

CEG 551/PHI 576 Philosophy for Children: Ethics and Values Sample

Instructor:
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Online Course Description

In this course we will focus on the question of moral education:

- Is there a crisis in morality among children today?
- Should we teach morality in public schools?
- What methods, programs and arguments exist for moral education within American schools? Are some more effective than others?
- Specifically, how does Matthew Lipman's "Philosophy for Children" curriculum address this need?
- What role do you see moral education as playing in our schools and how best can we achieve it?
- How do we accommodate different values and yet achieve a meaningful moral curriculum?

Given the fact that New York State has now mandated character education in the schools, it is important to examine these questions and explore ways in which we can and cannot help our young people and ourselves become better people.

Our shared readings will include two background texts on the issue of ethical education (those by Pritchard and Lickona) and the philosophical novels, Nous and Lisa by Matthew Lipman, written for the elementary (3rd-4th grade) and secondary education experience (grades 7-9+.) These novels are part of the Philosophy for Children curriculum as developed by the *Institute for the Advancement for Philosophy for Children* (IAPC.)

Our **course objectives** are threefold:

- 1. Explore the theoretical debate over moral education using Pritchard and Lickona as our guides.**
- 2. Examine an example of moral education curriculum, that of Matthew Lipman and the IAPC; this will entail reading the novels, exploring the accompanying teachers manual and evaluating these materials and discuss ways to implement ethical education within the classroom.**
- 3. Acquire the tools of moral inquiry through practice, using the materials in # 2 as catalysts. The class will carefully read the texts and using the accompanying manuals as guidelines, will engage in on-line discussion and reflection about such themes as fairness, lying and truth-telling, nature of rules and standards and animal rights among others.**

We will strive to explore ethical education at all levels of education but our focus will be developed out of the interests and needs of the course participants.

Note: While this course is geared towards teachers and those preparing for a career in the teaching profession, it would also be of interest to people working with children in other contexts (as caretakers, counselors, school administrators and parents) or individuals who are interested in the philosophic issues of ethics and values.

Course Assignments:

1. Weekly postings in reaction to the material read and the questions posted by the faculty leader and the other participants. A minimum of **three** posting throughout the week is necessary for *completion* of the course. But far more are expected and encouraged if one's goal is a superior grade. See **Participation Rubric** under **Assignments** for further details. There will also be 3 or 4 short

assignments announced within the course materials as the weeks progress.

2. Each student will be asked to prepare a set of questions and statements concerning one of the readings for the whole class. The student will moderate the discussion on this segment of material-- I will post more information about this assignment in Item labeled "**Discussion Leader**" in the **Assignment section**.
3. I may post periodic questions on the discussion board to which I will request a written response within a stated time period.
4. Two written essays will be required throughout the term; see the **Essays** in the **Assignment Section** for details.

Assessment

The final grade will be assigned on the basis of the following:

40% the written essays;

40% class participation in the internet discussion: a minimum of three commentary postings a week will be required,

more are encouraged and expected; in addition, students are expected to read all postings and complete any short

assignments that may be given. See the section on **Participation Rubric** under **Assignments**.

20% effectiveness in facilitator role during the discussion of the assigned text:

- preparation of summary guide and questions for class consideration
- responses to the comments of other students
- end of week summarizing statement

(During your week as discussion leader you should be participating significantly more than the minimum three times!)

Required Texts CEG 551 [Four required of everyone with the fifth one depending upon which novel you choose to facilitate.]

Theoretical texts:

Pritchard, Michael *Reasonable Children*

Lickona, Thomas *Educating for Character*

These will form the basis of our background discussion through the semester.

*Moral Education Curriculum:***

Lipman *Lisa*

Lipman *Nous*

Lipman, M. *Ethical Inquiry* (manual for LISA)

Lipman *Deciding What to Do* (manual for NOUS)

While all of the four above texts are strongly recommended, we will discuss a possible sharing of texts based upon student's background and interests. These stories and accompanying manuals will serve both as models of ethical inquiry and opportunities to practice moral reflection ourselves and will be the materials used for the discussion leader project. I do request that you purchase both novels (*Lisa* and *Nous*) but you can choose to acquire only one manual, the one that you will be using as a discussion leader. **You do need to obtain at least one manual so as to best comprehend the model of ethical education we are examining. These texts are difficult to obtain and I suggest getting them at the Stony Brook Bookstore. If you find them elsewhere, just be sure that you can receive them on time!

