SOCIAL ETHICS: ON EDUCATION (SERVICE LEARNING)

PHILOSOPHY 2008-03 (26317)
T-TH 3:10-4:40
PHILLIPS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ROOM 216

Prof. Joe Blosser
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Office: D. Hayworth Hall 217
Office Hours: M-T 2-3 PM, F 10-11 AM
Also by appointment

THIS COURSE FULFILLS YOUR ETHICAL REASONING REQUIREMENT

Course Description:

There can be no doubt that education in the U.S. is deeply troubled. We are lagging behind most other developed countries on all of the major international assessments, and the effects of our failing education system are readily apparent across our scarred urban and rural landscapes. Some people blame the teachers, some the principles, some the students, some the schools, some the local communities, and some a changing national and global context. Rather than simply throwing around blame, the course is intended to expose you first-hand to the injustices in our educational system and challenge you to think critically about them. The course employs a service learning pedagogy because one cannot understand the ethical challenges facing the educational system without first hand involvement. Like other Social Ethics courses, the course is also an introduction to historical and contemporary ethical perspectives and issues facing the world, but this class specifically focuses on philosophical theories of ethics concerning education so we can use the issue of education as a lens onto a whole variety of social problems and justice issues.

The expectations for thinking, writing, and serving in this class are high. As a course that fulfills its fourth hour through a service learning requirement, you will be pushed to integrate challenging primary texts in philosophy, contemporary writings on education, and your experiences serving with High Point area students and schools. The course is intended to develop your intellectual capacity to understand issues of ethics in education, your practical capacity to make effective changes, and your moral capacity to live a life of significance in complex global communities.

Learning Goals and Objectives:

1. Goal: Be able to identify and understand ethical issues that arise in education
   Objective: Experience the ethical issues facing elementary and middle school students in the High Point area through 25 hours of interaction with the Boys and Girls Club and Oak Hill Elementary School and then learn to name and understand the challenges through class discussions, papers, presentations, and reflections.
2. **Goal**: Develop confidence in their ability to read and critically engage intermediate-level works of philosophy, ethics, and educational theory.
   **Objective**: Read primary texts in the history of ethics and philosophy and demonstrate their understanding of classical, enlightenment, and progressive educational theories through large and small group discussion, papers, reflections, and presentations.

3. **Goal**: Write in a clear and informed manner about issues of ethics in education.
   **Objective**: Critically synthesize theoretical course material with practical service learning experiences in papers, presentations, class discussions, and structured reflection.

4. **Goal**: Clearly articulate how different approaches to education can alleviate some of the social inequalities that afflict our education system.
   **Objective**: Use the service learning experience in discussion board posts, class discussions, and the final presentation to challenge different philosophies of education and how they might (or might not) alleviate justice issues.

5. **Goal**: Be able to articulate their own philosophy of educational ethics and how it applies to their lives as citizens who are responsible to the communities in which they live.
   **Objective**: Utilize at least three of the major ethical theories on education and their experience in service learning to form a philosophy of education, which highlights their ethical perspective and commitment to improving education.

**Required Course Materials (On Reserve at Smith Library):**
Cahn, Steven M. *Classic and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Education*. 2d ed.


NOTE: Textbooks can be purchased rather inexpensively used online.
Other readings, writing assignments, and grades are located on BLACKBOARD.

**Service Learning Placements and Procedures:**
All students in the course are required to spend 25 hours in service to the organization with which they are paired in the course. Before beginning your service hours, you will be introduced to representatives of the organizations, receive an orientation to service learning as a pedagogy, agree to the Service Learning Code of Professional and Ethical Behavior, and sign a Partnership Agreement. You must begin your service learning experience by **Friday, Jan. 24th**, as it is necessary for your first reflection and paper.

Service learning is not an internship or simply volunteering – it is a pedagogical model that will deepen your understanding of the course material by exposing you first-hand to the ethical issues we discuss in class. You will perform service work that aids our local community and that service work will advance your thinking about ethics and education.

