

## Ethics Case Paper© 2003-2012

Dr. Michael C. LaBossiere

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### Introduction

This document is a detailed guide to writing the paper. The paper is a four part paper consisting of an introduction, an argument section, an objection & reply section and a conclusion. Be sure to read this guide completely and carefully. This guide has the following sections:

- **The Draft & final Version:** This explains the difference between the draft and the final rewrite. It also details how to turn the paper in.
- **Grade Discussion:** The guide to discussing the paper grade.
- **Plagiarism:** Information about plagiarism and how to avoid it.
- **Writing the Paper:** This explains how to write the paper. Each of the four sections of the paper is presented in great detail.
- **Checklist & Comment Sheet:** This section explains and then provides the Checklist & Comment Sheet for this paper. Be sure to have a copy of this sheet on hand—you will need it in order to make sense of the comment marks on your paper.
- **Sample Paper:** A complete sample paper.

### The Draft & the Final Version

The paper is intended to be written in two stages: a draft (or drafts) and the rewritten final version. The following details the draft and the rewrite of the paper.

**Draft Due Date:** This is the day the paper draft is due. The drafts will be collected, commented on and graded. The draft grade will be entered as a “temporary” grade. This grade will be replaced by the rewrite grade, assuming the grade on the final version of the paper is better (and assuming that plagiarism does not occur). Paper drafts can be turned in before this due date. Drafts must be printed copies, except in classes that are entirely online. In such classes, drafts can be turned in via Blackboard.

**Draft Deadline Date:** This is the last day to turn in a draft. Papers turned in after the draft deadline will be considered final revisions and will be graded as such. Any number of drafts can be turned in prior to this date and these will be commented on and graded. The draft deadline cannot be extended. Before the deadline drafts can be turned in during my office hours or class. On the draft deadline day, you can turn in a draft during my office hours (or class, if it occurs before my last office hours that day). I will read the drafts on a first-come-first-serve basis until my office hours end. To be fair, I will take the amount of time remaining and divide it by the number of drafts. Any drafts I do not get to or those turned in after the draft deadline will be treated as final drafts (unless the draft has clearly printed on it “do not grade as the final version” or something similar). Drafts must be printed copies, except in classes that are entirely online. In such classes, drafts can be turned in via Blackboard.

**Paper “On Time Bonus” Deadline Date:** This is the last day to turn in a paper and receive the +5 bonus. I must receive the paper by the end of class or the end of my office hours that day, whichever is later. The final version of the paper must be turned in via Blackboard.

**Paper “Emergency” Deadline Date:** This is the last day to turn in the paper and receive full credit. All other deadline conditions still apply. I must receive the paper by the end of my office hours on this date. This date can be extended by requesting an extension (see below). Papers must be turned in via Blackboard.

**50% Grade Paper Deadline Date:** This is the last date to turn in a paper and receive 50% credit. Papers turned in after this date will receive a 0. If you have a draft paper grade and it is higher than the 50% grade on the final version, than the draft paper grade will score as your paper grade (except in cases involving plagiarism). I must receive the paper by the end of my office hours on this date. Papers must be turned in via Blackboard.

**I’m So Confused!:** Here is the simple version: 1) Turn in your draft on or before the draft deadline if you want comments on your paper so you can rewrite it. 2) Turn in the paper on or before the paper “on time” deadline if you want the +5 bonus. 3) Turn in the paper by the paper “emergency” deadline if you want full credit. 4) Turn in the paper on or before the 50% paper deadline if you want half credit. 5) Turn in the paper after the 50% paper deadline (or never turn it in) if you want a zero.

### **Turning the Paper In (Draft or Final Version)**

If you are in a traditional or hybrid class, drafts need to be turned in as printed copies. For purely online classes, drafts can be submitted via the draft assignment on Blackboard.

The final version of the paper must be submitted via Blackboard, even if you already turned in a draft. You can also turn in a printed copy of the final paper for me to comment on. If so, it should be turned in during class. There is also a drop envelope by my office that you can use (entirely at your own risk). A paper is considered turned in when I actually receive (or find) it. Do not ask administrators, faculty or staff members to time stamp your paper—that is not their job. It is your responsibility to make sure that I receive your paper.

If you turn in a printed copy, keep in mind that the turn in time for the paper is set by whichever version (printed or Blackboard) is turned in last. If the versions do not match, the Blackboard version will be considered the “official” version of the paper. If you are in a hybrid or traditional class, you will need to turn in a printed copy as well as turn the paper in via Blackboard if you want comments on the paper. If you are in a purely online class, then comments will be made on the paper via Blackboard—you do not need to turn in a printed version.

When turning in the final version of the paper via Blackboard be sure to check that you are submitting the correct paper. I do not accept excuses involving the wrong file being uploaded and similar such excuses.

