

Social Advocacy & Ethical Life

SAEL 200
Spring 2017

Instructor: Gerald Jackson

Office Hours:
MW 1:30pm-2:00pm
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Social Advocacy & Ethical Life is addressed to the nature and relationship of ethics and oral forms of expression in a variety of socio-political contexts. Students in the course will have an opportunity to critically investigate theories of ethics and principles of spoken advocacy, and to apply their inquiry in a cumulative series of exercises and performances. Both critical and practical, the work undertaken in this course offers a chance for students to: 1) question the meaning and importance of contemporary calls for civility, engaged citizenship, and deliberation; 2) investigate the roots, power, and limits of ethical discourse and its relevance to social and political decision-making; and 3) develop a working understanding of the principles of social advocacy and the ways in which oral communication constructs, supports, and remakes the grounds of ethical interaction.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define the idea of social advocacy, identify distinct forms of oral advocacy, and demonstrate an understanding of the respective values and limits of such communicative practices in a variety of social, political, and cultural situations;
- Define sources and functions of ethical reasoning and explain its importance in the development of individual and collective life, identify key ethical concepts and recognize the kinds of social and political issues that provoke ethical questions, and critically analyze and engage ethical controversies that shape personal and social norms of responsibility;
- Understand, perform, and critically assess the ways in which social advocacy can invent, shape, and upset personal and collective ethical commitments and the ways in which ethical frameworks enable, promote, and guide advocacy;
- Understand and explain the fundamental concepts and frameworks that

enable social advocacy, including principles of argumentation, ethical forms of persuasion, theories of the rhetorical situation and audience interaction, and modes of listening;

- Apply and demonstrate the basic concepts of ethical social advocacy through the performance of speeches that address a variety of ethical issues and which engage audiences with diverse and conflicting ethical commitments;
- Critically assess the ethical responsibilities entailed in social advocacy and the conditions under which advocacy may be an ethical responsibility.

Course Materials

Course readings will be made available on the course website and through Blackboard.

Course Structure and Required Assignments

In this course, we will engage in a variety of activities, including lecture, lecture-based discussion, group activities, student speeches, and critical evaluation of contemporary discourse. Over the semester, students in this course will be asked to undertake and complete the following assignments. Each assignment will be detailed in handouts and discussed in class.

Speaking:

1. **Imagining Advocacy:** For this assignment, each member of the course will develop, compose, and deliver a 3 ½ - 4 minute speech addressed to a social, political, and/or cultural problem that provokes their interest and for which they are willing to advocate. The speech will be developed around several specific questions: For what would you advocate? When? To whom? Why? At what risk? In these terms, the speech does not ask the students to fashion a specific case but to introduce, describe, and explain their interest in giving voice to a particular issue. It thus serves three goals: 1) the speech offers an opportunity for class members to introduce themselves to their primary audience for the semester; 2) the speech provides a basis for reflection and discussion about how individuals, groups and cultures identify, accept, and defend values; 3) the speech offers a working introduction to principles of informative speaking and the ways in which information may (not) be heard by diverse audiences. The assignment is worth 50 points.
2. **Discovering an Issue:** In this second speaking assignment, each member of the class will choose and research a significant social-political-public issue and then develop and deliver a 4 ½ - 5 minute speech addressed to the history, contours, and ethical importance of that issue. Building from the first speech, the goal of this assignment is not to defend a particular position

but to provide an audience with a full and clear understanding of an issue's roots, sides, and potential ethical significance. The assignment thus serves several goals: 1) it provides an opportunity to investigate the advocacy of a significant issue through the lens of one or more ethical theories; 2) the speech requires a careful investigation and articulation of the "sides" of an issue, the ways in which issues are composed of different if not competing opinions about what is good, valuable, or appropriate; 3) the speech lays the groundwork for the course's concern for the motives of advocacy and the role of argumentation and audience analysis in its performance and evaluation. The assignment is 75 points.