The following texts offer a less academic but still quite useful exploration of "Philosophy and Children" and the sources and possible solutions to a perceived moral crisis among young people today:

(Recommended, but not required.)

Ronald Reed and Tony Johnson, *Friendship and Moral Education*, Peter Lang, 1999.

Kilpartrick, *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong*

Schleifer, Michael. *Talking about Feelings with Children*, 2005.

These are all available from Amazon.com

See the bibliography at the end for further suggested readings.

Week by week syllabus

Each week we will engage in three activities. **Firstly**, a theoretic introduction and discussion of ethical and values education using the Pritchard and Lickona texts as guides. I will lead the discussion in this Forum, posting questions for you to consider and some accompanying notes to facilitate your reading.

Secondly, we will read chapters from the novels, Lisa and Nous. These texts will generate discussion upon a wide range of philosophic themes, especially within ethics. The accompanying manuals, Ethical Inquiry and Deciding What to Do, will serve as guides for discussion as well as a source of analysis in terms of themes and methodologies to be used within the classroom setting. Our goals here are a direct exploration of the philosophic themes within the text as propaedeutic for such discussions with children. Beginning in our third week, class members will serve as discussion facilitators. (See **Assignments Section**.)

Thirdly, we will want to offer commentaries on the role of such a curriculum within an elementary/secondary classroom in terms of integrating it within the current curriculum and its connections with social studies and language arts and the community debate over moral education. This will serve to encourage you to connect our readings to your own experiences, either as teachers, students and/or parents.

As a philosophy course, discussion is at the heart of our intellectual endeavor so it is of vital importance that each and every participant become actively engaged on the board each week.

Schedule

The readings and discussion topics are listed from our four texts (the teachers manuals that accompany the novels will be our resource for discussion along with the relevant chapters). While this might look like a heavy reading load, you will find that the stories of Lisa and Nous read very quickly. Do not be overwhelmed! Be aware that as an online course, there may be online reading assigned in the posted notes or on the discussion board so be alert to these other opportunities to make use of the technology available to us. **Our week runs from Tuesday through the following Monday.**

Week One: The Question of Moral Education and Philosophy in the classroom: the Community of Inquiry

--the pedagogical basis for philosophic dialogue in elementary education and an orientation to philosophy in a community of inquiry

P (Pritchard text) 1

L (Lickona text) 1 & 2

Week Two-- The rationale for values education and its Aims and Objectives

This week we begin to read the novels along with the "theoretical" texts.

Lisa, chapter 1--part-whole distinction, empathy, treatment of animals, rights, privileges and obligations, means and ends, decision- making strategies

Nous, chapter 1: lying, rights, growth and changes, gifts, intelligences. persons

Nous, chapter 2: friendships, humans, understanding, feeling rejected, consequences

P 2

L 3 & 4**Week Three-- Examining the principles of Philosophy for children and Lickona's vision of the classroom**

(Our discussion leader assignments begins this week.)

Lisa, chapter 2 and 3--reciprocity in personal relationships, rules, freedom, students' rights, criticism, beliefs, thinking and acting, manners, facts and values, criteria, rules, taste, treating a person as a person, excuses and pretexts, reprimands

Nous, chapt. 3: making decisions, what is philosophy?, thieves, bragging

P 3

L 5 & 6**Week Four-- Critical Thinking, Discipline and Democracy in the Classroom**

Lisa, chapter 4 and 5--death and dying, principle of consistency, lying, fatalism and determinism, freedom and free will, defending beliefs, right by rules and by judgments, truth, intentions and consequences, contexts and similarities in ethical judgments

Nous, chapt. 4: how are we to live?, value, pride, ethics, sharing, virtues, moral character

P 4

L 7 & 8**Week Five--Critical Thinking and values through curriculum and cooperation**

Lisa, chapter 6 and 7--concepts of right and wrong, individuality and identity, fairness, right and fair, laws, standards, natural families and communications, the past, role of consequences, vocation and avocation, art and beauty, perfection

Nous, chapt. 5: being disloyal, sacrifice, beautiful, saint, punishment, true, good. standards

P 5

L 9 & 10**Week Six--The Arguments for Moral Education within the System**

Lisa, chapter 8--wrong and harmful, obedience, leaning the right thing to do, consolation, ambitions, friendship, loyalty, sexism, conduct, criteria of personal success, education

Nous, chapt. 6: harm, intentions, purposes, reasonableness, moral education

P 6

L 11-12**Week Seven--The Question of Moral Diversity and the challenge of controversies**