### **What Turning in the Paper Means**

When you turn in the paper you accept and acknowledge the following:

“I assert that this paper is my own work and that all sources have been properly cited and documented. I further assert that I understand the concept of plagiarism and I am aware of the penalties associated with plagiarism. I am also aware of the requirements for the paper.”

## **Grade Discussion**

Although every effort has been made to ensure that each paper has clear standards, the grading of written work contains an unavoidable subjective element. As such, students are encouraged to carefully consider paper grades and determine if the assigned grade is just and fair. If you believe that you did not receive the grade you deserved on a paper, then bring the work to me during my office hours. There are three things to keep in mind: First, a grade discussion can never result in a lower grade, with one exception. If the paper is found to be plagiarized, the student will receive a grade of zero (0) for the paper and face the possibility of being charged with academic misconduct. Second, you must bring the original work. Third, you must have a

legitimate case based solely on the content of the work. In other words, you must be able to show me exactly why the grade assigned failed to correspond with the grade you believe you deserve.

Students in purely online (as opposed to hybrid or traditional classes) have the option of discussing the paper grade via online means, typically via Blackboard conferencing.

I will be looking for specific reasons to change a grade and these reasons must be based on what is actually present in the paper. Irrelevant “reasons” such as “I thought I did well” or “I get As on all my papers in all my other classes” will not be accepted. Vague comments like “I think I did what you said” or “I thought I had arguments in there” are also unacceptable as reasons.

External factors, such as a student needing a particular grade to graduate, avoid the wrath of parents/guardians, get a sweet new car or keep a scholarship, are not an acceptable basis for grade alterations.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves turning in work that is completely or partially the work of another and failing to provide proper credit.

Plagiarism also includes copying significant ideas without giving credit, even if there is not direct copying of text.

Copying the work of another student is also plagiarism. If two or more students turn in similar or identical papers, each student will be assigned a grade of zero (0) on the paper. If one (or more) students are willing to confess to plagiarizing an innocent student’s paper, then the innocent student’s paper will be graded and each plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero (0) with the possibility of academic misconduct charges. If there is clear evidence (such as a draft one student turned in prior to the incident of plagiarism) that one student is the honest author of a work, that student will receive due credit, while the plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero (0) with the possibility of academic misconduct charges.

While distrust is an unpleasant thing, it is prudent to not allow other students to have access to your work. In most cases of students turning in similar or identical papers, one (or more) of those involved have claimed to have had their paper stolen by the other student(s). In any case, it is your responsibility to ensure that others do not gain access to your work and turn it in as their own.

While plagiarism of outside sources is common and can be accidental, it can be avoided by exercising due care. Here are three ways to avoid plagiarism:

1. If you are copying word for word from a source, you must put quote (“”) marks around the text. If you use a direct quote of more than five lines, single-space the quote and indent it in the body of the paper. In either case, cite the source properly. Keep in mind that quoting the work of another generally does not help your grade (beyond avoiding plagiarism, of course). Your grade is based mainly on the work you have done, not work that others have done.

2. If you are paraphrasing from a source, clearly indicate when the paraphrasing begins and when it ends. Cite the source properly. Like direct quoting, direct paraphrasing tends not to help your grade. In papers that involve summarizing the work of others it is important to know the difference between paraphrasing and summarizing.

3. If you are summarizing from a source, clearly indicate when the summary begins and when it ends. Cite the source properly. In papers that involve a required summary component, you do not need to formally site the text that is being summarized for that paper. You do, however, need to include the summary statement in the introduction that specifies you are summarizing the work in question.

Any standard method of citing sources that clearly indicates the title of the work, the author, page number(s), publisher/magazine, and date for each quotation/direct paraphrase is acceptable. Use whatever you normally use in your major area—I do not require that you learn an entirely new method. If you do not have a style that is standard in your major, you can use any standard academic/professional style such as MLA, APA and Chicago. If you do not know how to cite properly, it is important to learn how—there are numerous guides for citing sources that are fairly inexpensive. Also, such information on how to cite is readily available on the web.

## Writing the Paper

This is a step-by-step guide to the content of the paper. This guide spells out, in detail, everything that should be done in the paper.

The paper needs to be easily readable. In general, you should use one inch margins, a 12 point “normal” font (such as Times, Arial, Times New Roman), paragraph indents, and double space the paper. Printed versions should be on white paper using black ink/toner. Hard copies that are unreadable or excessively difficult to read will not be accepted.

### The Case

**The Goal and Picking Your Case:** The goal of the paper is to take and defend a position on one of the ethical issues provided in the Ethics Cases document or another approved topic. This document is available as a download from the class website. You need to pick one (and only one) case from the Ethics Cases. A paper that is not on one of the specified cases (or an approved alternative case) will receive a grade of 0 (zero).