The following Venn Diagram illustrates the three central components of a service learning pedagogy and how it is different from other activities. The Diagram is a synthesis of two sources: [http://www.csus.edu/cec/director_msg.stm](http://www.csus.edu/cec/director_msg.stm) and [http://mgmoses.com/Jumpstart/SectionII/Chap1%20Overview%20SL/Defining_SL.html](http://mgmoses.com/Jumpstart/SectionII/Chap1%20Overview%20SL/Defining_SL.html)
Our two community partners are:

1. Oak Hill Elementary School
   320 Wrightenberry St.
   High Point, NC 27260

2. The Salvation Army’s Boys & Girls Club
   http://www.salvationarmycarolinas.org/commands/highpoint/bgc
   121 Southwest Cloverleaf Twice
   High Point, NC 27263
   881-5444

Course Requirements and Grading:

1. Plagiarism Course 0% (Pass/Fail)
   You must successfully complete the Indiana School of Education plagiarism test at the following website before any grade will be given to you in the class: https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html (a link to the test can also be found on BLACKBOARD). Once you complete the test with a 100%, you must print off the certificate verifying your completion, sign it, and turn it in to me. Other resources on plagiarism as well as practice tests are available on the website.

2. Classroom Participation 10%
   This grade includes several elements:
   1) Attendance is mandatory and the only way to succeed in the course. You are allowed two absences without penalty or question (if you come in after attendance has been taken, you may be penalized for half an absence). I will issue an attendance probation warning upon your third absence, and the fourth absence may result in your withdrawal from the course.
   2) You must be prepared for class by completing the assigned reading material before class begins and bring the reading with you to class! To aid your reading,
each student should come to class with one critical question about the reading he or she is prepared to discuss. I also often call on students to answer basic reading questions to ensure that all have read.
3) You are expected to participate in large and small group discussions as well as the frequent in-class writing assignments.

3. Discussion Board (20%)
Students will be broken up into two groups depending on the service learning site to which they are assigned. Each group will have a Blackboard discussion board. Over the course of the semester, students will be required to reflect on five discussion questions that will be posted on Thursday at 5 PM and the discussion will be open until Monday at Noon. The questions will require that you synthesize the reading materials for that week and your service learning experience in order to form your own argument about an issue.

You will be graded based on your understanding of the course readings, the critical thinking you display in your reflection, and your serious engagement with the reflections of other students as you respond to their posts (I’m looking for quality of conversation, not just quantity of posts).

4. Ethical Argument Papers or EAP (x2) 25%
In the first paper, you must select one ethical argument Plato or Aristotle make about education and agree or disagree with their argument. The paper should be a persuasive essay in which you synthesize the classical philosopher’s own words and argument and your experiences at your service learning placement (along with other relevant experiences). In grading the paper, I will be assessing you on five criteria:

1) Your ability to identify an “ethical argument”
2) The accuracy with which you present the philosopher’s argument
3) The incorporation of your experience into your argument
4) The persuasive force with which you make your case, including a clear and precise thesis statement. Note: Excellent persuasive essays consider both sides of an argument as they make their case.
5) The grammar and composition of the paper, including proper citation.

The first EAP should be approximately 800-1000 words in length and is due Feb. 7th at 9 AM uploaded on Blackboard.

The second paper will require that you watch a film about education and relate it back to the philosophical theories in the course and your service learning experience in order to argue for the adequacy or inadequacy of the educational approach represented by the film. You should select two or three scenes from the movie and discuss how they exemplify or defy one or two of the different philosophies we have discussed (they do not need to represent the entire philosophy – you may focus on just a portion of it if you wish). The paper must use your service learning experience to support or challenge the educational approach demonstrated in the movie and by the philosophers. The paper might answer questions like: What ethical problems have arisen at your placement that
are similar or different from those in the film? Do you think the approach used in the movie would work with the students at your placement? What are the gaps or holes your service learning experience has taught you to see in the various philosophies related to the movie? In grading the paper, I will focus on five criteria:

1) The accuracy – and brevity – of your description of the film
2) Your analysis of how one or two of the philosophical theories we’ve discussed relate to the scenes from the film you selected
3) Your ability to think critically about how the service learning experience supports or challenges the film and the philosophies you related to it.
4) The clarity of the paper’s argument, including its thesis and supporting evidence. The paper is not a summary, but rather a critical synthesis of a film, philosophical theory, and experience to make a point about how a particular approach to education works (or doesn’t) in the real world.
5) Grammar and composition, including proper citation.

