Instructor: Robert Westerfelhaus, Ph.D.  
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday
Office: 9 College Way, #402  
Office Phone: 843-953-6533  
E-Mail: westerfelhausr@cofc.edu

Email is the best way to reach me, as the college has not provided me with voicemail. Except during Spring Break and the weekend I will be at a conference (March 24-27), I will respond to email inquiries within 24 hours of receiving them. I will respond to phone calls only during my office hours (see above).


Course Goals:  
Communication is central to our human experience. Through communication, we cultivate relationships and come to understand ourselves, others, and the world in which we live. To live well we must communicate well. Understanding the ethics of communication helps us to do so. After taking this course, students should:
- have a thorough grounding in the major ethical theories as these relate to human communication;
- be able to reason ethically in interpersonal, group, public, and mass communication contexts;
- possess a deeper understanding of their personal ethical positions and an appreciation for—though not necessarily agreement with—the positions of those who disagree with them;
- be adept at articulating, critiquing, and supporting their ethical positions; and,
- be capable of in-depth ethical analyses and critiques of communication ranging from the personal to the mass media.

Assignments/Grading  
Your grade for COMM-384 will be based upon the following:

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**Assignments/Grading (continued)**

*Exams:* The exams are designed to assess your knowledge of key concepts, names, and terms. Any material covered in assigned readings, lectures, and class discussions is fair game.

*Research Paper:* This paper provides you with an opportunity to offer an informed response to the ethical question posed by the assignment.

*Presentations:* Each student will be assigned a group. Each group will be assigned a topic for both presentations.

**Course Policies:**

*Attendance:* There are no excused absences. I have found that people who attend class regularly usually do well and those who do not usually do poorly. If you miss class, **DO NOT:** 1) ask me about schedule changes announced in class (you will be responsible for these, however, so ask a friend), 2) inquire about lecture material (ask a friend), 3) expect me to hand back graded work in class on another day (I will bring graded work to class only one time, after which you must come to my office to get it). Absence from class is never an excuse for missed assignments or poor performance! **An absence on any day presentations are scheduled will result in a full letter grade deduction from your presentation.**

*Disabilities:* Reasonable accommodation will be made for students with disabilities. Please see me at the beginning of the semester regarding such. SNAP students are responsible for arranging alternative exam accommodations a week prior to each scheduled exam.

*Conferences:* I strongly encourage you to visit me during any mutually convenient time to discuss concerns, obtain feedback about class performance, etc.

*Written assignments:* Grading for written assignments will take into account both content (i.e., what is said) and style (i.e., organization, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.). **Assigned papers must be placed in my hand the first ten minutes of class on the day they are due.**

*Extra credit and make-ups:* Absolutely no extra credit, late assignments, or make-up exams. **Nor will exams be given, or assignments accepted, earlier than the scheduled date.**

*Electronica:* Please turn off beepers, pagers, cell phones, etc., before entering class.

*Exams:* **The final exam must be taken the day it is assigned.** No exceptions. **You MUST be on time in order to take the exam.** Those who show up more than five minutes after the time that class is scheduled to start on the day of any exam will not be allowed to take it, which will result in a grade of 0 = F. No one will be allowed to leave an exam for any reason. To leave the room you must turn in the exam.

*Final Exam Policy:* As articulated by our department chair, Dr. Beth Goodier, this is our department/college’s final exam policy:

> Final exams must be given at their assigned times. Faculty are not permitted to give the exam at a different time. Students may petition faculty to change their individual exam time for “good cause.” [Such causes do not include travel conflicts, other unauthorized final exams, etc.]