When picking a case, you should read through the various cases and find one that appeals to you the most. Some cases include a variety of issues—be sure to pick one (and only one) of them to focus on.

**Creating Your Own Case:** If you do not wish to write on any of the existing cases, then you have the option of creating your own case. If you take this option, then you must have your case approved or you run the risk of getting a zero (0) on the paper for writing a paper that is not an ethics paper. You will need to submit your case idea to me using the (short) DIY Case form provided below (and also available as separate download). If you are writing on a case from the Ethics Cases, then you DO NOT need to use this form.

**Important:** The paper has only four sections (introduction, argument, objection & reply, and conclusion) but this guide has broken the sections into various parts. **Be sure to label each of these sections in your paper** (see the sample paper for how this should look). Each section is graded based on specific criteria and hence it is important for you to indicate to me which section is which in your paper.

Because this is a Gordon Rule class, the paper must be a minimum length. As such, if one section is the minimum specified length, then others will need to be expanded to meet the word count requirement as specified by the Gordon Rule.

### The Four Parts of the Paper

#### Part I: Introduction

The Introduction is worth five (5) points. It should be no more than 125 words in length. The purpose of the introduction is to inform the readers about the purpose and content of the paper. The introduction should be written out as text rather than presented as an outline (see the sample paper, below). The introduction should contain the following five things:

- 1. Thesis Statement:** Restate the specific thesis for the paper.

- a. Example: "The purpose of this essay is to discuss and assess the morality of charging larger airline passengers extra for their flights."
- 2. Case Statement:** Briefly identify the case you addressed
  - a. Example: "I will be addressing case X, the ethics of flying fat."
- 3. Position Statement:** Clearly restate your position on the issue.
  - a. Example: "It is my considered opinion that it is morally acceptable to charge larger passengers for a second seat or an upgrade."
- 4. Argument Statement:** Briefly state what arguments of your own you presented.
  - a. Example: "I will defend my position by making use of analogies, making an appeal to rights and considering objections against my view."
- 5. Minimal Relevant Background:** Provide some minimal background to set the stage for the reader.
  - a. Example: "While some airlines have been discussing implementing such a policy, some of them have actually put it into practice, thus leading to a controversy in the air."

## Part II: Argument

The argument is worth fifty (50) points. It must be at least three pages (750 words) in length. The paper is graded based on the quality of the work rather than the length of the paper-so there is no need to make the paper look long by adjusting spacing, fonts and such.

You will need to reach two overall goals in the argument section. The goals are not weighted equally in terms of the grade (see below). The first goal is to clearly, concisely, and accurately present the key details of the case in your own words. The second goal is to clearly state your position on the issue and then support your position with argumentation.

### *Contents of the Argument*

The argument contains two main components. The first component consists of the case information; the second consists of your argument in defense of your position. The first component, the case information, is worth approximately 10 points out of the 50 points of the body. In this component, you will provide a brief summary of the case you have selected. You can also provide additional background information that is relevant to the paper. The main objective is to provide enough information so that an intelligent reader will have a basic understanding of the case and the issue you will address. The amount of information you need to provide will depend on the case you select. Some cases require very little information because they are easy to understand or well known situations. Some cases will require more information because they are complex or involve matters that are not well known. If you are unsure how much you should write when presenting the case information, then ask about your specific case and the approach you are taking.

Be sure to keep in mind that the case paper is an argumentative paper and not a report. Because of this you need to keep the information about the case to a minimum-just what the reader would need to understand the paper. The sample paper, below, provides an example of how to do this. Argumentative essays, such as well-written editorials, also provide excellent examples about how to present background information before progressing to an argument. Professional news magazines, professional newspapers and professional blogs often provide excellent examples of how to present the minimal information needed by the reader.

The second component, the argument, is worth approximately 40 of the 50 points of the body. Because of this, the argument component is your main focus.

In this component you will begin by stating your position on the issue you have selected. Be sure to take a definite position on the issue. While it is generally better to argue for what you actually believe, this is not required and it can be educational to argue for a position you disagree with.

After you have stated your position, then the challenging work begins-you must argue in defense of your view. The objective is to present arguments that establish the truth (or at least the plausibility) of your

position. Since this is a short paper, it is better to have a few well developed arguments instead of many underdeveloped arguments.

The argument component will vary significantly from case to case. In some cases, you might need to address one or more factual issues and resolve them as part of your argument. In some cases, you might need to address one or more conceptual issues (arguments about definitions) and resolve them as part of your argument. In all of the cases you will need to address the overall value issue as part of your argument.

