nd participation assessment due

Bibliography of additional readings

Applying virtue ethics: The Rajat Gupta Case. (n.d.). *Seven Pillars Institute for Global Finance and Ethics.* Available at http://sevenpillarsinstitute.org/morality-101/applying-virtue-ethics-the-rajat-gupta-case

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