

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION 437-5

E100

Ethical Issues

(CAT. # 3388)

Fall Semester, 2007
(Thursday 4:30 – 8:20)
EDB 8620B

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THEMES AND TOPICS

People in Education increasingly are addressing education as a "moral project," a view that contains an implicit criticism of traditional liberal (progressive) education that focuses on abstract intellectual competencies and "marketable skills." Education is increasingly geared towards economic productivity of the consumer society, while insufficiently or largely neglecting the urgent question of how the current dominant form of life is destructive to both biotic and human communities. Moreover, education as a moral project view takes the understanding of education as "people-making" and "self-making" seriously, and articulates the educated person in terms of such moral ideals as becoming deeply caring, responsible, peace-loving, and compassionate human beings. This course proposes to explore and examine philosophically challenging issues and problems underlying the conception of moral life and moral learning. We will discuss and explore topics and issues that include: What is the difference between ethics and morality? How do we distinguish the immoral from the amoral, and the moral from the legal? Can there be universal moral norms in today's world of pluralism? What is moral relativism? How do we avoid conformism and indoctrination on the one hand, and conflict on the other? How do we extend the traditional face-to-face morality to a world of 6-billion strangers? Is there morally justified violence? Is there a connection between morality and happiness? And, between morality and power? Also, between autonomy and morality? How do we cultivate moral emotions? What tools and strategies do we have for moral transformation? We will explore these and other questions as we investigate humans' multidimensional relationships with nature, culture, self, other, and community.

This being an education course, our interest in ethics is application and practice-oriented, and aims as much at practice and self-transformation as at discursive exploration of content-matter. The classes will be conducted and the assignments constructed in ways that will reflect this application and practice orientation.

READINGS

- 1) Appiah, K. A. (2006). *Cosmopolitanism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 978-0-393-32933-9
- 1) Orr, D. (1996). *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. ISBN: 1-55963-295-X
- 2) Noddings, N. (1992). *The Challenge to Care in Schools*. New York: Teacher College Press. ISBN: 0-8077-3177-3

REQUIREMENTS

- Reading journal
- Portfolio
- Presentation

Further details will be discussed and negotiated on the first day of class.