### *Writing an Effective Argument*

The first step in writing an effective body is picking the case and issue that you want to write about. It is generally a good idea to pick the case that you find to be the most interesting (or the least boring). It is also a good idea to pick a case about which you have at least some initial opinion-although it can be enlightening to work towards an opinion on an issue.

Once you have selected the case, the next step is to decide your position on the issue. This is usually done by thinking about what you believe in regards to the issue. It can, however, be interesting to argue for a position that you do not accept. In any case, you need to take a clear and definite position on the issue.

After you have chosen your position you will need to back up this position. This process can begin with brainstorming. This is done by thinking of many reasons as to why your position is correct. The basic idea is that you are coming up with numerous answers to the question “why should anyone logically believe that you are right?”

Depending on the case you select and how you approach the issue you might need to argue over facts or concepts in addition to presenting a normative argument. These matters will be discussed in class.

If there are factual issues in dispute that are relevant to your case, then you might need to resolve these as part of supporting your position. For example, one factual issue is whether or not violent media affects peoples’ behavior in the real world. The resolution of this issue could be relevant to addressing the censorship of violent media.

If there are conceptual issues that are relevant to your case, then you might need to resolve these as part of supporting your position. For example, arguing about racist or sexist media might involve presenting and defending a definition about what counts as sexist or racist.

In any case, you will need to address the normative issue-each case is a normative case and has at least one normative issue associated with it.

Once you have thought up a variety of reasons, go through them and find the ones you consider to be the most plausible, the strongest and those that you think can be developed the most. Select the best of these and work up an outline for each that presents the argument’s premises and conclusion. Once you find the ones you consider to be your best arguments develop these fully into complete arguments and write them out in a form suitable for the paper.

Since the paper is a short one, it is generally best to focus on developing a few effective arguments rather than presenting many underdeveloped arguments. To use an analogy, it is usually more satisfying to have a balanced meal with a few complete portions rather than snacking on a variety of unhealthy junk foods.

Given that the goal of the arguments is to support your position you need to make sure that each argument you present is connected to the issue. In short, each argument needs to be aimed at directly or indirectly showing that your position on the issue is correct-or at least plausible.

The first part of the course is devoted to discussing the methods of addressing these types of issues and how to create effective normative arguments.

### **Part III: Objection & Reply**

The third part of the paper contains two main components. The first is an objection (or objections) that you raise against your position on the issue. Ideally, this objection (or objections) should be arguments designed to

counter or expose alleged flaws in your initial arguments. Be sure to present a serious objection/counter argument rather than a straw man sort of “attack” that can be easily brushed aside. The second component is your reply (or replies) to the objection(s) you raised. This reply is done by creating an argument or arguments that effectively refute the objection(s) you raised. This section of the paper is worth 40 points and must be at least 500 words.

### *Writing an Effective Objection & Reply*

When creating an objection/counter argument against your view, you will be doing the same sort of thing you did in coming up with arguments for your position. However, you will be thinking of reasons as to why your position is wrong. When countering the objection/counter argument, you will be showing that the objection/counter argument is flawed.

Argumentation, normative issues and normative reasoning will be discussed extensively during the first part of the course. Hence, much of how to do the paper will be presented and discussed in class.

### **Assessment of the Argument/Objection & Reply**

While assessing papers is not as exact as grading a true/false test, there are clear standards used to assess the work. The following provides a general guide to the assessment of these two parts of the paper.

#### **An excellent Argument/Objection & Reply (A)**

- Clearly and concisely presents the case information, the issue and your position on the issue.
- Presents effective and well-developed arguments.
- Presents the arguments as a coherent whole.
- Clearly presents how the arguments impact on the overall issue.
- Presents and effectively replies to an extremely challenging objection/counter argument.
- Is extremely well organized.

#### **A good Argument/Objection & Reply (B):**

- Does most of what an excellent summary does, but has some flaws that prevent it from being excellent.

#### **An adequate or average Argument/Objection & Reply (C)**

- Adequately presents the case information, the issue and your position on the issue.
- Presents basic arguments that are relevant and connect to the issue.
- Presents and adequately responds to a reasonable objection/counter argument.
- Does not achieve the quality of a good body but does not have any major flaws.

#### **A poor Argument/Objection & Reply (D)**

- Does not adequately present the case information, the issue or your position on the issue.
- Presents weak or poor arguments.
- Contains some fallacies.
- Poorly presents and replies inadequately to an objection/counter argument.
- Is poorly organized.
- Is incomplete.
- Has some other major flaws.

#### **A failing Argument/Objection & Reply (F)**

- Contains very poor arguments.
- Contains fallacies.
- Does not include an objection/counterargument or includes an exceptionally bad one.
- Is very poorly organized.
- Is incomplete.
- Has other major flaws.