3. **Making a Case:** This assignment asks each member of the class to develop and present a 5 ½ - 6 minutes speech that proceeds from a specific claim about an issue and which endeavors to generate interest from an audience. Working with the issues taken up in the "discovering an issue" speech, the goal of this speech is to move from providing information about a problem to making a specific claim about the meaning, significance, and/or appropriate resolution of an ethical issue. In this respect, the speech may contend that one perspective about an issue is rooted in a stronger argument than its counterparts or that the issue's different sides are limited and require a new approach. This work serves several goals: 1) the speech requires the application of argumentation theory, including the formulation and development of a claim that takes a position on the ethical significance of an issue; 2) the speech affords a working understanding of the rhetorical situation, an opportunity to invite an audience to listen critically and to present a case that engages the interests of those with different views of the issue under consideration; 3) the speech provides the chance to reflect critically on the specific ethical choices and dilemmas entailed in addressing an issue about which people disagree. The assignment is worth 100 points.
4. **Debating for Judgment:** The aim of the assignment is to undertake a debate over a single issue or problem and to do so in a manner that invites an audience to undertake deliberation and judgment about the merits and implications of the question under consideration. This is a collaborative exercise in which class members will work in pairs. Each debate will consist of a ten (10) minute performance. The goal of the debate is not to "win" but to collaborate in a manner that enables the ethical practice of deliberation. To this end, partners will work together to develop and compose speeches that provide contrasting and clashing views about the meaning, significance and basis for deliberation over a particular ethical issue. This effort affords an opportunity to: 1) consider the different sides of the issue, specifically with an eye to how they form a controversy and how we might begin to

understand the connections between the arguments that compose the controversy; 2) apply principles of ethical clash and consider how the process of clash can create space to define the meaning and significance of values; 3) open a moment of deliberation in which speakers and audiences reflect on and perhaps revise their own ethical and moral commitments. The assignment is worth 100 points.

Writing

1. **Reasoning about an Ethical Issue:** Each student in the course will develop and compose a five (5) page paper addressed to an ethically significant social, political, or cultural issue. Working from a clear and directed thesis, the paper should 1) detail the issue in question, 2) explain its ethical significance in light of one or more appropriate ethical theories, and 3) draw from relevant ethical theories in order to build a case for how the issue can be productively addressed or resolved. The issue addressed in the paper will be the same as that for Speaking Assignment #3 – Making a Case. The paper is due on the day this speech is delivered. The paper is worth 75 points.
2. **Addressing Ethical Controversy:** Each student in the course will develop and compose an eight (8) page paper that investigates specific ways in which ethical claims provoke opposition and how this opposition can be productively addressed. This paper will first involve a substantial revision of paper #1 (Reasoning about an Ethical Issue) based on instructor feedback and course readings. In addition, the paper will 1) detail two significant objections to the position defended in the paper, 2) identify how these objections are rooted in specific forms of ethical thought, and 3) draw from specific ethical theories to develop replies to these objections. The paper is worth 100 points. It is due on the last day of class.
3. **In-Class Writing:** Each student will also complete 6 in-class writing assignments. Prompts for these assignments will be announced in class, and will involve extensive collaboration in groups to address the application and discussion of discursive practices and theoretical concepts introduced during the course. Each assignment will be worth 50 points.

Course Policies

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class meeting in accordance with the University

Attendance Policy. Success in this course rests heavily on engaged participation. If you are not present, you cannot participate – as student, speaker, or audience member. Also see the section below on course policies regarding make-up speeches.

The University's policy on absences is that there are no excused absences. Furthermore, there are extensive in-class assignments, writings, and discussions that will directly impact your participation grade (see below) and that are not available for a "redo." Things come up where missing classes is necessary, but extensive and chronic tardiness or absence will not be accepted. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that you will be successful in this course with absences exceeding the university minimum for a 3-day per week class (4 absences).

Class Preparation

All readings should be completed by the day for which they are assigned. All students are expected to bring copies of the readings to class on the day that they are discussed. On days that you deliver or workshop a speech, all preparatory forms must be completed. Speech outlines must be submitted before speaking.

Participation

Participation in this course is mandatory and expected. Students cannot expect to be successful in this course without participating. This means participating in class discussion (coming prepared with materials, having read and taken notes), in in-class writing assignments, and outside the class (during office hours). Students should be (or become comfortable) with having discussions with their peers and teachers, seeking help and discussion outside of class from peers, and coming to office hours to discuss class material and projects with their instructor. Assessment of participation is subjective, although students may inquire as to their participation in class. **Note: This is not a punitive measure: in a speech, ethics, and advocacy class, learning to speak in multiple contexts and situations, seeking to bridge gaps in understanding, and looking to work collaboratively or at least in conversation with others is a key skill that will carry students far beyond this classroom.** Participation is worth a speech grade, at 200 points.

