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Mary Ann G. Cutter, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Philosophy, UCCS
mcutter@uccs.edu
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TEACHING CASE STUDY ETHICAL ANALYSIS ON-LINE

I. Goal: to teach case study ethical analysis on-line (in the context of biomedical ethical problems)

II. Considerations:

A. combine a normative ethical approach with an action-based approach to case study analysis in ethics

1. Strengths of traditional **normative ethical approach** to case study analysis in ethics (as seen in Beauchamp and Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. 7th ed. Oxford. 2013):

- a. focusing on an identifiable moral agent in a case
- b. engaging in the logic of ethical decision-making
- c. developing normative arguments for and against a decision/position
- d. taking a “learn to act” approach (Gentile, 2012, 192)

2. Strengths of **action-based approach** to case study analysis in ethics (e.g., Gentile’s *Giving Voice to Values* [GVV] [2010, 2012]):

- a. working “as a team” (“the collaborative peer-coaching role play”) (Gentile, 2012, 192)
- b. “scripting a workable alternative” and “voicing those scripts and action plans out loud, in front of peers” (Gentile, 2012, 192)
- c. getting to what’s at stake and implementing a plan to get the right thing

done

d. taking an “act to learn” approach (Gentile, 2012, 192)

3. both theory and practice are needed in case study analysis

B. respond to challenges in teaching case study ethical analysis on-line

1. theory needs to be delivered to students in a step-by-step fashion so that students learn about critical thinking in ethics and the various traditions in ethical theory

2. approach to case study ethical analysis needs to be divided up into “bite-size” steps in order to allow students to master the skills of critical analysis, argument, and criticism

3. group discussion of case needs to be built into the instruction in a way that is relevant to learning, encourages critical discourse, and allows students to “practice” voicing their views “in front of others

III. Proposal

A. Syllabus

1. theory (on, e.g., rights, welfare, and justice) is introduced each week

2. cases (a total of 5) involve scenarios from womb to tomb

B. A regular semester course in biomedical ethics involves 5 cases, ranging from womb

to tomb. Each case involves 2 weeks of analysis:

1. Week 1 of case: individual analysis submitted through Blackboard:

a. What is the major **ethical conflict** or dilemma in the case? (Reminder: an ethical conflict occurs when at least two values or principles collide. Be sure to state your ethical conflict in terms of X versus Y. As an example, a common ethical conflict is between the freedom to choose and the responsibility to achieve a certain end result or goal.)

b. State at least **three ways to resolve** the ethical conflict. Draw from your readings and cite when appropriate.

c. How do **you think** the ethical conflict should be resolved? Provide your argument. (Note: an argument is a **series of reasons** that support the view (or conclusion)

you hold. Give at least three reasons for the view you hold.) Draw from your readings to support your position. Cite from your readings when appropriate.

d. What needs to be done to resolve the ethical conflict based on your view in c? State your **action plan** and be sure to give practical details.

e. What is the **one** most serious **criticism** of your ethical position or action plan?

f. Would you **change or revise** your view or action plan based on the criticism? Why or why not?

2. Week 2 of case: peer-coaching using “Blog” on Blackboard. Break class into 5 groups of 5; each group has a “presenter” plus 4 “peers.”

a. **Presenter: Present case** analysis to peers. You may also load additional information (literature, videos) to support your position.

b. **Peers:** Respond to presenter’s proposal.

i. What is your **response to the presenter’s argument** or defense of his or her ethical position?

ii. What is your **response to the presenter’s action plan**?

iii. What **questions** do you have for the presenter?

iv. What might **improve the presenter’s argument or action plan**?

c. **Presenter:** In light of the peer comments, what changes, if any, will you make in your argument or action plan?

IV. Rubric

Week 1

All students (6 points total)	yes	maybe	No
a. clear and relevant statement of ethical conflict			
b. three clear and relevant resolutions			
c. your resolution (clear and relevant argument)			
d. clear and relevant action plan			
e. one clear and relevant criticism			
f. clear and relevant response to criticism			

Week 2

Presenter (4 points total)	yes	maybe	No
a. Clear presentation			
c. clear and relevant response to peers			

Peer Response (4 points total)	yes	maybe	No
i. clear and relevant response to presenter's argument			
ii. clear and relevant response to presenter's action plan			
iii. clear and relevant questions			
iv. clear and relevant suggestions for improvement of presenter's argument and/or action plan			

IV. Summary: Teaching case-study ethical analysis on-line involves:

- A. integration of theory and practice
- B. step-by-step normative analysis and practice in ethical analysis
- C. practice of individual ethical analysis as well as group discussion

V. Citations

Beauchamp Tom L. and Childress, James F. 2013. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. 7th ed. New York: Oxford.

Gentile, Mary C. 2010. *Giving Voice to Values: How To Speak Your Mind When You Know What's Right*. Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Gentile, Mary C. 2012. "Value-Driven Leadership Development: Where We Have Been and Where We Could Go," *Organization Management Journal* 9: 188-196.

VI. Discussion