### **Common Mistakes in the Argument and Objection & Reply**

The following presents various common mistakes made in writing the body of the paper. Be sure to avoid these mistakes—they would have a negative impact on your grade.

- **Writing a Report:** merely presenting a report on the subject. While you do need to provide the reader with information, the main goal is to argue for your position and not to write a report.
- **Writing a “Compare & Contrast” paper:** This involves merely comparing and contrasting various views on the issue. While it is acceptable to consider objections to your view the goal in the paper is to defend your position—not compare and contrast various views.
- **Assertions without Arguments:** It is common for people to make a claim (assertion) but not back it up with any reasons. Be sure that your claims are adequately supported.
- **Argument, but not a moral argument:** It is common for people to argue in support of their position using arguments that are not of the right sort. For example, a person might argue for censorship of a certain type of work and cite the bible. While this is a religious argument it is not automatically a moral argument. It is possible to use arguments from other normative areas (law, religion, etc) by properly using the mixing norms method (see the notes). As another example, a person might argue against cheating in a relationship by listing the health risks. This would be a medical argument—but not a moral one unless a link is made between the medical harms and the morality of the action.
- **A Non-Approved Topic:** It is not uncommon for a person to turn in a paper that is not on one of the cases. In most instances people are attempting to recycle papers written for other classes. Be sure that you only write on one of the cases or get your own case approved—a paper that is not on a proper topic will receive a grade of zero.
- **Plagiarizing:** The internet has made plagiarizing very easy—but has also made it **extremely** easy to catch people who plagiarize. I easily catch most people by typing in a few key words into Google—it is as simple as that. It is far better to type up something crappy at the last minute rather than plagiarize. A person who plagiarizes will receive a grade of zero on the paper and this also raises the possibility of charges of academic misconduct. Plagiarism is discussed in detail below.

### **Part IV: Conclusion**

The conclusion is worth five (5) points and needs to contain the following five points. It should be no more than 125 words in length. The conclusion should be written out as text rather than presented as an outline. See the sample paper, below. The purpose of the conclusion is to remind the reader what was done in the paper.

1. **Thesis Statement:** Restate the specific thesis for the paper.
  - a. Example: “The purpose of this essay was to discuss and assess the morality of charging larger airline passengers extra for their flights.”
2. **Case Statement:** Briefly identify the case you addressed
  - a. Example: “I addressed case X, the ethics of flying fat.”
3. **Position Statement:** Clearly restate your position on the issue.
  - a. Example: “It is my considered opinion that it is morally acceptable to charge larger passengers for a second seat or an upgrade.”



**4. Argument Statement:** Briefly state what arguments of your own you presented.

a. Example: "I defended my position by making use of analogies, making an appeal to rights and considering objections against my view."

**5. Final Relevant Remark:** Provide some relevant remark to close the paper.

a. Example: "While airlines should really provide larger seats, the practical and ethical solution for now is to charge the large."

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Plagiarism also includes copying significant ideas without giving credit, even if there is not direct copying of text.

Copying the work of another student is also plagiarism. If two or more students turn in similar or identical papers, each student will be assigned a grade of zero (0) on the paper. If one (or more) students are willing to confess to plagiarizing an innocent student's paper, then the innocent student's paper will be graded and each plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero (0) with the possibility of academic misconduct charges. If there is clear evidence (such as a draft one student turned in prior to the incident of plagiarism) that one student is the honest author of a work, that student will receive due credit, while the plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero (0) with the possibility of academic misconduct charges.

While distrust is an unpleasant thing, it is prudent to not allow other students to have access to your work. In most cases of students turning in similar or identical papers, one (or more) of those involved have claimed to have had their paper stolen by the other student(s). In any case, it is your responsibility to ensure that others do not gain access to your work and turn it in as their own.

While plagiarism of outside sources is common and can be accidental, it can be avoided by exercising due care. Here are three ways to avoid plagiarism:

1. If you are copying word for word from a source, you must put quote (""") marks around the text. If you use a direct quote of more than five lines, single-space the quote and indent it in the body of the paper. In either case, cite the source properly. Keep in mind that quoting the work of another generally does not help your grade (beyond avoiding plagiarism, of course). Your grade is based on the work you have done, not work that others have done.

2. If you are paraphrasing from a source, clearly indicate when the paraphrasing begins and when it ends. Cite the source properly. Like direct quoting, direct paraphrasing tends not to help your grade. In papers that involve summarizing the work of others it is important to know the difference between paraphrasing and summarizing. This is discussed below.

3. If you are summarizing from a source, clearly indicate when the summary begins and when it ends. Cite the source properly. In papers that involve a required summary component, you do not need to formally site the text that is being summarized for that paper. You do, however, need to include the summary statement in the introduction that specifies you are summarizing the work in question.

