

Education 437-4/823-5 Ethical Issues in Education

FALL SEMESTER, 1983

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Cornel Hamm

Undergraduate: Thursdays 4:30 - 8:30

LOCATION: on campus

Graduate: Thursdays 4:30 - 9:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is concerned with identifying and examining moral and ethical issues in education. Three broad areas of concern are explored.

(1) The normative character of education as a whole and its justification. Questions like the following will be examined: Is the God-like role of education in setting goals for children morally tenable? Can there be a value-free education? Does the contemporary shift to informal modes of education remove the moral problem? What justification is there for selection of compulsory curriculum content in education? Have we the right to force children to go to school? (2) Questions related to problems of equality of educational opportunity, autonomy, interpersonal relationships, and rights in education. What is the place for the exercise of authority in education? Is discipline and punishment in schools warranted? Who ought to control schools? What rights do children, teachers, and parents have? (3) The meaning and nature of moral education. What is the status of moral judgements? Are moral principles "objective"? When is a principle a moral principle? Can values be taught? Should they be? How do some recent theories of moral education (values clarification, developmental theories) fare under careful examination? Is moral education without indoctrination possible?

The course is intended for those who want to think hard and argue about these kinds of questions. It should be valuable to teachers, administrators, counsellors and all serious students of education. There are no pre-requisites for this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Participation in seminars through formal and informal presentations from time to time.
2. A mid-term examination based on required readings.
3. A term paper of about 10 typewritten pages on a relevant topic approved by the instructor.

TEXTS:

Peters, R.S. Ethics and Education. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1966.

Cochrane, D.B., Hamm, C.M., Kazepides, A.C., (eds.) The Domain of Moral Education. Paulist Press and O.I.S.E., 1979.