
EDST 593A: ETHICS AND EDUCATION:

ETHICS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Ethics and Education” is a required seminar for students in the EdD cohort starting in July 2021; it is not open to other students. The course will focus on the moral theories and ethical frameworks that can inform—and trouble—students’ work in educational leadership and policy. “Ethics” is understood in the course as that area of philosophy that asks questions about what it means to live well. The broad conception of ethics that shapes the course is the one outlined by Paul Ricoeur (1990/1992), who writes: “Let us define ‘ethical intention’ as *aiming at the ‘good life’ with and for others, in just institutions*” (p. 172). This conception of ethics calls attention to 1) different conceptions of the good life, 2) living with and for others, and 3) living in just institutions.

A grounding assumption is that “aiming at the ‘good life’ with and for others, in just institutions” has been a concern across places, times, and cultures, regardless of whether people have or haven’t used the particular language of ethics as an area of an academic discipline called philosophy. The course is organized around the three aspects outlined above, each of which raises questions for educational leadership and policy, such as:

- How do a society’s dominant ideas about the good life affect the purpose and orientation of the organization, and the type(s) of leadership expected in the organization?
- What ideas about “living with and for others” guide educational leaders in how they interact with others, and how they encourage those others to interact with each other?
- What moral qualities or character traits are expected of educational leaders in different contexts?
- How do ideas about justice affect how educational policies are written?
- How do leaders work within, or seek to change, unjust institutions?

ASSIGNMENTS

Ethical encounter (20%)

Quotation-commentary-question and response (20% + 20%)

Final paper (40%)

LOGISTICS

The delivery mode of this course depends on UBC’s decision about a return to on-campus, face-to-face teaching in September 2021. The course will be offered either in person during four weekends (Friday evening + all day Saturday), or via Zoom on six Saturday mornings. All readings for the course will be provided through the UBC Library Online Course Reserves (LOCR), accessible via the course Canvas site.

CONTACT

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