Any standard method of citing sources that clearly indicates the title of the work, the author, page number(s), publisher/magazine, and date for each quotation/direct paraphrase is acceptable. Suggested styles include MLA, APA and Chicago. If you do not know how to cite properly, it is important to learn how—there are numerous guides for citing sources that are fairly inexpensive. Also, such information is readily available on the web.

## **Checklist & Comment Sheet**

The Checklist & Comment Sheet is provided below. The main purpose of the checklist is to give you a quick way to check that you haven't missed any points needlessly. The second part is the Rewrite Checklist. This has the same purpose as the Checklist, but includes the additional requirements for the rewrite (final version) of the paper.

The last part consists of the codes for the comments. When grading papers I found that I tended to write the same comments over and over. That fact, combined with my horrific handwriting, inspired me to develop the comment sheet.

When you get your printed draft(s) and final printed rewrite back, it will have various comments codes on it (such as S2, A14, and so on). To figure out what those marks mean, consult the sheet on the next page.

**Ethics Case Paper Checklist & Comments Sheet**

Dr. LaBossiere

Revised: 12/21/2012

**Final Checklist**

- Paper is typed/computer printed (-10 penalty for handwritten papers).
- All sections are labeled (-1 per section that is not labeled).
- All direct quotes/paraphrases are properly cited (-1 per failure to cite, possibility of plagiarism).
- Pages are stapled together (-1 for failing to staple pages).
- An extra copy has been made and put in a safe place or a backup has been created.
- Your name and the name of the course are on the paper.
- All requirements for the paper have been met and the paper is on the proper topic.
- All pages are present .
- The paper is the correct paper for the course.
- The final version has been submitted via Blackboard.

**Paper Comments**

Information: The letters and numbers in the paper correspond to the letters and numbers on this comment sheet-simply match what is marked on your paper to this list of comments. These are general comments so your paper might not contain all of them.

**Organization/Style/Presentation**

- O1. This needed to be better organized.
- O2. This needed to be better presented.
- O3. This needed to be clearer.
- O4. This is too vague.
- O5. This is ambiguous.
- O6. This needed to be more concise.
- O7. You need to start a new paragraph here.

**Introduction/Conclusion**

- I1. Not all five required points are present.
- I2. This is needlessly long.

**Argument/Objection**

- A1 This is not accurate.
- A2. This should be in your own words.
- A3. Too many direct quotes are being used. .
- A4. Delete this-this does not need to be in the paper.
- A5. You needed to state what case you are addressing.
- A6. You needed to provide more information about the case.
- A7. You needed to clearly state your position on the issue.
- A8. This is not the issue/you are not addressing the issue.
- A9. This is not relevant/you needed to show relevance.

- A10. There is no argument here.
- A11. You needed to support this.
- A12. You needed to develop this argument more.
- A13. You might try using method X (name of method) in developing your argument.
- A14. This is a fallacy.
- A15. While this is an argument, it is not a moral argument.
- A16. You need to modify this so it is a moral argument.
- A17. You need to define this concept.
- A18. You need to support this factual claim.
- A19. You needed to show how this impacts the issue.
- A20. You need to raise at least one objection/counter argument.
- A21. You need to reply to the objection/counter argument.

**Penalties**

- P1. You needed to properly cite this. -1 point/incident.
- P2. This is plagiarism.
- P3. All sections are not labeled. -1 point per unlabeled section.
- P4. The paper not stapled. -1 point.
- P5. The paper not typed/computer printed -10.

**Do It Yourself Case Form**

**Directions:** If you cannot find a case that you like, you have the option of creating your own case. To do so, complete this form and provide it to me at least one week before the draft is due. If you are writing on one of the provided cases, you DO NOT need to complete this form.

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Class:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	

<b>Case Title:</b>	
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<b>Case Description:</b>	
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<b>Case Issue:</b>	
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## Sample Case Form

This is an example of how to complete the DIY Case form.

<b>Name:</b>	Michael LaBossiere
<b>Class:</b>	Ethics MWF
<b>Email:</b>	Michael.labossiere@famuedu

<b>Case Title:</b>	Flying Fat
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<b>Case Description:</b>	<p>In a somewhat controversial move, some US airlines have implemented a policy of charging large passengers extra. The gist of the policy is that if someone cannot fit comfortably in a normal seat, they will be required to purchase a second seat or upgrade to business class. This policy mainly targets obese people, although it would presumably also apply to other large folks.</p> <p>While some have accused the airlines of simply trying a new scheme to make money, the airlines have defended this policy by asserting that large passengers "infringe" on the comfort of other passengers and point to various complaints made by passengers about this problem.</p> <p>As of now, this practice is legal in the United States. Her neighbor to the north has a different policy: Canada considers being morbidly obese to be a disability and hence large passengers are entitled to an extra seat at no extra charge. Since this is to be the subject of an essay on ethics, the key issue here is whether or not this practice is morally acceptable.</p>
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<b>Case Issue:</b>	Is it morally acceptable for airlines to require larger passengers to buy an extra seat or upgrade to business/first class?
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## Sample Case Paper: The Ethics of Flying Fat

This paper is intended to serve as an example of the sort of paper you should write. Copying or paraphrasing from it would be plagiarism.

