Towards Ethical Maturity: Connecting theory, self-awareness, and practice in ethics courses

## Ethics Trial

Professor: Cris Wildermuth

Summary: Students are asked to take the roles of “lawyers” and “prosecutors” of a current moral issue and defend their sides at a trial, using at least two ethical theories. The “jury” is asked to decide considering the articulation of the theories and the presence or absence of logical fallacies.

Prior to the beginning of the semester, identify a significant and current moral issue. Past examples included the immigration crisis, war crimes recently uncovered, military decisions, etc.

Ask students to investigate the topic and get ready to debate it.

After teaching students at least two major ethical theories (for example: Kantianism and Utilitarianism), divide them into four groups: Lawyers, Prosecutors, Judges (a team of two or three), and the Jury.

Lawyers and prosecutors focus on one theory as they prepare opening statements and plan questions to ask their “witnesses.”

The Judges and Jury review both theories and plan the criteria they will use to evaluate the presentations.

When time is up, start “the trial.”

Depending on the class length, this activity may require several sessions and out-of-class homework.

## 4 Ethical Lens Debates

Professor: Linda Olson

Summary: Students are divided into four groups in accordance to the four ethical lenses. They are asked to respond to a case study considering their assigned lens. Students then present their cases and decisions and argue their positions with the rest of the class.

#### Debate Instructions

Timing for class: All students are assigned one of Baird’s 4 Ethical Lens groups. Each group will remain the same and in character for that ethical lens throughout the 4 debates over 4 class periods. Each group should plan to spend 1-2 hours outside of class reviewing the class readings for their lens and become experts in arguing from that lens for their own assigned case study as well as to argue the other cases. In class time will be accordingly:

**2:00-2:35** All of class: Small overview by professor of readings for today including group work, video clips and worksheets. Come prepared to explain the reading for the day.

**2:35-2:55** All 4 lens groups meet in their assigned groups. To prepare for the current day’s case study and debate.

>Assigned lens group for the day will finalize anything they put together outside of class and will make sure they are ready to present info, history of lens, and fully articulated approach to the assigned Case, including solutions (PowerPoints or other forms of engaging us with info are welcome; 15 minutes max).

>The other 3 lens groups will look at assigned Case, their own assigned Lens info and think about how they are going to argue a solution from their lens, debating the presenters. Try to persuade the group that your Lens is superior with cogent arguments and examples.

**2:50- 2:55** 5 Minute Break

**2:55-3:15 Minutes:** Assigned Debate Lens Group presents the Lens

**3:15-3:45** The other 3 lens groups find fault lines with presenting Lens that and argues for alternative ways of thinking; use questions, examples and reasoning that shows the different approach your lens brings to the table. .

**5 Minutes:** Debrief and Closure

#### How to prepare:

Each of your assigned groups will be formally presenting only on the day you are assigned. The Results Lens group will be up first. They will have 15-20 minutes to fully explain the Results lens and then the case you wil be presenting. Use information from our text, internet searches, and the pdf from Baird’s work through EthicsGame labeled ResultsLens.pdf under Files</Readings in Canvas. Spend a good amount of time showing us your understanding of the great asset Results bring to ethical decisions. Then, not only should you be (and act) like the experts from Results Lens, you will present your perspective on “Case A: Results Lens” of the pdf called “Four Cases.pdf”. You will tell us from a Results Lens how you will solve this dilemma. Argue strongly from results.

Then the 3 other assigned groups, who will be sitting in their lens group, will try to pick apart your logic/solution, based on their particular group lens. So for instance, the Reputation Group will debate you from a reputation perspective. Same with the other 2 groups.

We will then repeat this process each of the next 3 class periods in the following order of presenters: Reputation Lens Group, Relationship Lens Group and Responsibilities Lens Group. Each of your groups has a corresponding new case to present on your day and the 3 other groups will continue to argue out of their assigned lens groups as well.

## Memo to your Children, Personal Code of Ethics

Professor: Cris Wildermuth

*This exercise is adapted from Kouzes & Posner’s The Leadership Challenge model and facilitator’s guide.*

Summary: Students are asked to write a memo to their children (or future children) clarifying their key values. This exercise is completed prior to the Personal Code of Ethics. In the Personal Code exercise, students write their Codes of Ethics, including key principles to be used in decision-making and contrasting their personal codes and the main codes appropriate in their professions (i.e., the Society of Human Resource Management Code of Ethics, the Academy of Management Code of Ethics, etc.).

## Kingdom Tycoons

Professor: Cris Wildermuth

#### Objective:

Win the opportunity to build the new Kingdom Tycoon City (a combination of buildings and structures).

