

Business and Professional Ethics

[Sample Syllabus: Suitable for 200-level undergraduate course with 30-50 students]

Professor Information

Email Address: finestone@chapman.edu
Office Hours: TH 9:00-11:00 AM
Office Location: Wilkinson Hall 221

Class Information

Class Time: MW 11:00 AM -12:30 PM
Class Location: Wilkinson Hall 230

Course Description: This is a survey course covering the ethical issues which arise in business from the perspective of different stakeholders ranging from managers and investors to consumers and regulators. The aim of this course is to help students perceive and evaluate the ethical issues which permeate the business world, with a focus on providing the conceptual and analytical resources necessary to practically navigate the messy and sometimes morally fraught commercial world. We will be reading case studies drawn from the business world as well as more theoretical pieces attempting to parse through the principles at play. Complementing this, we will be undertaking various *market scenarios* in which we will all have the opportunity to put principles into practice.

Learning Goals:

- Students will gain familiarity with prominent case studies, market institutions, and ethical reasoning.
- Students will critically and charitably engage with primary sources.
- Students will gain improved proficiency in analytical writing, oral communication, and independent research.

Texts:

- Heath, J. 2023. *Ethics for Capitalists: A Systematic Approach to Business Ethics, Competition, and Market Failure*. Friesen Press.
- Gini, A. & Marcoux, A. 2008. *Case Studies in Business Ethics*. Pearson.
- Schwartz, D. 2010. *Consuming Choices: Ethics in a Global Consumer Age*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

All other texts will be made available via Canvas. The schedule below is subject to change. In the event of changes, I will send a class-wide email and announcement on Canvas.

Course Requirements:

- **Participation (10%):** Participation in class discussions will be assessed on (1) grasp of and depth of reflection on the assigned readings; and (2) ability to attentively listen and charitably respond to other students' comments and questions. Consistent and constructive participation will weigh in favor of the higher grade in the case of a borderline final grade based on your work.
- **Discussion Questions (10%):** For every reading you will be responsible for crafting a discussion question regarding some aspect of the reading which you found to be confusing, disconcerting, provocative, or simply worth discussing in greater detail. Discussion questions will be submitted *before* the start of class and be used to organize discussions.
- **Writing (10%; 20%):** During the semester, you will be responsible for completing a short essay pertaining to each of the thematic topics. These **topic essays** must be written in response to one of the assigned prompts and critically engage with the primary literature. In addition, each essay must also provide an explanation for *why* you choose that specific prompt rather than the alternatives provided. You will also be responsible for completing a semester-long **research paper**. To complete the research paper, you will need to complete (1) the verbal topic discussion, (2) the research proposal, and (3) the term paper. More details pertaining to all writing assignments can be found on the *Writing Handout*.
- **Presentation and Commentary (10%; 5%):** Before starting to write the term paper, each student is required to present their research to a peer who will provide commentary on the presentation. Presentations will last 8 minutes and should involve either a visual presentation or a handout, followed by 2 minutes for commentary. More details can be found on the *Presentation Handout*.
- **Market Scenarios (35%):** After every topic, you will participate in a market scenario which concretizes the more abstract and theoretical discussions. Each scenario will be tailored to the specific topic and will require you to display discretion as you cooperate and compete, as well as reflect on your practices. More details can be found on the *Market Scenarios Handout*.

Course Arrangements:

- **Revise and Resubmit:** I will provide extensive and actionable comments – critical and constructive – to all papers you hand in. The expectation is that you can make use of these comments to improve both your arguments as well as your general writing. For the topic essays, you are encouraged to revise and polish the papers once in order to strengthen the paper and receive a better grade. For the term paper, you are encouraged to revise and resubmit the paper up to three times. Good writing and good thinking require time, persistence, and multiple perspectives. If your initial grade is disappointing, take the time to rethink your argument, explore

additional texts, and refine your writing. All rewritten work will be held at the same standard and grading scale as initial submissions.

- **Topical Discussion:** We will start every class with a pre-class mini discussion regarding current events, specifically with regard to news stories which relate to our current discussions. For example, if there has been an alleged “medical breakthrough” or if there has been research scandal, we will see if we can connect up our philosophical reflection with real-world concerns and events.
- **Extended Office Hours:** In addition to the regular office hours, I will offer extended office hours two weeks prior to the deadline for the term paper so as to help you wrestle with your research topics, discuss writing strategies, and provide feedback.

Grading Scale

A+: 95% and up; A: 93-95%; A-: 90-92%; B+: 87-89%; B: 83-86%; B-: 80-82%; C+: 77-79%; C: 73-76%; C-: 70-72%....

Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the Chapman Academic Integrity Policy will be required to participate in the outlined procedures. For concerns with AI writing aids, see the *AI Policy Handout*.

Disability Resources

If you have a disability that requires special accommodation you should contact the Chapman Disability Services at ds@chapman.edu as soon as possible.

Schedule:

Class 1	Introduction: Is business ethics an oxymoron? No reading
Class 2	Methods and Questions Madsen & Vaccaro, “The Parmalat Affair” In <i>Case Studies in Business Ethics</i> Heath, “Ethics for Capitalists” Chapters I-III
Class 3	Heath, “Ethics for Capitalists” Chapters IV-VII
Class 4	Managers Moberg and Romar, “The Good Old Boys at WorldCom” In <i>Case Studies in Business Ethics</i>
Class 5	Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits”
Class 6	Heath, “Ethics for Capitalists” Chapters IX-XI
Class 7	Managerial Market Scenario
Class 8	Managerial Market Scenario
Class 9	Managerial Market Scenario
Class 10	Labor Lewis, “Selling your Sole at Birkenstock” In <i>Case Studies in Business Ethics</i>

Class 11	Heath, "Ethics for Capitalists" Chapter XIII
Class 12	Duska, "Whistleblowing and Employee Loyalty" In <i>Case Studies in Business Ethics</i>
Class 13	Ceva & Bocchiola "Theories of Whistleblowing"
Class 14	Labor Market Scenario
Class 15	Labor Market Scenario
Class 16	Labor Market Scenario
Class 17	Consumers Schwartz "Consuming Choices" Chapter I
Class 18	Schwartz "Consuming Choices" Chapters II-III
Class 19	Consumer Market Scenario
Class 20	Consumer Market Scenario
Class 21	Consumer Market Scenario
Class 22	Regulators Lerner "The Economics and Politics of Consumer Sovereignty"
Class 23	Boatwright, "H.B. Fuller in Honduras" In <i>Case Studies in Business Ethics</i>
Class 24	Norman & Ancell "Democratic Theory for a Market Democracy"
Class 25	In-class Presentations No Reading
Class 26	Regulator Market Scenario
Class 27	Regulator Market Scenario
Class 28	Regulator Market Scenario