

LBST 2500-80/88: Liberal Studies & Community Engagement
3 Credit Hours
Dr. Elizabeth Victor
Office Hours: By appointment

Winter 2018
Online
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OH via BB Collaborate or phone

Course Description: Does our society claim to uphold certain values? Do we actually uphold those values? Every thoughtful person must struggle with balancing our own rights and freedoms with our responsibilities towards others. Liberal Studies and community engagement examines what is required for community life and collaborative action. The course considers individuals' relationships with our communities, including our responsibilities to ourselves and others, our capacity to make reflective choices with integrity and care, and the conditions for dialogue, connection, and reciprocity. This course considers specific issues in applied ethics and provides students with tools to engage with difficult issues in their own lives and their communities. The purpose of the course is for students to reflect on meaning, value and responsibility in their own lives.

Prerequisite: Area 4 course requirement; sophomore standing. Liberal Studies majors: LBST 2010.

Learning Goals & Outcomes:

In this course, students should be able to develop their capacity to:

1. Identify ideals and principles as they have been spelled out in a variety of ethical systems.
2. Apply these conceptual structures and guidelines to social problems and dilemmas through case studies and an engagement project.
3. Present their findings regarding how the theories and concepts can address the social issues.
4. Describe important facts and varying positions in response to selected issues, using sympathetic and respectful representations of those various positions to engage in community problem solving.
5. Identify needed skills or virtues to be an effective member of a community.
6. Understand the evolution of concepts such as free choice, beliefs, values, independence, and autonomy in the context of their relationships to community standards.

Required Texts/Material (2):

- 1) **ELI:** Ethical Lens Inventory (www.ethicsgame.com, access code available online, see ELI section of BB)
- 2) **BB:** The rest of the assigned readings covered will be posted on Blackboard.

Grading Scale:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
100-93	92-90	89-87	86-84	83-80	79-77	76-74	73-70	69-67	66-60	59 and below

Letter Grade Meanings:

A: Outstanding. The individual displays thorough mastery of all material and genuine engagement with the subject matter. This grade is reserved for those individuals who attain the highest levels of excellence in thought and expression. Exceptionally good writing.

B: Good. The individual displays accurate understanding of the bulk of material. Writing is clear and free of mechanical errors.

C: Adequate. The individual displays basic grasp of roughly three fourths of the course material. There may arise occasional misunderstanding or inaccuracy. Writing is acceptable.

D: Marginal. The individual displays a grasp of the course material that deserves credit. Quality of apprehension of material indicates lack of effort and/or lack of aptitude.

F: Unacceptable. The individual displays virtually no grasp of the material as addressed in the course.

Dates to Note: Drop/Add ends 12/26 Last day to withdraw (grade W) 1/02

Composition of Course Grade:

5%	Syllabus Quiz
10%	Ethical Lens Inventory
15%	Core Concepts Quiz (Midterm)
30%	Discussion Blog Entries (Participation)
10%	IAT Reflection Journal
<u>30%</u>	Individual Community Engagement Project
100%	

5% Syllabus Quiz

The syllabus quiz is due on **December 26th** (end of the day). The link for the quiz is available in the Assignments link of Blackboard (BB). Students will have THREE attempts to take the quiz, with the highest score counting as the final grade.

10% Ethical Lens Inventory

The Ethical Lens Inventory is a brief survey-based instrument that will act as the foundation of the course assignments and final project. Completing the ELI is required, and you will need to purchase the access code to register for it. A video with instructions and the class code (needed in addition to the access code) is available under the “ELI” tab on BB. Completion of this is pass/fail and is due **December 27th**.

15% Core Concepts Quiz

The Core Concepts Quiz will cover material discussed in the first two weeks of the course, including key ethical concepts, and assigned readings. The quiz will consist of several multiple choice style questions as well as true/false questions. The quiz is meant to ensure students understand the fundamental concepts prior to completing the individual project. Quizzes are expected to be completed independently, although students can use notes and course materials. Students have up to THREE attempts to take the quiz, with the highest score counting as the final grade, due by the end of the day on **January 5th**.

30% Participation/Blog Entries (see course outline for due dates)

For each blog posts, you will select an article from the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, or another **mainstream** news publication (no older than eight months) on the assigned topic (identified on the discussion blog each week). Blogs are meant to provide the student an opportunity to engage in a thoughtful discussion of the ideas presented in this course and current events. This requirement has two components: Your original post and responses (2) to your colleagues’ post.

- **Your original post (approx. 3 points per post):** For full credit, be sure to 1) briefly *paraphrase* the argument or perspective put forth in article chosen and 2) elicit either an analysis of those claims or a personal commentary, incorporating the Ethical Lens Inventory. For example, determine which values the author of the article is using as the basis of their analysis, and provide an alternative analysis using another lens (your own lens, for instance). Explain where you agree/disagree with the author, being sure to connect to the differences/similarities in values. Blog posts should be approx. 500 words, not including citation/source article information. For full credit, be sure to intersect ELI/course material into analysis/commentary—this is essential to full credit. Blog spaces are a means to measure student comprehension and develop the skill of briefly articulating and defending one’s ideas in written form.
- **Two responses to a colleagues’ post (approx. 3 points per response):** In addition to YOUR post, you will be expected to review and respond to TWO other people each week. You will be expected to be charitable and exhibit decorum (i.e., don’t call people names, don’t strawman their arguments). In a manner similar to your original post, you can offer an example to support/challenge the author, ask if their argument matters in other contexts/ethical lenses, or offer additional insights from your primary field of study. There is no length limit for the response, but it should be at least three-four well-formed sentences (a paragraph).