Email Policy

I will respond to emails from students within 24 hours. If I have not responded within this time you may follow up on that email or in class. I do not answer or reply to email on the weekend or holidays. I will also not respond or acknowledge last-minute emails regarding being unprepared from class, assignments that are not done, or so on.

Technology and Materials

This class includes a paper reader, available for purchase at Copy Services in the

basement of Russell House. This is the only required text for the course, outside of any optional or digital readings I provide for the class. It includes the syllabus, assignment sheets, and any notes students take on assigned readings. As such, students are required to bring in this reader for **All Course Periods. No Exceptions.**

Grading Scale

The following scale will be used for the calculation and assignment of all grades in the course.

Imagining Advocacy Speech	50 Points
Discovering an Issue Speech	75 Points
Making a Case Speech	100 Points
Debate Speech	100 Points
Essay 1: Reasoning About an Ethical Issue	75 Points
Essay 2: Addressing Ethical Controversy	100 Points
In-Class Writing (6)	300 Points
Participation	200 Points
Total Points	1000 Points

A: 100%-90% (1000-900)	C: 75-70% (759-700)
B+: 89-86% (899-860)	D: 69-60% (699-600)
B: 85-80% (859-800)	F: Below 60 (<599)
C+: 79-76% (799-760)	

Make-Up Speeches

In order to complete our work and deliver a full complement of speeches, all students must be diligent in presenting their speech on the day it is assigned. It is almost impossible to allow make-up speeches in class. For this reason, unexcused missed speeches may be performed only outside of class (i.e. office hours) and for no more than 50% credit. Students can make up their speech in class for full credit only if there is clear and authoritative documentation that attendance was prevented by:

bereavement; disabling illness; accident or disabling injury; legal obligation; university authorization.

Academic Responsibility, Integrity and Ethics

The Carolina Community holds that “It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud or deceit of any type in connection with any academic program. Any student who violates this rule or who assists others to do so will be subject to discipline.” Dishonesty will constitute:

- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, or attempting to give or receive such assistance, in connection with the performance of ANY academic work.
- Unauthorized use of materials or information of any type including the use of any obtained through electronic or mechanical means.
- Access to the contents of any test or examination prior to its administration.
- Unauthorized use of another person’s work without proper acknowledgment of source, regardless of whether the lack of acknowledgment was unintentional.
- Intentional misrepresentation by word or action of any situation of fact, or intentional omission of material fact, so as to mislead any person in connection with any academic work.

Students with Disabilities

Any person who because of a disability may need special arrangements or accommodations to meet the requirements of this course should consult with the instructor as soon as possible. The Office of Disability Services may be reached at 777-6142, or at www.sa.sc.edu/sds/.

Course Calendar of Units and Assignments:

DATE	AGENDA	READINGS
Week 1		
1/9	Introduction: Syllabus, Introduction. What are Morals, Values, and Ethics? What is Advocacy?	Readings: Syllabus.
1/11	Language and Advocacy: What are the responsibilities, obligations, power relations, and implications of speaking, writing, and language?	Readings: hooks, "The Power of Language." Lorde, "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," && "Who Blames the Victim?"
1/13	Language Advocacy, and Ethics: Advocacy and marginalization, alliances, questions of efficacy and ethics. In-Class Writing #1	Reading: Aristotle, "Rhetoric." Foss, "Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for Invitational Rhetoric."
Week 2		
1/16	No Class: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.	Reading: Brockriede and Ehninger, "Toulmin on Argument." Schafer-Landau, "The Fundamentals of Ethics."
1/18	Argumentation: Models of argumentation, persuasion and advocacy.	Reading: Burke, "Terministic Screens."
1/20	Situations, Ecologies, and Rhetorics: The position of advocacy and speech, actors and agency, invention.	Reading: Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation."

Week 3

1/23	Speech Week: "Imagining Advocacy." Speech Outlines Due before class.
1/25	Speech Week: "Imagining Advocacy." Speech Outlines Due before class.
1/27	Speech Week: "Imagining Advocacy." Speech Outlines Due before class.

