

Business Ethics: PHIL/ETHICS/ICS 270

Summer 2019

Instructor: Kobi Finestone

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Course Description

In this course you will develop your analytical and philosophical abilities through both written and oral arguments and apply them to real-world business scenarios. This will involve analyzing and discussing the business world from three different perspectives: (I) Micro, (II) Meso, and (III) Macro and in the process understanding how these different levels interact with one another. The analytic approach in this course will involve both normative analysis combined with empirical inputs in well-reasoned arguments which will allow you to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to business ethical theory.

Meeting Time

MTTH 5:00 PM – 7:05 PM

Location: Allen 226

Office Hours

By Appointment – Email me to arrange office hours.

Assessment

The semester grade is determined by the following breakdown:

- Participation: 10%
- In-Class Presentation: 10%
- Reading Quizzes: 15%
- Essay Plan: 10%
- Completed Essay: 25%
- Take Home Exam: 30%

Participation mandatory for this course as it is a seminar. You are expected to attend every session and to fill out all polls in a timely manner. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis but must be emailed to me ahead of time in order to be considered.

Each student will do one in-class presentation during the semester. This presentation will involve briefly recounting the assigned readings and posing probing questions to jumpstart the days discussions. You will also be responsible for asking follow-up questions throughout the days discussions.

There will be regular short reading quizzes which are designed to be relatively easy, given that you have completed the readings. It is therefore essential that you do the readings *before* class every day. Failure to attend class will also ensure failure to complete the reading quiz.

There will be an analytical philosophy essay covering the middle section of the course. Part of the assignment will involve submitting a detailed plan and outline for the essay to me. You will then receive detailed feedback which should then be incorporated into your future essay. The final paper will be a **maximum length of 2,000 words**. The plan is due on **July 26th** and the final essay on **August 7th**.

The final take home exam will be open book and cover the final section of the course. It will be released on **August 9th** at Noon and due on **August 11th** at Noon.

Attendance and Lateness Policy

Attendance is mandatory without prior permission. Assignments submitted after due deadlines without documented excuse will be subjected to a ten percent daily penalty. In-Class Presentation and Essay Plan are time sensitive and therefore are subject to stricter late penalties.

Academic Integrity

The Duke Honor Code applies to this class, as it does for all other courses

Content Warning

Some of the readings may involve potentially sensitive topics. Do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns you may have with engaging with such topics in an academic setting.

Topics and Readings

Business Ethics is a very broad field. The course is split into four distinct parts, each with its own distinct topics and aims: (I) Analytic Tools, (II) Case Studies, (III) Theories, and (IV) Business and Society.

In the *Analytic Tools* section of the course, we will introduce some of the basic distinctions of the course as well as some of the primary subjects of our normative analysis. This will include distinguishing between micro-analysis, meso-analysis, and macro-analysis, and then introducing a formal study of the firm, consumer, NGO, and regulator. This section will conclude with a brief survey of some formal tools, primarily from economics, which will help us throughout the remainder of the course.

In the *Case Studies* section of the course, we will look at a number of case studies from the business world, exploring their normative dimensions. There are a set number of case studies which we will be examining, but **if you have a case study you are interested and want to introduce to the class, please contact me with the case study.**

In the *Theories* section of the course, we will abstract away from the case studies using some of the analytic tools already introduced in the course. Specifically, we will look at three general ethical tradition: deontology, consequentialism, and virtue ethics. From there we will consider

three explicitly business ethical traditions: Stockholder Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and the Market Failures Approach.

In the *Business and Society* section of the course, we will survey a number of other topics in business ethics. Specifically, we will consider the moral agency of firms, ethical consumerism, and whether there are reasonable ethical constraints on free trade.

All readings will be available on Sakai. There will be no need to purchase any additional resources for this course.

Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
7/1/19	Introduction	Norman, W. (Draft) "Nuts and Bolts for the Business Ethicists": <i>Chapter 1</i>
7/2/19	Market Successes	Boatright, J. (2012) "Ethics and the Conduct of Business": <i>Chapter 2 pg. 22-32</i>
7/8/19	Market Failure/Collective Action	Salvatore, D. (2009) "Introduction to International Economics": <i>pg.10-15</i>
7/9/19	Case Studies	(1) Hayes, C. (2009) "Pulp Nonfiction" – <i>The Nation</i> (2) McCormick, E. (2017) "Turing Pharmaceuticals: Fair Profits or Price Gouging in the Drug Industry?"
7/11/19	Case Studies	Jayakumar, T. and Tahora, S. (2017) "Building a "Backdoor" to the iPhone: An Ethical Dilemma"
7/15/19	Golden Rule, Deontology	(1) Maxwell, J. (2003) "No Such Thing as Business Ethics": <i>Chapter 2</i> (2) Rachels, J. and Rachels, S. (2011) "The Elements of Moral Philosophy – 7 th Edition": <i>Chapter 7</i>
7/16/19	Consequentialism and Virtue Ethics	(1) Rachels, J. and Rachels, S. (2011) "The Elements of Moral Philosophy – 7 th Edition": <i>Chapter 8</i> (2) Vaughn, L. (2015) "Virtue Ethics"
7/18/19	Stockholder Theory and Stakeholder Theory	(1) Friedman, M. (1970) "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits" (2) Freeman, R. (2013) "Business is about Purpose" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dugfwJthBY&ab_channel=TEDxTalks
7/22/19	Market Failures Approach	Heath, J. (2006) "An Adversarial Ethic for Business: or When Sun-Tzu Met the Stakeholder"
7/23/19	Beyond Market Failures	Smith, J. (2019) "Corporate Responsibility and the Plurality of Market Aims"
7/25/19	Firm Moral Agency	Petit, P. (2017) "The Conversable, Responsible Corporation"
7/29/30	Firm Moral Agency	Sepinwall, A. (2017) "Blame, Emotion, and the Corporation"
8/1	Discrimination in Employment	Beauchamp, T. "Affirmative Action" [Guest Lecture]
8/5/30	Essay Clinic	No Reading
8/6/30	Free Trade	Satz, D. (2010) "Noxious Markets"
8/8/30	Free Trade	Brennan, J. and Jaworski, P. (2015) "Markets Without Limits: Moral Virtues and Commercial Interests": <i>Chapters 16-18</i>