In addition to obtaining my permission to take a final exam on an alternative date, you must also obtain the permission of our associate department chair, Dr Lynn Cherry, which she very rarely grants. In the rare event that she does grant a student permission to take the exam on an alternative date, be advised that I never give final exams earlier than scheduled. **Alternative dates are always later.**

*Honor Code:* All rules outlined in the College of Charleston Code of Civil and Honorable Conduct will be strictly enforced.
COMM 384 Spring 2011 Schedule  
(subject to change and revision at instructor’s discretion)

WEEK ONE: 10, 12, 14 Jan  
Paper and group assignments discussed  
Groups assigned

Introductory Lectures  
Ethics defined  
Ethics vs. Morality  
Epistemology  
Ontology  
Aquinas’ Four Laws  
Agency  
The Four Traditions  
Deontological  
Relativism  
Teleological  
Contractualism

WEEK TWO: 17, 19, 21 Jan  
17 Jan: No Class—MLK Day  
19 and 21 Jan: Intro Lectures continued

WEEK THREE: 24, 26, 28 Jan  
24 Jan: Exam #1  
26 Jan: Group Work  
Lecture:  
Modern and Postmodern Currents in Ethical Theory Frankfurt School, Foucault, etc.

WEEK FOUR: 31 Jan, 02, 04 Feb  
31 Jan: Groups 1 and 2  
Lectures  
John Locke and Tomas Hobbes  
Machiavelli’s The Prince  
Golden Rule  
Saul Alinsky  
Kenneth Burke’s Dramatism

WEEK FIVE: 07, 09, 11 Feb  
07 Feb: Groups 3 and 4  
09 Feb: Groups 5 and 6  
11 Feb: Groups 7 and 8

WEEK SIX: 14, 16, 18 Feb  
14 Feb: Groups 9 and 10  
Lectures:  
Holocaust

WEEK SEVEN: 21, 23, 25 Feb  
Lectures:  
Wiesenthal’s Sunflower  
Jeremy Bentham and J. S. Mill’s Utilitarianism  
25 Feb: Exam #2

WEEK EIGHT: 28 Feb, 02, 04 Mar  
Lectures:  
Adam Smith’s Virtue of Selfishness  
Ayn Rand’s Objectivism  
Carol Gilligan’s Ethics of Care and Concern  
04 Mar: Paper Consultation

WEEK NINE: 07, 09, 11 Mar  
Spring Break

WEEK TEN: 14, 16, 18 Mar  
14 Mar: Paper Consultation  
16 Mar: Group Work  
18 Mar: Research Paper Due

WEEK ELEVEN: 21, 23, 25 Mar  
21 Mar: Groups 10 and 9  
23 Mar: Groups 8 and 7  
25 Mar: No Class

WEEK TWELVE: 28, 30 Mar, 01 Apr  
28 Mar: Groups 6 and 5  
30 Mar: Groups 4 and 3  
01 Apr: Groups 2 and 1

WEEK THIRTEEN: 04, 06, 08 Apr  
Lecture:  
Habermas and Ratzinger’s Dialectic  
08 Apr: Exam #3

WEEK FOURTEEN: 11, 13, 15 Apr  
Lectures:  
Practical Communication Ethics re: Interpersonal Relationships  
Sissela Bok, Martin Buber, etc.

WEEK FIFTEEN: 18, 20, 22 Apr  
Lectures:  
Practical Communication Ethics re: Journalism, Media, Public Relations

Continued on next page…
WEEK SIXTEEN: 25 Apr
25 Apr: Last Day of Class

Lecture:
TBA

FINAL EXAM:
02 May @ 12:00 noon
(see page 2 of syllabus for CofC’s final exam policy)
Research Paper (1) = 10% of the final grade

Due:
As per syllabus. NB: Hardcopies of the research paper must be in my hand during the first ten minutes of class on the day they are due. I will not accept papers that are submitted early or late, sent via email, or placed under my door or in my mailbox.

Length:
Three (3) pages. Points will be deducted for papers that are too short or too long. And be advised, I will quit reading at the bottom of the third page. Per academic convention, pagination does not include cover page or bibliography.

This writing assignment is designed to: (1) stimulate an informed, thoughtful, and well reasoned response regarding interpersonal ethical responsibilities related to friendship, honesty, and the keeping of promises, and (2) provide a forum for an articulate and well-reasoned expression of that response.

