

BUSINESS ETHICS
PHILOSOPHY 160
SPRING 2012

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Office Hours: Monday
11:00am – 12:00pm
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Introduction:

In this course, we will consider ethical and philosophical questions related to business: What makes an action a morally right action? Is it morally wrong to be dishonest when doing business? What sort of moral responsibilities do corporations have, if any? Is capitalism the best economic system? To this end, we will critically analyze the views of contemporary philosophers. This is an introductory course in business ethics; as such, it doesn't require any previous background in philosophy.

Required Texts:

There is no required textbook. Readings will be distributed online, through the class website.

Website

This class has a website: <http://businessethics.qwriting.org>

On this website, you will find a copy of the syllabus, a class schedule, as well as your reading assignments.

Final Grade:

Your final grade is calculated based on your performance on three in-class exams (75%) and one in-class debate (25%).

In-Class Exams (75%): Throughout the semester, there will be three in-class written examinations. Each exam is worth 25% of your final grade. Together, the exams make up 75% of your final grade. Each exam is non-cumulative, and will be based on the material we have covered since the previous exam. The first exam is on **Wednesday, March 7, 2012**. The second exam is on **Wednesday, April 4, 2012**. The third exam is scheduled during Finals week.

In-Class Debate (25%): The remainder of your final grade will be determined by your performance in one in-class debate. Throughout the semester, we will have five in-class debates. You must participate in one debate. For more information on this part of the class, see the section on In-Class Debates on the second page of the Syllabus, as well as the more detailed handout on the In-Class Debates.

Final Letter Grade: Your final letter grade is determined by your scores on the in-class exams and the in-class debate. It is computed based on the standard scale:

A+ : 97 – 100	B+ : 87 – 89	C+ : 77 – 79	D+ : 67 – 69
A : 93 – 96	B : 83 – 86	C : 73 – 76	D : 60 – 66
A- : 90 – 92	B- : 80 – 82	C- : 70 – 72	

Academic Honesty: Refer to the Undergraduate Bulletin for an explanation of the college's policies on cheating and plagiarism. I take these policies very seriously. If you are caught cheating, you will fail this class. Further disciplinary action taken by the college may result in expulsion.

I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability and may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements so that the appropriate arrangements can be made.

In-Class Debates

Everyone must participate in one prearranged, in-class debate. Students will be organized into teams, and teams will be matched with topics shortly after our first class meeting. You may not necessarily agree with the side of the issue you have been assigned. This is not essential, and arguing a different point of view might even be good for you, as it will increase your ability to see things from a different point of view.

Debate Topics

Wednesday, 02/29/2012	Can capitalism lead to human happiness?
Monday, 03/19/2012	Is increasing profits the only social responsibility of business?
Wednesday, 03/28/2012	Do corporations have any responsibility to the environment?
Wednesday, 04/25/2012	Is CEO compensation justified by performance?
Wednesday, 05/09/2012	Was the financial industry responsible for the economic meltdown of 2008?

You should start thinking now about which debate you would like to participate in.

Format of the debates

Each team will have four members, and so each debate will involve eight people. Each debate will have the following format:

1. Affirmative team's opening arguments: 15 minutes.
2. Negative team's opening arguments: 15 minutes.
3. Negative team will question affirmative team: 15 minutes.
4. Affirmative team will question negative team: 15 minutes.
5. Class will question both teams: rest of the period.
6. At the end will be a class vote to determine the winning team.

Evaluation

Your performance in the debate will be included in your course grade. The mark will be a team grade. Factors involved in your team's grade include:

- a. the quality (clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, logical strength) of opening arguments
- b. your understanding of the issue as shown by your presentation and your answers to questions
- c. your support of your position in the face of questions from the opposing team
- d. the quality (clarity, precision, relevance, strength) of the questions you ask the other team
- e. the team's ability to stay focused on the important issues (on the topic and on the questions/problems raised by the reasons presented by the other side)
- f. class assessment of the team's performance and strength of presentation

Lecture Schedule:

This schedule is tentative and subject to change.

Week 1	Topic	Reading Due
Monday, 01/30/2012	Trolley Problem/Organ Harvest	No reading due
Wednesday, 02/01/2012	Utilitarianism	Mill
Week 2		
Monday, 02/06/2012	Cost-Benefit Analysis	Hoffman
Wednesday, 02/08/2012	Kantianism	Kant
Week 3		
Monday, 02/13/2012	NO CLASS	
Wednesday, 02/15/2012	Kantianism	O'Neill
Week 4		
Monday, 02/20/2012	NO CLASS	
Tuesday, 02/21/2012	Honesty	Carr & Bowie
Wednesday, 02/22/2012	Capitalism	Smith
Week 5		
Monday, 02/27/2012	Marxist Critique of Capitalism	Marx
Wednesday, 02/29/2012	DEBATE 1	
Week 6		
Monday, 03/05/2012	Review for Exam 1	
Wednesday, 03/07/2012	EXAM 1	
Week 7		
Monday, 03/12/2012	Social Responsibility	Friedman
Wednesday, 03/14/2012	Social Responsibility	Freeman
Week 8		
Monday, 03/19/2012	DEBATE 2	
Wednesday, 03/21/2012	The Environment	Baxter
Week 9		
Monday, 03/26/2012	The Environment	Hoffman, Singer
Wednesday, 03/28/2012	DEBATE 3	
Week 10		
Monday, 04/02/2012	Review for Exam 2	
Wednesday, 04/04/2012	EXAM 2	
Week 11		
Monday, 04/09/2012	NO CLASS	
Wednesday, 04/11/2012	NO CLASS	
Week 12		
Monday, 04/16/2012	Fairness and Justice	Rawls
Wednesday, 04/18/2012	Fairness and Justice	Nozick
Week 13		
Monday, 04/23/2012	Rich and Poor	Singer
Wednesday, 04/25/2012	DEBATE 4	
Week 14		
Monday, 04/30/2012	Movie: Inside Job, Pt. 1	
Wednesday, 05/02/2012	Movie: Inside Job, Pt. 2	
Week 15		
Monday, 05/07/2012	The Economic Meltdown	
Wednesday, 05/09/2012	DEBATE 5	
Week 16		
Monday, 05/14/2012	Review for Final Exam	