### I Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to discuss and assess the morality of charging larger airline passengers extra for their flights. I will be addressing case X, the ethics of flying fat. It is my considered opinion that it is morally acceptable to charge larger passengers for a second seat or an upgrade. I will defend my position by making use of analogies, making an appeal to rights and considering objections against my view.

While some airlines have been discussing implementing such a policy, some of them have actually put it into practice, thus leading to a controversy in the air.

### II Argument

In a somewhat controversial move, some US airlines have implemented a policy of charging large passengers extra. The gist of the policy is that if someone cannot fit comfortably in a normal seat, they will be required to purchase a second seat or upgrade to business class. This policy mainly targets obese people, although it would presumably also apply to other large folks.

While some have accused the airlines of simply trying a new scheme to make money, the airlines have defended this policy by asserting that large passengers "infringe" on the comfort of other passengers and point to various complaints made by passengers about this problem.

As of now, this practice is legal in the United States. Her neighbor to the north has a different policy: Canada considers being morbidly obese to be a disability and hence large passengers are entitled to an extra seat at no extra charge. Since this is an essay on ethics, the key issue here is whether or not this practice is morally acceptable. I contend that it is and will defend my view with the arguments that follow.

When assessing the morality of this action, one relevant point to consider here is what the airline is selling when it sells a ticket. If the airline is selling a single seat, then it is selling (or rather renting out) a specifically sized area. If someone exceeds that area, then they would need to buy more space. To use an analogy with time, if I rent a car for a day, but use it for two days, then I would obviously owe more for that extra day. If I refused to pay for that extra day, then I would be, in effect, stealing the car for a day. Intuitively, stealing is morally unacceptable. If the analogy with time holds, then the airlines are in the right to charge more and passengers who infringe on others would be stealing space. As such, it should be concluded that it is morally acceptable for the airlines to require larger passengers to purchase the extra space that they use rather than allowing them to steal it from other passengers.

My point is also supported by the fact that the airlines sell their business/first class seats at a higher price than the economy/coach class seats. Obviously, the first class passengers are getting transported to the same destination as everyone else on the flight. As such, they are not paying more for the actual transportation from one airport to (hopefully) another. What they are paying extra for is more space (plus perhaps a few extra amenities). So, if more space costs more, then large people should have to pay more if they need the extra space. Returning to the analogy about time, larger passengers who infringe into the space of other passengers would be like people who want to pay for one day's rental of a car, yet keep it for two days. Obviously, if they need the car for two days, then they should rent the car for two days rather than one. Likewise, if someone cannot fit into one seat, then they would need to purchase enough space for their needs.

The point can be made even stronger by changing the analogy slightly. Since the larger passenger is infringing into the space of his/her fellow passengers, then the analogy would be to a person who needs to rent a car for two days but rather than paying for a second day s/he decides to take someone else's rented car to use on the second day. This would clearly be a case of theft (unless the other person consents, of course) and hence would be morally unacceptable.

Such an intrusion can also be seen as a violation of the other passengers' rights. After all, the passengers around the large person have paid for their seats and hence have a moral and legal right to that space. While property rights can be endlessly debated, if a person pays for something and there is no reason to think that the person has acted wrongly, then it seems reasonable to conclude that the person has a moral right to that purchase. Given that property rights are well established, the burden of proof would be on those who would contend that such a purchase does not provide a property right, albeit a temporary one.

So, if someone else intrudes into that purchased space without permission or compensation, then that would be a violation of the owner's property right. Since such a violation would be, as argued above, on par with theft it is evident that such an intrusion would be immoral. To protect the rights of the other passengers the airlines would thus be in the right to require larger passengers to purchase more space so as to allow the other passengers to fully exercise their property rights.

To use another analogy, to allow large passengers to intrude into the space of other passengers would be like a property manager allowing a person to park his boat partially across someone else's driveway because he did not have enough room to park it in on his own property. While it would be nice of the neighbor to share her driveway space, it is her driveway and the neighbor has no right to make such an intrusion. As such, if he wants to have his big boat, then he will need to find a place large enough to park it. Likewise, a large passenger who cannot fit into one seat would need to park himself in a space large enough to allow the other passengers to exercise their property rights to the space they have purchased. Since the airlines are selling the space it is acceptable and perhaps even obligatory for them to ensure that this takes place. Since the way to ensure that this happens is by requiring larger folks to purchase more space, this practice is morally acceptable.