Lisa, chapter 9--relativism, alternatives to relativism, conflicts, practice, use of logic in ethics

Nous--chapt. 7: ethical inquiry, obligations, integrity, intellectual virtues, appropriateness

P 7

L 13, 14 & 15**Week Eighth--The nature and role of Development Theories**

Lisa, chapter 10 --theories of truth, thoughtless actions, superiority, inferiority and equality, identifying presuppositions,

Nous, chapt. 8: emotions, caring, the golden mean, character, moral reasoning, imagination, moral principles

P 8

L 16 & 17**Week Nine--Case reasoning and more difficult issues for classroom instruction**

Lisa, chapter 11-- justice, friendship and love, fairness, rights, obligations, thinking for one's self, making ethical decisions, loving and being hurt

Nous, chapt. 9: being careful, education, justifying decisions, ideals, perfection, persuasion, obligations, teachers

P 9-10
L 18-20

Please let me know if you catch any errors here or are confused about any of our readings and procedures!

Bibliography for "Philosophy for Children" Methods Courses

This bibliography can serve as a reference tool for the incorporation of philosophy into the elementary and secondary curriculum. I do not expect participants to read all of these or to have read them!

A. Shared Background and Extended Research Bibliography

I. Educational Theory and P4C Background:

- ◁Bruner, Jerome. The Process of Education. Harvard University Press, 1960.
 Dewey, John. Democracy and Education. MacMillan, 1944.
 Dewey, John. Experience and Education. Norton, 1929.
 Flavell, J.H. Cognitive Development. Prentice-Hall, 1977.
 Freire, Paula. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Herder and Herder, 1972.
 Kohle, Wendy (editor.) Critical Conversations in Philosophy of Education. Routledge, 1995.
 Lipman, Matthew. Philosophy Goes to School. Temple University Press, 1988.
 Lipman, Matthew, and Sharp, Ann Margaret. Growing Up With Philosophy. Temple University Press, 1978.
 Lipman, Matthew, Sharp, Ann Margaret and Oscanyan, Fred. Philosophy in the Classroom. Temple University Press, 1980.
 Lipman, Matthew (ed.) Thinking Children and Education. Kendall/Hunt, 1993.
 Matthews, Gareth. Dialogues with Young Children. Harvard University Press, 1984.
 Matthews, Gareth. Philosophy and the Young Child. Harvard University Press, 1980.
 Matthews, Gareth. The Philosophy of Childhood. Harvard University Press, 1994.
 Nelson, Leonard. Socratic Method and Critical Philosophy: Selected Essays. Yale University Press, 1949.
 Reed, Ronald. Talking With Children. Arden Press, 1983.
 Schleifer, Michael. Talking about Feelings with Children, 2005.
 Sharp, Ann Margaret and Splitter, Laurance. Teaching For Better Thinking. ACER, 1996.
 Vygotsky, L.S. Thought and Language. M.I.T. Press, 1962.
 Whitehead, Alfred North. The Aims of Education. MacMillan, 1929.

II. Philosophical Traditions:

Recommended are some acquaintance with the great works of the Western philosophical tradition:

Presocratic Philosophers

Plato

Aristotle

the Stoics

Augustine

the mediaevals: Boethius, Anselm, Aberlard, Roger Bacon, Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham

the moderns: empiricist and rationalist traditions

Kant and Hegel

Nietzsche

twentieth century movements: analytic, phenomenology, pragmatism, existentialism, post-modernism

Primary sources exist in many translations and editions.

Some secondary sources are:

Adler, Mortimer. Adler's Philosophical Dictionary. Schribner, 1995.
Copleston, Frederick. A History of Philosophy. Image Books, 1963.
Hartshorne, Charles. Insights and Oversights of Great Thinkers. SUNY, 1983.
Jones, W. T. A History of Western Philosophy. Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969.
Stumpf, Samuel. Socrates to Sartre. McGraw-Hill, 1975.
Tarnas, Richard. Passion of the Western Mind. Ballentine Books, 1991.

Many others are available.

B. Works Specific to individual methods courses--Ethics and Values—Lisa and Nous

Albert, E., Denise, Theodore and Peterfreund, Sheldon. Great Traditions in Ethics. Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1988.
Coles, Robert. The Moral Intelligence of Children. Random House, 1997.
Lickona, Thomas. Educating for Character. Bantam Books, 1991.
Noddings, Nel. The Challenge to Care in Schools. Teachers College Press, 1992.
Rachels, James. The Elements of Moral Philosophy. McGraw-Hill, 1993.