American Philosophical Association Grant Proposal

Title: A National Survey of Introductory Ethics Courses

Project Steering Committee: Dr. Timothy Shiell, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Abstract: This project is a national survey of introductory ethics courses taught in philosophy department in the U.S. collecting data regarding course content, instructional methods, student learning measures, how courses have changed in the past 25 years, what changes instructors anticipate in the next 10 years, the demographic characteristics of instructors, courses, departments and academic institutions. This extensive “snapshot” of the field and the correlations between the various factors will provide a foundation for (a) more fact-based discussions and debates both within and beyond the academy regarding the teaching of ethics, and (b) further empirical research into the teaching of ethics and potential ways of improving the teaching of ethics.

Project Purpose and Benefits: The purpose of the project is to collect data regarding course content, instructional methods, student learning measures, how courses have changed in the past 25 years, what changes instructors anticipate in the next 10 years, and the demographic characteristics of instructors, courses, departments and academic institutions have. See Appendix C for a copy of the survey. Empirical study of ethics instruction is a relatively recent phenomenon, and prior studies have collected quite different and much more limited data than this proposed national survey of introductory courses housed in U.S. philosophy departments. For example, Cooper (2009) did a field study of ethics courses at eleven English and U.S. campuses while McGraw, et.al. (2012) did a study of the academic training and home department of ethics instructors. Numerous studies investigating specific variables regarding specialized ethics courses (especially business ethics, but also medical ethics, media ethics, etc.) have been done, including Schoenfeldt, et. al., 1991; Gilbert, 1992; Cowton, 1995; Gautschi and Jones, 1998; Morris, 2001; DuBois and Burkemper, 2002; McDonald and Gael, 2004; Plaisence, 2007; Kirkman, 2008; Hughes, et.al., 2009; Templin and Christensen, 2009; and Quesenberry, et.al., 2012). Other types of empirical studies have examined the effectiveness of specific methods for teaching ethics (such as Houser, et.al, 2011; Schonfeld, Dahlke and Longo, 2011; Alfred and Chung, 2012) and general education ethics courses at Christian colleges (Glanzer, et. al., 2004). See Appendix A for citations to the studies listed.

The primary benefit of this project will be to provide to the profession and the public the first set of comprehensive data regarding the teaching of introductory ethics courses offered by U.S. philosophy departments. It will collect data on, for example, the extent to which “non-traditional” perspectives such as feminism, post-modernism and non-Western philosophy are included in such courses; what ethicists and theories are taught in such courses; which ethicists and theories instructors most agree and disagree with; whether they teach in a value-transparent or value-neutral way; how instructors assess student learning; the extent to which 21st century ethical issues such as global justice, terrorism, and technology are taught; and how instructors use technology. Moreover, the variables will be correlated to determine whether or not there are differences, for example, between the content or methods or disciplinary perspectives of male and female instructors, younger and older instructors, and instructors at public and private institutions; whether an instructor’s meta-ethical or normative preference results different teaching methods or content; whether the instructor’s teaching load or department size or tenure-status affect content or methods, etc. The results will be of considerable interest to both the profession and public.
Groundwork: The survey format and individual survey items have been developed, tested, and revised, most significantly, through administering the survey to an audience at a plenary session of the 2011 annual meeting of the Society for Ethics across the Curriculum, but also through consultants. The survey will be administered by the UW-Stout Applied Research Center (ARC). ARC staff have formal training in evaluation studies, and several staff hold Masters and Doctoral degrees in this field. ARC staff have over 50 years of combined experience working in survey development, survey administration, statistical analysis, qualitative analysis, and other aspects of research design and have worked on numerous grants from the National Science Foundation, Department of Education, UW System and UW-Stout. ARC staff will help edit the final draft, put it into an electronic format (Qualtrics), disseminate it, collect and compile quantitative and qualitative results, and provide an extensive analytical report. To identify and contact survey participants, the current plan is to rent addresses for approximately 3400 philosophers specializing in ethics from the Philosophy Documentation Center (PDC) since no organization currently has an email rental list for the target audience. Since the survey will be electronically delivered and completed, these snail mail addresses will be converted to email addresses. Note: If email addresses become available by the time the project begins, they will be used in place of snail mail addresses in order to shorten the project timeline.

