

## HUAF 5090 – Ethics of Humanitarian Assistance

### Course Summary

This course will give students an understanding of the origins and development of ethical thought as well as its historical and ongoing relationship to religious and other ideological systems and the diversity of its manifestation in culture, norms and behaviour of societies today. The course will focus on the development of humanitarian ethical principles and their codification in conventions, charters and codes of conduct. Particular attention will be paid to the ethical dilemmas facing humanitarian workers, the ethical discipline required to work in unequal power situations and the application of humanitarian ethics to particular aspects of humanitarian administration.

### *Course Texts*

- Open Site History of Ethics (<http://open-site.org/Society/Philosophy/Ethics/History>) Seek **better text from Fordham Faculty**
- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief
- IFRC World Disaster Report 2003 – Focus on Ethics and Aid
- Refugees and Humanitarian Ethics: Beyond the Politics of the Emergency - Peter Nyers - YCISS Occasional Paper Number 58 March 1999.
- No Harm – Mary B. Anderson
- The influence of the Muslim religion in humanitarian aid - Jamal Krafess – International Review of the Red Cross
- Faith-based and secular humanitarian organizations - Elizabeth Ferris – International Review of the Red Cross
- Ten Rules Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets - Section 2 Workbook/Readings/5 UN Codes of Conduct

### Pre-Course Requirement:

- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief
- Do No Harm – Mary B. Anderson
- Students to prepare examples of ethical dilemmas which they have faced in humanitarian situations

### Course Requirements

#### DAY 1

##### *Morning*

Scope of ethical considerations in modern society and in humanitarian action

History of the development of Ethical thought and systems (Part 1)

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### *Afternoon*

History of the development of Ethical thought and systems (Part 2)

Role of modern religious thought in the Ethics of Humanitarian Action

### DAY 2

#### *Morning*

Development and modern practice of the Humanitarian Principles of Neutrality, Impartiality, Independence, Universality, Responsibility and Accountability

Extension of Humanitarian Principles into concepts such as: “The Humanitarian Imperative” “Do no Harm” “Human Security” and “The Responsibility to Protect”

#### *Afternoon*

Overview of international instruments that incorporate key ethical and humanitarian principles into international law with a review of signatory and ratifying countries. Comparison of regional instruments with global and the different ethical bases that they represent.

Ethical boundaries of sovereignty

### DAY 3

#### *Morning*

Ethical dilemmas facing humanitarian workers, with particular reference to those that result from the politicisation of humanitarian action. The options available to humanitarians and the consequences of each option. These dilemmas include:

- Prolonging conflict – delaying political solutions
- Assisting forced displacement
- Working in corrupt environments
- Supporting the political agenda of donor governments
- Unintentional consequences of humanitarian action

Presentation and group analysis of ethical dilemmas faced by participants

#### *Afternoon*

Introduction to the ethical considerations in working in unequal power relationships with examples from other areas of work.

Identification and analysis of the unequal power relationships involved in modern humanitarian action. Discussion on methods of alleviating and/or coping with the ethical pressures generated

### DAY 4 Codes of conduct

#### *Morning*

Historical development of codes of conduct

Codes of conduct based on international instruments

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Codes of conduct based on humanitarian ethical principles

Analysis of the Red Cross/NGO code of conduct

### *Afternoon*

“Do no Harm” and “Ten Rules Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets” as humanitarian codes of conduct

Dissemination and Enforcement of Codes of Conduct

End of day and overnight group exercise: Draft/ revise a comprehensive code of conduct for humanitarian workers.

## **DAY 5**

### *Morning*

Review draft/revised codes of conduct

Identification of potential abusers during recruitment of volunteers, interns and staff

Ethics of information exchange regarding violations of codes of conduct

Institutional liability for abuse and violations of codes of conduct

### *Afternoon*

Ethical External Relations – Tutorial team guided discussions on:

- Ethics of Humanitarian publicity and fundraising
- Ethics of relations with the Media
- Ethics of photography and filming in Humanitarian situations
- Ethics of privacy and information exchange regarding beneficiaries
- Ethics of research, evaluation and the interviewing of survivors.
- Ethics of co-operations with military forces