The second EAP should be **1000-1400 words** and is due **April 5th at 9 AM** uploaded on Blackboard.

**IMPORTANT:** Papers must have one inch margins all around, be double-spaced, written in a Times Roman, Calibri or Cambria font, and be properly cited according to a commonly accepted manual of style. You should submit papers via BLACKBOARD. Papers must be submitted in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx), text or rich text (.txt or .rtf) formats, or as a PDF file (to convert any file to a PDF file for free go to [www.cutepdf.com](http://www.cutepdf.com)). Please be aware that any written work submitted in this course may be verified using plagiarism detection technology in order to ensure that the work is not in violation of the Honor Code.

5. Mid-Term Exam 15%
This will be an in-class, closed book examination covering the ethical theories presented in the first part of the course. **March 1st.**

6. Final Paper 20%
The final paper offers you a chance to develop your own ethics of education, which must synthesize the course material and service learning experience. The paper consists in three parts:

1) On **Tuesday April 17th** we will workshop the papers in class. Therefore, you must come to class with two typed hard copies of a tentative thesis statement and four topic sentences that demonstrate the evidence you will use to support your argument. The topic sentences must reference at least two different philosophies from the class and your service learning experience. You will turn in one hard-copy at the start of the class and keep the other to make changes on during class.

By **Tuesday May 1st at 8:30 AM** you must submit the final two parts of the paper by uploading them to Blackboard.
2) A full 5-7 page, double-spaced version of your ethics of education. The paper must include at least three philosophers from the course and the implications of their theories on your personal philosophy, especially in terms of moral issues, like justice, equality, freedom, opportunity, and/or character development. You must develop your personal philosophy in conversation with your service learning experience, using your experience to challenge and exemplify your approach to education. This paper will be graded on:
   a. The clarity and persuasiveness of your argument, including a strong thesis statement and logically supporting evidence
   b. Your understanding of three philosophers from the course
   c. The rigor of your reflection on the service learning experience and its applicability to a philosophy of education
   d. Grammar and composition, including proper citation.

3) A one page, double-spaced abstract of your ethics of education that does not include any direct quotations and is written for an audience of education professionals who are not specialists in the ethics of education. The abstract should convey the main arguments of your ethics of education, but it must do so in approachable, plain language. For those of you interested in becoming teachers, this paper can become the basis for the personal philosophy of education you will be required to submit with many job applications. This paper will be graded on the clarity and persuasiveness of your argument and the accessible nature of your writing.

7. Final Presentation 10%

During our regularly scheduled final exam period on Tuesday, May 1st from 8:30-11:30 AM, we will meet for your final presentations. Your final presentations will be done in groups, depending on your site assignment. The students at your service learning site will form two or three groups and make a presentation back to the whole class, the community partner, and the public. These will be formal presentations, students should dress up as they would for a business interview, and the presentation should be a well-practiced production.

The presentation should describe the kind of service work you performed and then go into depth on one particular ethical problem encountered in your placement (or by the students at your placement). The presentation should then offer your personal analysis of the ethical problem and how you think it could be best approached. Remember the community partner will be present, so you will want to point out what they have done well and then politely and graciously gesture toward how they could move forward.