My background in teaching ethics and involvement in prior surveys provides a strong basis to do this research effectively. See Appendix B for a partial list of relevant work. I have taught introductory ethics courses for more than 20 years, done dozens of ethics workshops for academic and non-academic audiences, judged various ethics competitions, presented on topics in ethics at campuses and conferences and public forums, and published on topics in ethics. The three most significant examples of my prior survey work are: (1) administering Howard Curzer’s moral assessment tool at UW-Stout to more than 600 students in approximately 20 courses (co-investigator with Elizabeth Buchanan, Moral Assessment Survey (2012, 2013), (2) developing and funding a survey of Wisconsin citizen beliefs about the First Amendment resulting in the publication, The State of the First Amendment in Wisconsin (2004), T.E. Franklin, et.al., and (3) directing a survey of approximately 600 UW-Stout students in 40 courses regarding ethics in their classwork and their personal opinions (Primary Research Investigator, “Student Ethics Survey 2002.”). Most of this work was conducted in my role as founder and director of a center for ethics at UW-Stout, where I currently serve as Associate Director.

Project Period: January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014.

January through July 2014: Addresses rented, converted into email addresses, and put into an electronic file. Survey converted into electronic format (Qualtrics) for email delivery and electronic completion.

August 2014: Initial survey distribution.

September 2014: Second chance survey distribution.

October 2014: Results compiled.

November 2014: ARC report delivered to Shiell.

December 2014 (and thereafter): Shiell analysis and dissemination of data.
Project budget with a schedule for allocation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost estimate</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Payable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$325</td>
<td>Philosophy Documentation Center address list</td>
<td>January 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5000</td>
<td>UW-Stout Applied Research Center services</td>
<td>November 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis
- Edit survey questions 3 hours
- Qualtrics set-up & distribution 10 hours
- Load Nvivo 4 hours
- Theme identification 15 hours
- Data coding 20 hours
- Data coding review 8 hours
- Create tables 10 hours
- Data cleaning 5 hours
- Data analysis 5 hours
- Report generation 30 hours
- Overall project management 15 hours

Estimated total: 125 hours @ $40/hour

Fiscal agent: The University of Wisconsin-Stout has longstanding, established processes for managing federal and non-federal grants and contract funding. The fiscal agent is the Controller, Kim Schulte-Shoberg, within the Business and Financial Services unit of the University.

Other funding sought or obtained: None currently. Survey results and findings should merit future grant proposals investigating further empirical data on ethics instruction or using the empirical data to identify and develop potential improvements to ethics instruction.

How project assessed: The quality of the project will be assessed through five main factors:

1. Survey response rate. Although the ideal return rate is 100%, electronic return rates tend toward 20%-30%. Higher the response rate equals better quality survey data.
2. Quality of responses. Ideally surveys will be fully completed, including written comments on open-ended questions.
4. Quality of survey format and individual survey items.
5. Level of interest in and evaluation of the survey results by the profession.

How project advertised to philosophical and/or lay public: The survey will not be “advertised” as such. Rather, the survey will be distributed electronically directly to individuals teaching introductory ethics courses in philosophy departments. Survey results and findings will be disseminated to philosophical audiences through professional conferences and publications, and to the general public through news releases and other media coverage.
Appendix A: Citations to References


Appendix B: Abbreviated Shiell Resume

Professor of Philosophy, and Associate Director of the Center for Applied Ethics, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751, phone: 715.232.1490, email: shielt@uwstout.edu

AOS: Philosophy of Law, Ethics
AOC: Political Philosophy, History of Philosophy, Eastern Philosophy
Ph.D. Philosophy, 1988, University of Iowa

Awards and Recognition:
- Outstanding Researcher Award, UW-Stout, 2010
- Speaker, Wisconsin Humanities Council Speakers Bureau, 2006-present
- Reinhold & Borghild Dahlgren Professorship, 2003-2005
- Maybelle Ranney Price Professorship, 1998-1999

Grants:
- 2011 (with Elizabeth Buchanan) Campus Reading Seminar Grant (Rebecca Skloot, The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks), UW-System Institute on Race and Ethnicity
- 1999 and 2000 UW-Stout grants to develop Center for Ethics
- 1995-97 UW-Stout Faculty Research Initiative Grant to research free speech
- 1994 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Study Grant to research free speech

Publications: 2 books, 5 book chapters, 7 journal articles, 4 newsletter articles, and 4 book reviews including,
- Campus Hate Speech on Trial, 2nd Edition, Rev. (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2009)
- “Using the Concept of ‘Traditional Ethics’ to Teach Introductory Ethics,” Teaching Ethics (Spring 2011), pp. 1-12.
- “Putting Prisoner’s Dilemma to Work,” American Philosophical Association (APA) Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy (Fall 1996), pp. 103-105.