#### Background:

You have woken up in the “Starting Gate” of a new kingdom. The community’s first “Round Table” has decided to allocate resources according to your effort and wits. Effort and merit will be rewarded. After resources are allocated you will be placed in a team and asked to build the prototype of a new city.

#### **The Bottom Line:**

Follow the rules of the competition in order to obtain the bricks needed to be the Kingdom’s Tycoon Team! Your MAIN objective early in the game is to EARN BRICKS. After you EARN BRICKS you must use them (and *only them*) to build the dazzling prototype of a new city.

#### Rules:



The game has 3 phases:

### PHASE 1: TRADE!

Open your envelopes.

Your envelopes contain one brick and five cards.

You have 5 minutes to trade cards as much as you like.

Follow the trading rules:

* Objective: To obtain the best possible poker hand.
* Trade only one card with **one** person at a time.
* Trades are accomplished through **mini card challenges**.

Mini Card Challenges

* First, challenge an opponent by presenting **one single high card** (hidden, do not show until both opponents choose a card).
* The highest card wins (If there is a tie, the person whose age is closest to Cris’ age wins).
* The winner may then see ***all***his/her opponent’s cards and trade any card at will (one card per trade only – then move on to the next person).
* Blue exception! If you own a **blue brick** you do not have to show your cards even if you lose. In that case, your opponent must pick a card at random from your hand (without seeing it).
* Each time you win a challenge pick a brick from your opponent.
* If your opponent has no more bricks left, come to Trading Station # 1 to pick one.
* Note: You do not have to trade – continue trading only while it is in your best interests to do so.

### PHASE 2: EARN BRICKS!

Once the trading time is completed, show your poker hands to the facilitator.

You will earn bricks and be assigned to teams according to your results.

* Top 3 hands: The Dukes Team (please use blue pipe cleaners to create a bracelet).
* Next 3 hands: The Knights Team (please use yellow pipe cleaners to create a bracelet).
* Remaining hands: The Peasants Team (please use red pipe cleaners to create a bracelet).

### PHASE 3: BUILD!

You have 20 minutes to build a prototype of the new kingdom.

Use ONLY bricks.

Get ready to sell your solution to the Panel of Judges.

## Movie Analysis Paper

Professor: Cris Wildermuth

Summary: Students consider two lenses as they approach a moral dilemma exhibited in a movie or TV episode of their choice. They must connect these lenses to appropriate theorists and reach a final solution.

Select a movie or episode in a TV series.

Describe the episode and key dilemma faced by one or more characters.

Select at least two lenses with which to analyze the dilemma.

Students must clearly state what they would do to solve the dilemma – and why.

## Ethical Response Paper

Professor: Linda Olson

Summary: In the Ethical Response paper, students are asked to use the four ethical lens approaches to reflect on a past personal dilemma. They then reflect on any changes they would make to their past decision should they encounter a similar dilemma again and add new insights gained from the course.

**Instructions to Students:**

In the first part of this course, we explored a variety of ethical lenses or approaches to making ethical decisions. For this assignment, you will summarize the approaches of each of the lenses by addressing an ethical situation in which you have found yourself the last few years, while a college student. **Please do not go back to high school days for this.** Ideally, this should be a challenging situation that you may or may not have responded as you now wish you had. To start the process, you should use the ELI Worksheet to outline your issue and the four frames as presented by Baird. This should be included as an appendix to your paper. The worksheet is posted on Canvas.

Then using the 4 Ethical Lens Approaches write a 7-8 page paper describing the dilemma first (1-2 pp max) and then analyzing your decision using the 4 lenses systematically and referencing the reading as you go. Consider any changes you would make if given the chance to respond again. Then choose one of the 4 decision-making models presented in the Johnson Canvas reading to look at your situation from another vantage. In essence, you will 1) apply all 4 Baird viewpoints to an ethically challenging situation of your own choosing; 2) Choose and apply one of the models Johnson presents in ‘Chapter 6’ to analyze the situation from another decision model; 3) Finally, compare and contrast ideas about the best way to approach the situation articulating your current assessment about the most ethical thing to do now that you have time to reflect. While these papers are confidential, please refrain from using a situation I am required to report given my position of authority, such as ongoing crime, past sexual assault, self-harm or something of the nature. Use pseudonyms to protect others identity that might be identifiable. We will discuss all of this in class and be sure to ask questions, if you have any concerns.

## Leadership Manifesto

Professor: Linda Olson

Summary: In the Leadership Manifesto paper, students articulate their personal leadership definitions and the moral dimensions embedded in these definitions. They articulate clear values they have discovered important to them over their leadership studies journey and create goals around further character development and values clarification. They are asked to consider possible future career choices and strategies to continue their ethical leadership development.