The presentation will be graded on the following four criteria:
   1) Rigor of reflection on your service learning experience
   2) Understanding and analysis of the ethical issue
   3) Creativity of the presentation
   4) Professionalism and polish of the presentation
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday January 10</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Readings are due on the day listed. Readings listed (online) can be found on Blackboard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday January 12</td>
<td>Introduction to Service Learning</td>
<td>Eyler and Giles, <em>Where’s the Learning in Service-Learning</em>, ch. 1 (online)</td>
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<td>Howard, “Academic Service Learning: A Counternormative Pedagogy” (online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday January 17</td>
<td>Classical Philosophers I</td>
<td>Plato, <em>The Meno</em>, pp. 5-16</td>
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<td>(last day to drop without record)</td>
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<td>Morton, “Community Service and Starfish Hurling” (online)</td>
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<td>Thursday January 26</td>
<td>Classical Philosophers IV</td>
<td>Plato, <em>The Republic</em>, pp. 59-74</td>
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<td>Discussion Board (DB) #1 Posted</td>
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<td>Tuesday January 31</td>
<td>Classical Philosophers V</td>
<td>Aristotle, <em>Nichomachean Ethics</em>, pp. 75-93</td>
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<td>Brooks, “If it Feels Right” (online)</td>
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<td>Thursday February 2</td>
<td>Classical Philosophers VI</td>
<td>Aristotle, <em>Politics</em>, pp. 93-103</td>
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<td>Tuesday February 7</td>
<td>Reflection: The Classical Positions and Service Learning</td>
<td>Harkavy and Benson, “De-Platonizing and Democratizing Education as the Bases of Service Learning” (online)</td>
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<td>EAP 1: Due at 9 AM on Blackboard</td>
<td>The Character Counts Website (<a href="http://charactercounts.org">http://charactercounts.org</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday February 9</td>
<td>Enlightenment Philosophers I</td>
<td>Locke, <em>Some Thoughts Concerning Education</em>, pp. 105-121</td>
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<td>Tuesday February 14</td>
<td>Enlightenment Philosophers II</td>
<td>Kant, <em>Lectures on Pedagogy</em>, pp. 153-173</td>
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<td>Thursday February 16</td>
<td>Enlightenment Philosophers III</td>
<td>Rousseau, <em>Emile</em>, pp. 122-25, 133-152</td>
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<td>DB #2 Posted</td>
<td>Watch <em>Simpsons</em>, season 23, episode 2</td>
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<td>Eby, “Why Service Learning is Bad” (online)</td>
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<td>Thursday February 23</td>
<td>Achievement Gap</td>
<td>Education Week, “Achievement Gap” (online)</td>
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<td>NY Times, “Class Matters” (online)</td>
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<td>Forbes, “The Achievement Gap” (online)</td>
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<td>Thursday March 1</td>
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<td>Mid-Term</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Break March 2-12</strong></td>
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<td>(last day to withdraw with March 16)</td>
<td>Dewey, <em>Democracy and Education</em>, pp. 228-42</td>
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<td>Tuesday March 27</td>
<td>Progressive Education V</td>
<td>Freire, <em>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</em>, ch. 1</td>
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<td>Thursday March 29</td>
<td>Progressive Education VI</td>
<td>Freire, <em>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</em>, ch. 2</td>
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<td>DB #4 Posted</td>
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<td>Tuesday April 3</td>
<td>Progressive Education VII</td>
<td>Freire, <em>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</em>, ch. 3</td>
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<td>Thursday April 5</td>
<td>Democratic Education</td>
<td>Scheffler, “Moral Education and the Democratic Ideal,” pp. 345-350</td>
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<td>EAP 2: Due at 9 AM on Blackboard</td>
<td>Gutmann, <em>Democratic Education</em>, pp. 328-44</td>
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<td>Tuesday April 10</td>
<td>Film</td>
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<td>Thursday April 12</td>
<td>Reflection: Theory and Practice</td>
<td>Nel Noddings, <em>Caring</em>, pp. 387-91</td>
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<td>McKnight, “Why ‘servanthood’ is bad” (online)</td>
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<td>Tuesday April 17</td>
<td>Final Paper Workshop</td>
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<td>Thursday April 19</td>
<td>Experiential Education for Moral Development</td>
<td>Mendel-Reyes, “A Pedagogy for Citizenship: Service Learning and Democratic Education” (online)</td>
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<td>DB #5 Posted</td>
<td>Bernacki and Jaeger, “Exploring the Impact of Service-Learning on Moral Development and Moral Orientation” (online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday April 24</td>
<td>Experiential Education for Moral Development</td>
<td>Boss, “The Effect of Community Service Work on the Moral Development of College Ethics Students” (online)</td>
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**FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**
TUESDAY, MAY 1<sup>st</sup> 8:30-11:30 AM