Presentations: 5 Keynotes, 30 conferences papers, 34 invited presentations, 23 workshops, 7 panels, 21 invited classroom presentations, and 42 media interviews or articles, such as,
- “Three Perspectives on Infusing Ethics into the Curriculum: An Ethicist, a Designer and a Manager,” (with Julie Peterson and Jeanette Kersten), Society for Ethics across the Curriculum, Grand Valley State University, Oct/2012
- "Ethics Education in the STEM Classroom," (with Elizabeth Buchanan) 3rd Annual Polytechnic Summit, Southern Polytechnic State University, Marietta, GA, June/2011
- "Ethics for Professionals," Chippewa Valley Chapter, International Association for Administrative Professionals, Red Cedar Medical Center, Menomonie, WI, Apr/2010
- "World War I Wisconsin and Political Dissent," Neville Museum, Green Bay, WI, Feb/2008
- Keynote: "Civility and Free Speech," Winona State University (MN), Feb/2005
- "Using Wisconsin’s Free Speech History in the Classroom," Dialogues with Democracy: Improving Civic Education in Wisconsin’s Schools, UW-Madison, Nov/2004
- "‘Traditional Ethical Systems’ as a Concept for Teaching Ethics” Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, Charlotte, NC, Feb/2003
- "Teaching Ethics through a Center for Ethics," (with Dr. Jerry Kapus) AAPT International Conference on Teaching Philosophy, Thomas More College, Aug/2002

Prior Surveys:
- Co-Investigator (with Elizabeth Buchanan), Moral Assessment Survey (2012, 2013)
- Primary Research Investigator, “Student Ethics Survey 2002.”

Some Ethics-Related Service to Profession and Community:
- Editorial Advisor, Theoretical and Applied Ethics. (Published by the Society for Moral Inquiry)
- Judge, Dalton Institute on College Student Values Dissertation of the Year Award (2013, 2014)
- 12 time conference session chair or respondent
- 3 time Judge and Moderator for APPE Ethics Bowl student ethics debate competition
- Member, Eau Claire Luther Hospital Ethics Committee, 2004-2008
- Judge, National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Study Grant Program, 1995
- Panel Moderator, and Member, Speaker’s Committee, Eau Claire Big Read, Apr 2007

Memberships:
- American Philosophical Association
- Association for Practical and Professional Ethics
- Society for Ethics across the Curriculum
Appendix C: Proposed Survey

Category A: Course Content

A1. The primary ethicists covered in your class are (select all that apply):

Plato       John Locke       Emmanual Levinas
Aristotle   Soren Kierkegaard Jean Paul Sartre
Confucius   Jeremy Bentham   Philippa Foot
Gautama Buddha John Stuart Mill Alasdaire Macintyre
Epicurus    Immanuel Kant     Peter Singer
Jesus       Karl Marx        Ayn Rand
Augustine of Hippo Friedrich Nietzsche Carol Gilligan
Mohammed    W.D. Ross        Martin Buber
Moses Maimonides G.E. Moore   Alison Jagger
Thomas Aquinas Abul Ala Maududi Albert Schweitzer
Avicenna    G.E.M. Anscombe   Aldo Leopold
Thomas Hobbes Dietrich Bonhoeffer Amartya Sen
Thomas Reid Mohandas Ghandhi   Vine Deloria, Jr.
David Hume  C.L. Stevenson   R.M. Hare
Mary Wollstonecraft Bernard Williams Christine Korsgaard
Other:

A2. Which ethicist do you most identify/agree with? Name up to three.

A3. The meta-ethical approaches/theories covered in your class are (select all that apply):

Moral realism   Ethical Naturalism   Ideal Observer Theory
Constructivism  Ethical Non-naturalism Divine Command Theory
Cognitivism     Ethical Relativism   Value Monism
Non-cognitivism Ethical Subjectivism Value Pluralism
Moral universalism Moral Nihilism   Moral Intuitionism
Other:

A4: Which meta-ethical theory do you most identify/agree with? Name only one.