While the above analogies are quite reasonable, there are some objections that are well worth considering. It is to these that I now turn.

### **III Objection & Reply**

The above arguments rest on the assumption that the airlines are selling space. However, if the airlines are only selling passage to a destination, then charging extra for a large person would be unfair. After all, they are receiving no more than anyone else on the plane, namely a trip to the specified destination. The fact that they take up more space would not, it might be argued, be relevant. To use an analogy, consider an "all you can eat" buffet. If I go to the buffet with a friend and I eat twice as much as she does, I would not be charged extra. After all, I am purchasing the right to eat all I can and not purchasing a set amount of food. Obviously, if I was paying by the item, then the more I ate, the more I should pay. Likewise, if passengers are paying for transportation, then the fact that one passenger uses more space would not be relevant. They need to be provided with the space they need in order to be transported to the destination in question. After all, that is what they paid for.

The obvious reply to this objection is that airlines are not just selling passage to a destination. As pointed out above, airlines charge more for the larger business/first class seats. As such, they are selling space in addition to passage. To use an analogy, think of shipping a package. While the service is to send a package from one location to another, the price of shipping varies with the weight of the package and not just the destination. This is because it costs the shipper more to ship heavier packages. Likewise, the price of a ticket varies with both the destination and the space. Thus, it would be morally acceptable for airlines to charge more for larger passengers because they are using more space. This is a relevant difference, as shown by the analogy, and hence it morally justifies a difference in treatment.

Another point to consider is the fact that being obese is considered by some to be a disability. From a moral standpoint, it is generally expected that people with disabilities should receive the same services and access without being compelled to pay more. For example, if a business put a toll gate on the handicap ramps that allowed access to the store, then that would be regarded as morally outrageous. Likewise, to charge obese people more because they need more space could also be seen as outrageous and immoral.

Of course, one important distinction is that being obese is generally seen as the result of decisions on part of the obese person rather than a true disability. While some people are genetically predisposed to being obese, how much a person eats and how much they exercise is a matter of choice. Since they could reduce their weight, the rest of us are under no obligation to provide special accommodations for them. This is because they could take reasonable steps to remove the need for such accommodations. To use analogy, imagine someone who insisted that she be provided with a Seeing Eye dog because she wants to wear really dark sunglasses all the time, even at night. Obviously, since she does not need to wear such glasses, there is no obligation to provide her with the dog. If she wants to pay to have a dog trained so she can wear her glasses, then that would be another matter. Likewise, if someone wants to live in a way that results in a size that infringes into the space of others, then they must expect to pay for their own special accommodations.

A final point worth considering is the fact that some large people are not obese. A person might simply be larger than the very cramped seats that most airlines provide. For example, I am fairly thin but I can barely fit into the typical coach seat. Since such people cannot be expected to be smaller than they are, it would seem unfair to charge them more simply because of their unavoidable size.

One reply is that if the airlines are going to charge large people extra, then they are obligated to provide adequate space based on the size of average adult humans. If they do this, then charging larger people more would be acceptable. To use an analogy, clothing companies often charge extra for extra large (and larger) t-shirts and other clothing. This is because the larger clothing uses more material. Likewise, if the airlines provide adequate basic seating, then they can charge more for larger folks based on the same logic. Naturally, the large folks cannot help being large, but this is a relevant difference that justifies their paying more. Using another shipping analogy, it is not the fault of a box of metal cups that it is heavier than a comparable box of Styrofoam cups. However, the weight difference is relevant: it costs more to transport heavier items and hence a shipping company may justly charge more. The same would, it seems, apply to large people.

Another analogy that can be used is a meal at a restaurant. Presumably, a meal is designed so that it will satisfy the hunger of an average person. If a person who is very hungry purchases such a meal and it does not fill him up, then he would need to buy more food. He cannot expect that being able to eat more than average entitles him to additional food at no extra cost. Likewise, a larger person who cannot fit in an average seat would need to buy more space.

Thus it can be safely concluded that charging a larger passenger for an extra seat or an upgrade is morally acceptable if s/he cannot fit properly in one seat.

#### **IV Conclusion**

The purpose of this essay was to discuss and assess the morality of charging larger airline passengers extra for their flights. I addressed case X, the ethics of flying fat. It is my considered opinion that it is morally acceptable to charge larger passengers for a second seat or an upgrade. I defended my position by making use of analogies, making an appeal to rights and considering objections against my view.

While airlines should really provide larger seats, the practical and ethical solution for now is to charge the large.