EDUC 269X The Ethics of Teaching

Spring 2013

Instructor: Eamonn Callan
Office: Cubberley 218
Phone: 723 8317.

The best way to catch me is through e-mail. If you don’t get a reply within 24 hours, then pester me. I’m happy to meet students outside class at mutually convenient times. My e-mail is <ecallan@stanford.edu>

The purpose of this course is to help students to prepare for the ethical problems they will routinely confront in their professional lives as educators. These problems are commonly much more intellectually complex than they seem at first glance. More than unreflective goodwill or familiarity with a code of professional conduct is needed if educators are to be equal to the moral challenges their work inevitably poses. Educators require moral sensitivities and understanding that will develop haphazardly – or not at all – without some systematic study in the applied ethics. This course is an opportunity to begin that study.

By the end of the course, students should have a command of some basic principles of ethical reasoning, a familiarity with the most important ethical concepts that apply to their work, and an ability to apply these skills and concepts in the analysis of case studies. Among the ethical concepts addressed in the course will be the following: confidentiality; academic freedom and freedom of speech; equal treatment and fairness; students’ and parents’ rights; democratic accountability and moral pluralism. Apart from the cases I distribute for analysis in class, no reading is required for the course. The best available book on the ethics of teaching is Kenneth Strike, *Ethical Leadership in Schools*. You should read it at some point in your career. But there is no particular advantage to reading it now.

A short case-based assignment will be due on May 8. Whether students wish to take the course for one or two units, they must complete that assignment. Students who wish to take the course for two units must undertake an additional written assignment. That assignment can be submitted when the course is submitted by June 4.