Be Creative and Engaging. There is no specified or recommended platform for student presentations (you are limited only by your imagination). Feel free to bring in anything you find relevant from newspaper/magazine

covers, op-eds, ads, commercials, photographs, videos, films etc. Blog success will be evaluated primarily on the accuracy of information, and how well you engage others.

Extra Credit Opportunity: Up to 4.5 points extra credit can be earned throughout the semester by going above and beyond on the response requirement. You can earn extra credit when the author of a post responds to criticism/suggestions (beyond the two responses to a colleague's post). You will earn 1.5 points per response.

10% IAT Reflection Journal

Each student will be required to take an implicit association test related to gender (Gender-Science or Gender-Career) during the third week of the term. The reflection journal will be a structured, private journal reflection on what the test means, your reaction to the test you chose, what implicit associations might mean in the professional sphere (your chosen profession/area of work), and how your reaction/reflection mirrors/diverges from your Ethical Lens. The reflection journal should be at least 500 words. A link is available in the Assignments tab of BB and is due **January 10th** (end of the day).

30% Individual Community Engagement Final Project

For your community engagement project, each student will be responsible for engaging in democratic deliberation with their community. This project will be graded in stages, including:

- Identification of congressional representatives (House of Congress and Senate) and issues of concern to you/in your community (5%, Due: **1/09**)
- Writing law makers letters (drafts submitted via BB) about at two issues of concern (10%, Due: **1/11**)
- A reflection paper about democratic engagement and the Ethical Lens Inventory: Write a 1000 word reflection identifying the issues of community concern that you focused on for your law maker letters. Be sure to identify the Ethical Lens you are coming from in those letters, offer an alternative lens for how someone from another ethical lens would view the concerns you raised, and a reply from your own ethical lens to the alternative ethical lens perspective. Finally, explain whether this was an effective form of democratic engagement, and why or why not. (15%, Due: **1/14**)

Classroom Policies

IT Assistance: Any technology related concerns should be processed through the IT helpdesk. Please enter a ticket (www.wpunj.edu/help).

Timeliness Response and Feedback Promise: Email correspondence should be reserved for *personal* (private, specific grade questions, etc.) correspondence with the Professor. Email responses are promised within 48 hours, and grades will be posted on all assignments within a timely fashion (usually within less than 5 days of the due date). General questions about the course can be answered by referencing the syllabus or assignments tab on Blackboard.

Lateness and Make-up Policies: All assignments are lowered half a letter grade for each day they are late and may be submitted up to three days late, with the exception of the final project.

Inclusiveness: This class will seek to include, engage, and support a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff. William Paterson University (and this Professor) values a multiplicity of opinions and backgrounds, and is dedicated to incorporating multiple voices and experiences into every aspect of its operations.

Academic Integrity: Academic Integrity is taken very seriously. This course adheres strictly to the Academic Integrity Code of William Paterson University: <http://www.wpunj.edu/cte/wpu-academic-integrity-policy.dot>. As far as this course is concerned, be aware that all student assignments will be subject to audit through plagiarism detection software of the Professor's choosing. The sanction to be imposed on any student committing plagiarism will be a failing grade for the course.

Extra Credit Opportunity: Earn an automatic 2.5 points on the final grade if you **email** the results of your plagiarism knowledge quiz (<http://en.writecheck.com/plagiarism-quiz>) and hand it into the Professor during the **first week of class**.

Campus Resources

Disability Support Resources

Please inform me of any special needs as early as possible (within the first three days of the semester) so that those needs can be met in a timely manner. If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact me and the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 973-720-2853 or check out the website at <http://www.wpunj.edu/disabilityservices/index.dot>.

Course Outline (Subject to Change)

ELI: Ethical Lens Inventory **BB:** Reading on Blackboard

Date	Week/Topic	Readings/Assignment
Week 1: Consequentialism, Deontology		
12/26	Syllabus overview/Quiz Ethical Lens Inventory	<i>Syllabus Quiz due today (end of day)</i>
12/27	Take Ethical Lens Inventory Watch TED Talk	Register and Complete ELI Blog (finding common ground in politics)
12/28	Consequentialism/Results Lens Blog	BB: Consequentialism Responses (2) to others' blog due
12/29	Deontology/Rights & Responsibilities Lens	BB: Deontology
Week 2: Virtue Ethics, Feminist Ethics, Food Insecurity		
1/02	Virtue Ethics/Reputation Lens	BB: Virtue Ethics
1/03	Feminist Ethics/Relationship Lens Blog	BB: Feminist Ethics/Care Ethics Blog post due (welfare in the U.S.)
1/04	Food Insecurity Blog	BB: Singer Responses (2) to others on blog due
1/05	Concept Quiz	Concept Quiz (due by end of day)
Week 3: Sexism and Income Inequality/Final Project		
1/08	Sexism	BB: McIntosh
1/09	Pay Inequality Representative identification—Due end of the day	Lecture only (no reading) Blog post due (pay equality legislation)
1/10	Implicit Association Test (Gender) Implicit Association Journal—Due end of the day	Link on BB (in BB Readings) Responses (2) to others on blog due
1/11	Write your Representatives	<i>Drafts of letters to representatives due</i>
1/12	Project Research/Writing Day	<i>Work on final project</i>
<i>Project Paper Due 1/14 (end of day, no late papers accepted!!!)</i>		