

# **PHIL\*2600 Business and Professional Ethics**

Winter 2014

## **Instructor**

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Aaron Masecar

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OFFICE HOURS: Monday 2:30-3:30 or by appointment

## **Instructor**

## **Course Description**

In 1970 Milton Friedman said that it is the social responsibility of business to increase its profits. Put another way, businesses are there to make money, not be socially conscious. The business community has been wrestling with this comment ever since. On one level, it seems obvious that a business should concern itself with making a profit, but what if that profit comes as a result of displacing indigenous groups in Africa to put in a new mine or converting eco-systems to produce export crops that make local residents dependent on foreign trade to feed themselves? Does a business not bear some responsibility in these situations that goes beyond profit making? Or should a business simply be concerned with ensuring that its practices are within the bounds of law and the rest of the problems can be dealt with by lawmakers for example? These are some of the questions that we will address in this course.

By the end of the course, you will have a familiarity with the predominant ethical theories and be able to apply those theories to situations in the business world. These theoretical tools will help to deepen and broaden your understanding of the ethical situation, not just to be more critical thinkers, but to understand how the decision maker, the business, stakeholders, and the general public are implicated in business issues.

The point is to develop a set of competencies that ask us to think more critically about our activities; to ask who is involved, to what extent, who is responsible, what is the impact on my sense of self, my workplace, my society, my world? This course will ask us to broaden our scope in understanding difficult situations.

## **Course Goals**

1. Be able to identify and understand what makes a particular business situation an ethical situation
2. Recognize the importance of business ethics in a global economy while respecting individual employees and their work-life balance

3. Be able to identify and use terms like globalization, sustainability, corporate social responsibility, stakeholder theory, corporate accountability, corporate citizenship, civil society organizations
4. Identify and employ key normative ethical theories
5. Evaluate the role that governments should play in regulating businesses

### Required Text:

Crane, Andrew and Dirk Matten. *Business Ethics: Managing Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability in the Age of Globalization*. Third Edition. Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-19-956433-0

### Course Structure

Week	Topic	Assignment
Unit/Week 1	Introducing Business Ethics	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz
Unit/Week 2	Framing Business Ethics: Corporate Responsibility, Stakeholders, and Citizenship	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz
Unit/Week 3	Evaluating Business Ethics: Normative Ethical Theories	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz
Unit/Week 4	Making Decisions in Business Ethics: Descriptive Ethical Theories	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz
Unit/Week 5	Managing Business Ethics: Tools and Techniques of Business Ethics Management	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz
Unit/Week 6	Shareholders and Business Ethics	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz <b>First Assignment Due</b>
Unit/Week 7	Employees and Business Ethics	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz
Unit/Week 8	Consumers and Business Ethics	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz

Unit/Week 9	Suppliers, Competitors, and Business Ethics	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz
Unit/Week 10	Civil Society and Business Ethics	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz <b>Second Assignment Due</b>
Unit/Week 11	Government, Regulation, and Business Ethics	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz
Unit/Week 12	Conclusions and Future Prospects	Reading, Discussion Board Post, and Quiz
Exam Period		<b>Final Exam: Take-home exam.</b>

### **Groups**

The class will be divided into groups of 5-10 students depending on the enrolment in the course (a higher enrolment will mean more students per group). These groups will be randomly selected and are closed to non-members of the group.

You will be assigned to a group before the beginning of the course. The purpose of the group is to assign you to a smaller group than the entire class. These groups will allow you to get to know a small section of your classmates in a way that being swallowed up in a group of a hundred students wouldn't permit. Only your group members will be able to see your posts and you will use your group to help edit your papers before you hand them in.

The more that you work with your group, ask questions of your group, and help to answer those questions, the better you will understand the material and the higher mark you will likely get. I **strongly** encourage you to develop conversations in your group posting area and not just post your answers there once a week.

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

Weekly Posts	12x2% = 24%
Quizzes	12x3% = 36%
Assignments	2x10% = 20%
Final Exam	20%

If you have any questions at all about any of these, then please do not hesitate to contact me. You might want to post your question on the discussion board in advance so that everyone can benefit from the question and response.

As a general strategy for doing well in the course, I would recommend that you read through the course text on the weekend and then you will be prepared first thing Monday morning to write the discussion post and the quiz. Once you've had a couple of days to digest the material, then you will be ready to write a response to the initial discussion post.