Problem:
When I was a roster faculty member at the University of Houston’s downtown campus, I taught a course in Interpersonal Communication. One writing assignment allowed students to discuss personal matters if they chose to do so, with the promise that I would keep anything they wrote in strictest confidence. In one paper an African American male student (let’s call him Jim), who was the president of his fraternity, admitted to having a “serious crush” (his words) on another male student in my class (we’ll call him Jack). A few papers later, Jack admitted that he had a crush on Jim. If you were me (God forbid!), what would you do? Would you break your word regarding confidentiality? Or would you keep it? Why? What ethical criteria would you use to guide your decision?

Research:
Find five peer reviewed academic journal articles that addresses the ethical issues touched upon in the problem outlined above. Cite the article and reference it per APA style. You may use electronic, on-shelf, or online journals. Be advised, APA requires that electronic sources be referenced differently than print. You may use the journal articles to support your stance. Or, you may take issue with what the articles state. If you do, be sure to provide a good argument for your disagreement.

Grading:
This is a formal paper. Strict adherence to the conventions (grammar and spelling) of standard American English and APA style are required. No clichés. No slang. No contractions. Three egregious errors with respect to style or grammar will result in a full letter grade deduction. Additional errors will result in the deduction of additional points. Your argument must be clearly expressed and logically and ethically sound. Plagiarism will result in an F for the assignment. NB: Failure to meet the minimum requirements for this assignment (e.g., adherence to APA style, inclusion of five peer reviewed academic articles, etc.) will earn you an F.

Format:
Typed. One inch margins. Double spaced. 12 point Times new Roman font.
Group Presentation (2) = 10% of final grade (05% each)

Due: Per syllabus.

Length: 20 minutes

The group presentation assignment is designed to: (1) encourage students to work collaboratively toward accomplishing a common goal, and (2) provide a forum for describing and critiquing ethical theories. Presentation grades will take into account both content and delivery.

Content:
Each group will provide a general overview of the life and work of their assigned ethical theorist (for assignments, see below), except for those presentation topics marked with an asterisk (concerning which, see your professor). In doing so, groups should:

- provide a brief biographical sketch;
- place their ethicist’s life and work within his/her historical context;
- highlight the key contributions (theoretical and practical) made by their ethicist to the field of communication ethics;
- point out the epistemological assumptions informing their ethicist’s work, and
- include an application of their ethicist’s ideas to some contemporary communication concern. Such concerns might relate to advertising, business management, interpersonal communication, health communication, human resources, the internet, journalism, marketing, the mass media, politics, popular culture, religion, etc.; and,

- turn in a bibliography rendered per APA style prior to presenting. (Note: the bibliography should have the presentation subject listed as the title at the top of the page, followed by a list of the group members arranged in alphabetical order by last name.)

Delivery:
Presentations should be entertaining as well as educational. Thus, creativity is strongly encouraged. Try to incorporate interactive games, skits, videos and other visuals, etc. As this is an upper level communication class, it is assumed that students know how to present in a polished, professional manner. Like good speeches, good presentations should be organized, with a discernable introduction, body, and conclusion. Segues, signposts, and transitions are to be used in moving from topic-to-topic, from one segment to another (e.g., from a skit to a class debriefing), and from speaker-to-speaker. If using media/technology, be sure it is in working order BEFORE you present.

NB: Anyone who simply reads from a manuscript will earn an F for this assignment.

PRESENTATION ASSIGNMENTS

ROUND ONE
Group 1: Niccolò Machiavelli
Group 2: Renaissance*
Group 3: Aristotle
Group 4: Buddha
Group 5: Confucius
Group 6: Epictetus
Group 7: Epicurus
Group 8: The Talmud*
Group 9: Elie Wiesel
Group 10: Simon Wiesenthal

ROUND TWO
Group 10: Francis Bacon
Group 9: Friedrich Nietzsche
Group 8: Dietrich Bonhöffer
Group 7: Emmanuel Lévinas
Group 6: John Rawls
Group 5: Leszek Kołakowski
Group 4: Bartolomé de las Casas
Group 3: Francisco Suárez
Group 2: Joseph Ratzinger
Group 1: Jürgen Habermas