

- Department of Philosophy, University of Guelph –

PHIL 2600
Business and Professional Ethics

Winter Term 2013

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Office: MacKinnon 332 (office wing)

Office Hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays 12:30-1:30
(or by appointment)

DESCRIPTION:

Ethics is primarily the study of how we *should* live and act, and of what is *good*. Just as we can be mistaken in our views about topics in science and economics, we can also be mistaken in our views about how we should act and about what is good. Ethics is, therefore, a very important topic to anyone who wants to live a good life.

Business Ethics is the study of how one *should* act in the business world. Just as we can be mistaken about whether or not implementing some business initiative will be *profitable*, we can also be mistaken about whether or not implementing some business initiative is *ethical* (and sometimes there is a conflict between what is profitable and what is ethical).

The aim of this course is to provide you with some skills and knowledge that will help you make better ethical decisions within the business world. We will start by examining capitalism and different theories of distributive justice. We will then draw from these as we discuss some of the following topics:

- the responsibilities of businesses towards the environment.
- the responsibilities of businesses towards consumers (eg product safety, misleading advertising, ethical sales practices).
- the responsibilities of employees to employers (eg loyalty and whistle-blowing).
- the responsibilities of businesses to society more generally

REQUIRED TEXT:

Honest Work: A Business Ethics Reader, 2nd edition, eds Ciulla, Martin, and Soloman (Oxford, 2010)

Each student will need to bring his or her own textbook to some of the tests (midterms and exams). During these tests you will not be allowed to share textbooks, use photocopies of the

textbook, and no text books will be provided for students who (for whatever reason) do not have one. Make sure that you have the correct edition!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Midterm: 20%
First Essay: 25%
Final Essay: 25%
Final Exam: 30%

COURSE POLICIES

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day that it is late, unless accompanied by appropriate *official* documentation (eg. medical documentation about your having a medical illness serious enough to prevent you from completing an assignment). Assignments handed in on the same day that they are due, but after the time that they are due are considered one day late. Computer problems do not constitute a legitimate reason for lateness. See “When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement” in the College of Arts 8 Standard Statements (below).

Classroom Etiquette:

- Be respectful of the views of classmates that differ from your own.

- To minimize the extent to which your actions will distract me and your classmates:
 - Do not arrive to class late. It is very distracting for everyone.
 - During lecture you may only use electronic note-taking devices (such as computers or tablets) for taking notes. No watching movies, playing games, looking at pictures etc.
 - Pack away and turn off all smart phones before class begins. No texting or using social media during class.
 - Don't have private conversations during lectures (unless instructed otherwise).

- Students who are excessively disrespectful or distracting in lecture will be asked to leave.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (Likely to change)

The Good Life and Capitalism

Week 1 (Starting Jan 7)

Introduction

Robert C. Soloman: “Strategic Planning—For the Good Life” 74-76

Soloman Schimmel: “Greed” 89-91

Week 2 (Starting Jan 14)

Adam Smith: “The Benefits of Capitalism” 623-625

Robert Heilbroner: “Reflections on the Triumph of Capitalism” 629-631

E.F. Schumacher: “Buddhist Economics” 634-638

Distributive Justice

Week 3 (Starting Jan 21)

-Stats about inequality in Canada and growing divide between rich and poor

CASE 5.6: “Poverty in America” 210-211

John Rawls: “Justice as Fairness” 174-175

Robert Nozick: “Anarchy, State, and Utopia” 176-187

Week 4 (Starting Jan 28)

Nozick Continued

Peter Singer: “Rich and Poor” 187-189

Business and Social Responsibility

Week 5 (Starting Feb 4)

Midterm

Milton Friedman:

“The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Profits” 218-222

CASE 6.5: “Sentencing a Corporation to Prison” 250

Christopher D. Stone: “Why Shouldn’t Corporation Be Socially Responsible” 223-226

Peter A. French: “Corporate Moral Agency” 227-232

Week 6 (Starting Feb 11)

R. Edward Freeman: “A Stakeholder Theory of the Modern Corporation” 232-238

CASE 6.6: “The Debate Over Doing Good” 251-253

Kenneth J. Arrow: “Social Responsibility and Economic Efficiency” 238-242

Case 6.3: “NYSEG Corporate Responsibility Case” 246-248

---Winter Break (Feb 18-22)---

International Business

Week 7 (Starting Feb 25)

****First Essay Due****

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| Benjamin Barber: "Jihad vs. McWorld" | 408-412 |
| Mary Midgely: "Trying Out One's New Sword" | 413-416 |
| Case 11.2: "Diller's Dilemma: Street Children and Substance Abuse" | 440-442 |
| Case 11.6: "Dancing with the Dragon: Google Goes to China" | 446-454 |
| Ian Maitland: "The Great Non-Debate Over International Sweatshops" | 428-438 |

Business and the Environment

Week 8 (Starting Mar 4)

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| Mark Sagoff: "At the Shrine of Our Lady Fatima or Why Political Questions Are Not All Economic." | 459-466 |
| William F. Baxter: "People or Penguins" | 466-470 |
| Peter Singer: "The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues" | 477-482 |

Ethics of Advertising, Marketing, and Sales

Week 9 (Starting Mar 11)

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| John Kenneth Galbraith: "The Dependence Affect" | 291-295 |
| Friedrich von Hayek: "The Non Sequitur of the 'Dependence Effect'" | 296-298 |
| Alan Goldman: "The Justification of Advertising in a Market Economy" | 299-303 |
| Leslie Savan: "The Bribed Soul" | 304-309 |
| Case 8.2 "Advertising at Better Foods" | 319-320 |
| Case 8.3 "Advertising's Image of Women" | 320-321 |

Loyalty and Whistleblowing

Week 10 (Starting Mar 18)

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| Sissela Bok: "Whistleblowing and Professional Responsibility" | 369-374 |
| Ronald Duska: "Whistleblowing and Employee Loyalty" | 380-384 |
| Case 10.5 "Whistleblowing at the Phone Company" | 404-405 |
| Case 10.2 "Would You Blow the Whistle on Yourself?" | 401 |
| David E. Soles: "Four Concepts of Loyalty" | 385-392 |
| George D. Randels "Loyalty, Corporations, and Community" | 392-396 |
| Case 10.3 "Changing Jobs and Changing Loyalties" | 402 |

Product Liability

Week 11 (Starting Mar 25)

Mark Dowie: "Pinto Madness" 345-348

Peter Huber: "Liability" 328-333

Judith Jarvis Thomson: "Remarks on Causation and Liability" 352-358

Week 12 (Starting Apr 1)

****Final Essay Due****

Spare and Review

Final Exam: March 16th (unless otherwise stated on official exam timetable)

8 Standard Statements of the College of Arts

Winter 2013

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 **Winter 2013** courses, without academic penalty, is **Friday, March 8, 2013**. 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 Counseling Office: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/baco/contact.shtml>