### **Weekly posts (12 x 2% = 24%)**

The main point of the weekly posts is to get you engaged with the course material in a thoughtful way. In order to do that, it is best if you refer to a specific passage to back up your opinion of the material. You will have access to the discussion board as of Monday at 9am. Here are the following requirements for each discussion post:

1. Each post must contain a particular claim and reasons in support of that claim.
2. First post is due by Wednesday at 5pm. If you have not completed the first major post, then the second post will not count.
3. The first post must be a direct response to the question being asked.
4. Second post is due by Friday at 5pm.
5. The second post must comment on someone else's post and contain a reference to the text.

Here is a good resource for creating good discussion posts by our office of open learning:

[http://www.open.uoguelph.ca/online/learning\\_resources/online\\_discuss\\_tips.html](http://www.open.uoguelph.ca/online/learning_resources/online_discuss_tips.html)

### **Quizzes (12 x 3% = 36%)**

There will be a quiz each week that must be completed by Friday at 5pm. When exactly you complete the quiz will be up to you, but the quiz must be completed by each Friday at 5pm. The quiz will be a timed quiz, which means that you only have a certain amount of time to complete the entire quiz. The quiz will time out after twenty minutes That means that you need to start the quiz before 4:30pm or else you might run out of time before the quiz can be completed.

There will be five quiz questions randomly chosen from a quiz bank. Many of the questions will be of definitions. As a strategy for preparing for the questions, you might want to write out definitions of the key terms and the page numbers as you read through the text.

### **Assignments (2 x 10% = 20%)**

#### **First Assignment (See the Schedule for due dates.)**

Select a business ethics problem or dilemma that you have faced or which has arisen in an organization of which you have been part, either as an employee, a student or a manager.

1. Briefly describe the basic details of the case, and identify and discuss the main business ethics issues involved.

2. Set out the main responses, solutions, or courses of action that could have been considered in relation to this problem.
3. Evaluate these options using theory discussed in this (or any) chapter.
4. What decision was finally made? To what extent do you believe that this was the best option, and why?

The more theory and concepts, and the more appropriate the theory/concept that you can use in a comprehensive, coherent response, the better. That said, it is better to use fewer theories/concepts but those theories/concepts in more detail than simply listing off a series of different theories and concepts. For example, using one or two theories but using them in a lot of depth is better than using many theories only superficially. Instead of listing the theory and how it can be applied, explain the situation and then use the theory/concept to explain the situation and possible responses. Think about the most appropriate responses as well. Feel free to evaluate the appropriateness of the theory/concepts in your response. Does one theory/concept fail to capture something important? If so, why is that?

**Second Assignment (See the Schedule for due dates.)**

Select one of the “Research exercise[s]” from chapters five through ten. Clearly identify what research exercise you are responding to in the title of your work. Please use the following key:

If you are working on unit:	Then answer question(s):
Five	3
Six	1-4
Seven	1, 5 and only one of 2, 3 or 4
Eight	1 or 2, and 3 or 4
Nine	1-4
Ten	1-3

## **Assignment Format and Submission Instructions**

Assignments will be between 1000-1250 words long, double-spaced, using Chicago Manual of Style formatting. For more information on formatting, head into [Writing Services in the Library](#) or visit the [OWL Purdue Online Writing Lab](#). Use the notes-bibliography system and not the author-date system.

Assignments are due on the Friday of weeks 6 and 10 by 5pm. Late assignments will not be accepted unless arrangements have been made in advance with the instructor.

## **Final Exam (20%)**

The final exam will be a take-home exam. It will be a mixture of questions from each of the units and responding to particular cases.

Once the questions are started, you will have one hour to complete all the questions. There will be twenty questions in total.

You will also have a case released to you. You will need to analyze this case and answer the questions provided. The format for responding to the case will be very similar to the case responses that you have already done throughout the course.

In order to prepare for the exam, I would suggest you write out all the definitions that you find throughout the textbook as you read through the textbook. Second, I would suggest that you work through some of the cases found at the end of each of the sections. If you would like to talk with me about these cases then I am more than happy to. Let me know how I can help.

## **Policies**

### **E-mail Communication**

As per University regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

### **When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

### **Drop Date**

The last date to drop one-semester Fall 2011 courses, without academic penalty, is Thursday November 3. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar:<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights which carry commensurate responsibilities which, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. The Rights and Responsibilities are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c14/c14-strightsrespon.shtml>

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

Resources

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>

If you find yourself in difficulty, contact the undergraduate advisor in your program, or the BA Counselling Office: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/baco/contact.shtml>