A5. The normative approaches/ theories covered in your class are (select all that apply):

Deontology     Confucian ethics   African ethics
Teleology       Native American ethics Daoist ethics
Ethics of Care   Buddhist ethics   Islamic ethics
Virtue-based ethics Utilitarianism   Christian ethics
Rule-based ethics Ethical Egoism    Buddhist ethics
Rights-based ethics Contractarianism Jewish ethics
Natural Law     Kantian ethics     Existential ethics
Other:
A6. Which normative ethical theory do you most identify/agree with? Name only one.

A7: The applied issues/cases covered in your class are (select all that apply):

Medical ethics  Just War  Authenticity/Integrity
Professional ethics  Terrorism  Honesty
Ethics and the media  Famine Relief  Fairness
Environmental ethics  Abortion  Courage
Feminist ethics  Euthanasia  Moderation
Business ethics  Death Penalty  Friendship
Aesthetics  Economic Justice  Altruism
Ethics and Science  Criminal Punishment  Honor
Ethics and Technology  Animal Rights  Compassion
Pornography  Aid to the poor  Civil Disobedience
Global Justice  Global Ecology  Sex Equality
Gay and Lesbian Rights  Racial Equality  Tolerance
Other:

A8. The balance of theoretical discussion to discussion of cases/applied issues in your class is:
A. Does not apply—do not use theory and cases approach
B. Almost entirely theory; very few cases/applied issues
C. More theory than cases/applied issues
D. Approximately same amount of theory and cases/applied issues
E. More cases/applied issues than theory
F. Almost entirely cases/applied issues; very little theory

A9. Which ethicists or ethical perspectives do you think are not taught enough in the discipline:

A10. Which ethicists or ethical perspectives do you think are taught too much in the discipline:

Category B: Course Methods

B1. You teach introductory ethics as (select all that apply):
A. a 100% online course
B. a 100% traditional classroom course
C. a “hybrid” course

B2. You teach introductory ethics in a:
A. Predominantly value-neutral way
B. Predominantly value-transparent way
C. Even mix of value-neutrality and value-transparency

B3. Your students are required to read from (select all that apply):
A. Primary Sources  E. Instructor created readings
B. Textbook (non-anthology)  F. Instructor created website
C. Anthology  G. Non-instructor website/s
D. Instructor compiled readings  H. Other __________________
B4. Your students are required to (select all that apply):
A. Complete worksheets for assigned readings
B. Complete quizzes
C. Complete exams
D. Do in-class active learning exercises
E. Write multiple non-exam short essays
F. Write term paper
G. Do service learning
H. Do in-class group work
I. Do out-of-class group work
J. Other _____________

B5. Your exams include (select all that apply):
A. Short essays
B. Long essays
C. True/False
D. Multiple choice
E. Matching
F. Take-home questions
G. Other ________________

B6. For online or hybrid courses, you provide/use/require (select all that apply):
A. Not applicable—do not teach online
B. Asynchronous discussion/chat
C. Synchronous discussion/chat
D. Group activities
E. Videos (not created by instructor)
F. Instructor created videos
G. Worksheets / study guides for assigned readings
H. Lecture Capture software
I. Text-based lecture notes
J. Peer editing/evaluation
K. Drop box
L. Other __________________

B7. The primary course objectives / goals of your course are (select all that apply):
A. Stimulate moral imagination/recognition of ethical issues
B. Encourage responsible behavior
C. Enhance ethical reasoning/decision-making
D. Enhance ability to understand, respect and reason about ethical disagreements.
E. Ensure students understand major historical ethicists, theories and methods.
F. Ensure students understand contemporary ethics and ethicists, theories and methods.
G. Develop critically examined personal code of ethics.
H. General education skills such as analysis, synthesize, critical thinking, etc.
I. Other ________________

B8. Estimated time for each listed classroom pedagogy:
A. Lecture 0-20% 21-40% 41-60% 61-80% 81-100%
B. Full class discussion 0-20% 21-40% 41-60% 61-80% 81-100%
C. Small group discussion 0-20% 21-40% 41-60% 61-80% 81-100%
D. Multimedia presentation 0-20% 21-40% 41-60% 61-80% 81-100%
E. Other ________________ 0-20% 21-40% 41-60% 61-80% 81-100%