Week 4

9/12	Primary Ethical Theory: Utilitarianism and Consequentialism.	Readings: Mill, "Utilitarianism."
9/14	Primary Ethical Theory: Utilitarianism and Consequentialism.	Readings: Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality."
9/16	Application: Thinking about Utility, suffering, value.	Readings: Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas."

Week 5

1/30	Primary Ethical Theory: Social Contract Theory.	Readings: Rawls, "Social Theory of Justice."
2/1	Primary Ethical Theory: Social Contract Theory.	Readings: Young, "Displacing the Distributive Paradigm."
2/3	Application: Justice and the Social Contract. In-Class Writing #2.	None.

Week 6

2/6	Primary Ethical Theory: Care Ethics.	Readings: Held, “The Ethics of Care.”
2/8	Primary Ethical Theory: Virtue Ethics.	Reading: Annais, “On Being Virtuous and Doing the Right Thing.”
2/10	Application: Care and Virtue Ethics, Value. In-Class Writing #3.	Reading: Arendt, “On Private and Public Life.”

Week 7

2/13	Speech Week: “Discovering an Issue.” Outlines of Speeches and Reference Sheets are Due.	
2/15	Speech Week: “Discovering an Issue.” Outlines of Speeches and Reference Sheets are Due.	
2/17	Speech Week: “Discovering an Issue.” Outlines of Speeches and Reference Sheets are Due.	

Week 8

2/20	Primary Ethical Theory: Deontology and Duty.	Readings: Kant, “Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals.”
2/22	Primary Ethical Theory: Deontology and Duty.	Readings: Kant, “Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals.”

2/24	Primary Ethical Theory Deontology and Duty. In-Class Writing #4.	Readings: None.
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Week 9

2/27	Society, Advocacy, and Obligation: What is our obligation as citizens, participants in a democracy, students, and peers? When is Advocacy an ethical responsibility?	Reading: Mill, "On Liberty." Due: Essay 1.
3/1	Society, Advocacy, and Obligation: What is our obligation as citizens, participants in a democracy, students, and peers? When is Advocacy an ethical responsibility?	Reading: Thoreau, "On Civil Disobedience."
3/3	Society, Advocacy, and Obligation: What is our obligation as citizens, participants in a democracy, students, and peers? When is Advocacy an ethical responsibility? In-Class Writing #5.	Reading: Butler, "The Value of Being Disturbed."

Week 10

3/6	No Class: Spring Break	Reading: None
3/8	No Class: Spring Break	Reading: None
3/10	No Class: Spring Break	Reading: None

Week 11

3/13	Disturbance and Stakes: What does it mean to be disturbed? How does this structure our response to the mundane or every-day issues around us?	Reading: Wallace, "Consider the Lobster."
3/15	Disturbance and Stakes: Disturbance and questioning as argumentative imperatives and strategies.	Readings: Wallace, "Consider the Lobster."
3/17	Disturbance and Stakes: Application and Response. In-Class Writing #6.	Readings: Goodnight, "Controversy."

Week 12

3/20	Advocacy and Affect: Emotions, politics, and practices.	Readings: Ahmed, "Why Happiness Why Now."
3/22	Advocacy and Affect: Emotions, politics, and practices.	Readings: Kennedy, "The Case Against Civility."
3/24	Advocacy and Affect: Emotions, politics, and practices.	Readings: Nussbaum, "Aristotle on Emotions and Rational Persuasion."

Week 13

3/27	Speech Week: "Making a Case" Speech. Speech Outlines Due.	
3/29	Speech Week: "Making a Case" Speech. Speech Outlines Due.	
3/31	Speech Week: "Making a Case" Speech.	

Week 14

4/3	Peer Review: Preparation for final projects.	Reading: Thaler and Sunstein, <i>Nudge</i> .
4/5	Peer Review and Revision: Peer Review and Revision.	None.
4/7	Revision: Structuring and Outlining the Final Paper.	None.

Week 15

4/10	Revision Workshop: Planning and Revising the final Project.	None.
4/12	Revision Workshop: Planning and Revising the final Project.	None.
4/14	Revision Workshop: Planning and Revising the final Project.	None.

Week 16

4/17	Speech Week: Debate Speech. Speech Outlines Due.
4/19	Speech Week: Debate Speech. Speech Outlines Due.
4/21	Speech Week: Debate Speech. Speech Outlines Due.

Finals

4/24	Final Class Period: Final Papers Due.
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