**THIS SYLLABUS IS OPEN TO REVISION AND IS POSTED ON BLACKBOARD**
COURSE POLICIES
(See the Student Guide to Campus Life for more information)

SERVICE LEARNING AGREEMENTS
All students in the course will be required to abide by the policies set forth by the HPU Service Learning Program in its Code of Professional and Ethical Behavior and Partnership Agreement. You will sign these documents near the start of the semester. Failure to abide by these policies will be treated as a breach of the University’s Honor Code and you may be referred to the Honor Council for punishment. You are expected to take the initiative to complete your service hours and you are responsible for the penalties to your grade if you do not complete the hours.

PLAGIARISM
To be frank, plagiarism is stealing (remember the eighth commandment?). Assuming this is your first offense at HPU, the first time I catch you plagiarizing in my class you will receive an automatic F on the assignment, and then you must provide proof that you visited the Writing Center for all ensuing eligible writing assignments or you will fail the course. The second time I catch you, you will receive an F for the course. Period. If you have been caught plagiarizing before and are caught in my class…it will not be pretty…the Honor Court awaits you!

Papers taken off the internet are easy to find (I too can use Google, and I also use Turnitin.com). If you use a ghost-written paper, you will fail my course immediately, and I will press the University to investigate every written assignment you have ever submitted. Most instances of plagiarism, however, are not intentional, and here is where you must be careful because ignorance is not an excuse! After completion of the plagiarism test at the start of the course, I assume you know what constitutes plagiarism and I therefore assume all instances of plagiarism are intentional. As a college student, you are expected to know what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. There are also campus resources, like the Writing Fellows or the University Tutoring Program (see http://www.highpoint.edu/academics/asc/ for more information on both programs), that can help you.

This course is bound by the definitions and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and other issues of academic integrity outlined in the High Point University Honor Code and Student Guide to Campus Life (http://studentlife.highpoint.edu/sga/the-university-honor-code). A full definition of the university’s understanding of plagiarism can be found in the Handbook.

Check out these helpful sites to understand plagiarism better:
http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/Resources/Students/index.html
http://www.nyu.edu/classes/op/writing/CourseBuilder/plagiarism/delfattore_frame.htm

GRADING
Though only a rough guide, I have the following standards in mind as I grade:

A student will receive an “A” on work that illustrates incisive critical thinking. This work will demonstrate a clear grasp of the core material, the service learning experience, and offer creative insights into the ethical problems and approaches at hand. To deserve an “A,” a student must offer a careful analysis and evaluation of the material, synthesize the service learning
experience, and offer his or her own perspective and argue for its validity. This work will be free of grammatical errors and will use proper citation. (A- = 90-93%; A = 94-99; A+ = 100%)

A student will receive a “B” when he or she has demonstrated competency in the course material. This student’s thesis and evaluation will not be as strong as work that receives an “A,” but he or she will have a working thesis, include reflection on the service learning experience, and offer some insights into the material. This work may have some grammatical errors but the overall structure of the argument will be coherent. (B- = 80-83%; B = 84-87%; B+ = 88-89%)

A student will receive a “C” if it appears he or she has an acceptable grasp of the course material. Work that receives a “C” fails to demonstrate the author’s voice in a clear and compelling manner or thoroughly synthesize the service learning experience. “C” work evidences substantial grammatical and structural flaws as well as errors and omissions in the author’s argument. (C- = 70-73%; C = 74-77%; C+ = 78-79%)