Category C: Perceptions of changes in the discipline

C1. Covering the traditional/canonical ethicists and ethical theories is:
A. Essential to the integrity of the discipline
B. Helpful but not essential to the integrity of the discipline
C. Irrelevant to the integrity of the discipline
C2. In what ways, if any, do you believe course content or methods in introductory ethics courses have changed in the past 10 to 30 years? Select all that apply.
   A. Not applicable—no opinion or lack relevant experience.
   B. It has become less theoretical and more applied
   C. It has been “dumbed down” due to lack of student preparedness
   D. It has become more diverse, inclusive of traditionally underrepresented views
   E. It involves greater use of computer technology
   F. Other __________________________

C3. Which ethicists, theories, topics or issues, if any, do you believe will receive more attention in introductory ethics courses in the next 10 to 15 years?

C4. Which ethicists, theories, topics or issues, if any, do you believe will receive less attention in introductory ethics courses in the next 10 to 15 years?

C5. Compared to introductory ethics students in the past, I believe students today:
   A. Are less academically prepared
   B. Are more academically prepared
   C. Are equally academically prepared
   D. Not applicable—no opinion or lack relevant experience

C6. What trend/s or change/s in the discipline that has occurred or is occurring do you agree with?

C7. What trend/s or change/s in the discipline that has occurred or is occurring do you disagree with?

C8. In your opinion, most of your students perceive introductory ethics as:
   A. Highly relevant to their interests and needs.
   B. Moderately relevant to their interests and needs.
   C. Slightly relevant to their interests and needs.
   D. Not relevant to their interests and needs.
   E. Not applicable—no opinion or lack relevant data.

C9. In order to make your course more relevant to student interests and needs you have (select all that apply):
   A. Changed course content.
   B. Changed teaching methods.
   C. Changed assignments.
   D. Started using technology in the classroom.
   E. Other __________________________
   F. Not applicable—have not changed course to make more relevant.

Category D: Instructor

D1. What is your highest educational degree?
   A. M.A.       C. Ph.D
   B. A.B.D.       D. Other __________________________
D2. In what academic discipline is your highest educational degree?
A. Philosophy
B. Other _____________________

D3. What is your current academic rank / position?
A. Adjunct / Lecturer
B. Assistant Professor
C. Associate Professor
D. Full Professor
E. Other _____________________

D4. What is your standard teaching / course load per year:
A. Four 3-credit courses each semester.
B. Three 4-credit courses each semester.
C. Three 3-credit courses each semester.
D. Two 3-credit courses each semester.
E. Other _____________________

D5. What is your tenure status?
A. Not in tenure track
B. In tenure track
C. Have tenure

D6. What is your biological sex?
A. Female
B. Male
C. Other

D7. Use the U.S Census Bureau definitions below to indicate your ethnicity. Select all that apply.
A. American Indian or Alaska Native. (Origins in North, Central or South America).
B. Asian. (Origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent).
C. Black or African American. (Origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.)
D. Hispanic or Latino. (A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race).
E. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. (Origins in Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.)
F. White. (Origins in Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.)

D8. What is your age?
A. 20 to 29
B. 30 to 39
C. 40 to 49
D. 50 to 59
E. 60 to 69
F. 70 or more

D9. In your career, how many sections of introductory ethics have you taught?
A. 1 to 4
B. 5 to 9
C. 10 to 19
D. 20 or more

Category E: Institution data

E1. At what type of academic institution do you teach?
A. Community College
B. Private non-religiously affiliated college or university
C. Private religiously affiliated college or university
D. Public college or university
E. Other _____________________
E2. What is the highest level philosophy program offered at your institution?
A. No philosophy major or minor  
B. Minor in Philosophy  
C. B.A. in Philosophy  
D. M.A. in Philosophy  
E. Ph.D. in Philosophy  
F. Other _________________

E3. How many students typically enroll in one section of your introductory ethics course?
A. 1 to 9  
B. 10 to 19  
C. 20 to 29  
D. 30 to 39  
E. 40 to 49  
F. 50 to 99  
G. 100 or more

E4. How many sections of introductory ethics are taught each year in your department:
A. 1 to 5  
B. 6 to 10  
C. 11 or more

E5. Your introductory ethics class is a (select all that apply):
A. General Education requirement  
B. General Education elective  
C. Philosophy requirement  
D. Philosophy elective  
E. Other __________________