A student will receive a “D” if he or she shows some effort in completing the assignment. The work will not constitute acceptable collegiate level work as it will lack clarity, accuracy, and insight. The receipt of a “D” on any assignment should be cause for concern and the student should immediately schedule office hours with me. (D- = 60-63%; D = 64-67%; D+ = 68-69%)

A student will receive an “F” when his or her work does not demonstrate a concerted effort to meet the course requirements or no work is submitted. (F = 50%- 0%)

GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE
Believe it or not, sexism is embedded in the very fabric of our language. It is part of my ethical commitment as a teacher to help students recognize, reflect on, and then eliminate sexism in their use of language. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding the use of the gender-specific personal pronoun “he” in cases where the gender of the antecedent is unknown (e.g., I use the phrase “he or she” when referring to a student in this syllabus because a particular student could be either male or female). It also means being intentional about the kinds of examples one uses. Many of our authors wrote before the presence and danger of sexism in language was understood. While you must use these sources in your work, you must not continue their sexist use of language. If you have questions on how to properly write with gender-inclusive language, please ask.

WRITING CENTER
One of the objectives of this course is to improve students’ abilities to write in a clear, informed manner. I strongly recommend you use the Writing Center. It is located on the fourth floor of Smith Library and provides writing assistance at any stage in the writing process, from invention through revision, for students at all levels, from freshman to graduate. The Center is staffed by student writing consultants and will be open Sunday through Thursday from 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., starting Tuesday, September 6th. Appointments for twenty-five or fifty-minute sessions may be made on the fourth floor of Smith Library at the Grades First kiosk using an HPU Passport or student ID number. Consultants at the Writing Center do not proofread or edit students’ papers for them, but they do work with students to help them develop strategies for improving their writing in light of their respective assignments, instructors, and personal writing styles. For more information, please visit the Writing Center in 430 Smith Library, or contact the Center’s Faculty Coordinator, Dr. Joe Goike, at jgoeke0@highpoint.edu or (336) 841-9633.
**LATE WORK**
Except through notification by a Dean, a student will be penalized one letter grade (for example, an “A” will become a “B”) on an assignment for each day after the deadline that it is submitted. After four days all work will receive an “F.” Remember an “F” may still receive up to 50% but an unsubmitted assignment is a 0%. It is still to your benefit to turn in an “F” paper.

**IMPORTANT:** All assignments are posted on BLACKBOARD and papers must be turned in on BLACKBOARD. Papers are considered late one minute after the stated deadline. Thus, if the deadline for a paper is 9:00 AM, the paper will be considered late and be docked 10% at 9:01 AM. The deadline should be treated as the last possible minute in which you can turn in a paper.

**INCOMPLETES**
These are VERY difficult to receive. I do not grant them except in the most extraordinary of circumstances. If you do not ask for an incomplete and have one approved in writing before the Due Date of the Final Exam your course grade will reflect whatever assignments you have completed at that time.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
Students who require classroom accommodations due to a diagnosed disability must submit the appropriate documentation to Disability Support in the Office of Academic Development, 4th Floor Smith Library. A student’s need for accommodations must be submitted to the instructor at the beginning of a course. Accommodations are not retroactive.

([http://www.highpoint.edu/academics/asc/](http://www.highpoint.edu/academics/asc/))

**CLASS CONDUCT AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES**
It is expected that all members of the class arrive promptly as you would for a day of work. A good classroom environment demands that all students be invested in the learning process. Even one distracted student texting on his or her phone, surfing the net, or falling asleep in class can disrupt everyone’s learning. So please silence your cell phones and make it a personal challenge to see if you can go our entire time together without texting anyone during class. Laptops are allowed, but if you are caught surfing the net or if phone calls or texting become a nuisance, I will ask you to leave the room, and you will receive an absence for the day. Let your full attention be on the class discussions and material. I expect we will have a great semester!