Professional and Business Ethics
Ph 330 A01 Fall 2015

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Class meetings: Tue, Wed, Fri: 11:30 – 12:20
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Course description

Objectives
In this course we explore ethical issues that arise as a result of the activity of professionals, businesses and businesspersons. We aim to develop a critical vocabulary that can enable appropriate ethical discussion of problematic situations. We start from the assumption that professionals, businesses, and those involved in business, co-create, and are dependent on, the fabric of contemporary societies. Consequently, we will, furthermore, pursue to develop a vision of the contribution that responsible professionals and business persons can make to society, even while pursuing their personal goals.

Method
The course makes available conceptual tools that can enhance the capacity to make ethical assessments of problematic issues in the professions and business. We survey ethical theories and apply them to cases that may arise in particular contexts. We may explore a diversity of alternatives, such as cooperatives, social enterprises, fair trade organisations and ethical sourcing, Critical analysis of assumptions and arguments, supported by case analysis, will be pursued throughout the course.

Questions considered

- What distinguishes the professions from other occupations?
- What makes the professional-client relationship special?
- Ethically, should corporations be considered persons?
- What is the basis of corporate social responsibility?
- What responsibilities does business have toward stakeholders that are not shareholders?
- Why are whistleblowers important and when is it ethically alright to blow the whistle?
- Do businesses have special responsibilities when operating globally?
- What ethical responsibilities does business have concerning the environment?
- When is sustainability more than a greenwashing catchphrase?
- Who is responsible for the safety of products, of employees and of customers?
- What are ethical problems in advertising and targeting?
- What is the foundation of property rights?
- How are work and private property related in today’s world?
- What is the social economy, and what characterises cooperative businesses?
- Why is fair trade fair? What makes ethical sourcing ethical?

Texts

Course organisation

Readings and student engagement
Assigned weekly readings need to be done *ahead of class lectures*. Attendance during class periods, constructive participation, and tolerance with regard to the views of others will be expected. Students are responsible for materials covered, and for informing themselves about announcements missed if absent. Weekly class time will be devoted to brief presentation of key points from the material assigned and to class discussion. Attendance, constructive engagement, and performance of weekly assignments all contribute to the participation grade credit.

Tips for best performances
1. Do readings *ahead of class periods*, and do weekly assignments.
2. Come to class, and constructively *participate in class discussion*.
3. Speak to the instructor if failing to understand the material.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation, including weekly assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term test</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A final, comprehensive, take-home exam</td>
<td>50%</td>
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1. **Participation** is assessed on the basis of a) *regular attendance*, b) *constructive participation in class discussion*, and c) *weekly assignments* based on the course readings and personal analysis of the issues under discussion. *Class attendance will be taken*, and is particularly encouraged in the case of guest speakers. Justified absences should be discussed with the instructor ahead of time.

2. **The mid-term test** covers both readings and lectures. Both understanding and recall of material covered, and reflective analysis, is expected. Test questions will consist of a combination of shorter and longer answer, and possibly some true-false and multiple choice, questions.

3. **The final exam** will be a comprehensive take-home exam with long as well as short answer questions. Questions will be handed out on the last day of classes, and the completed exam must be brought to the Department of Philosophy *no later than 5 days after exam questions hand-out, before 3:30 p.m.* Late exams will NOT be accepted (late exams will receive 0%). **Exams also have to be submitted simultaneously through Coursespaces.** Understanding of material covered and reflective analysis will be expected. Answers to questions will be assessed on the basis of the following three criteria: (1) demonstrating knowledge of the material, (2) well-developed discussion of points presented, (3) clarity, neatness, and organisation of points.

Other matters

**Numerical and letter grades**
Grades will be given as percentile marks. The percentile mark for the course will be converted to a letter grade in the following manner: A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 - 79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49. The A range means exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. A grade in the B range means a very good, good and solid performance. A grade in the C+ or C range means satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory, performance. A grade of D or D- indicates merely passable or marginal performance. An F indicates unsatisfactory performance.

**Late assignments**
Late assignments will **not** be accepted (they will be worth 0) and exams will **not** be rescheduled. If a test is missed for significant reasons of a medical sort (provide medical certificate), or for other serious, **documented** personal reasons, arrangements will be made to accommodate the student within reason (a make-up may be scheduled). Documented evidence for having legitimately missed an exam and an explanatory statement in writing have to be received **no more than ten days after the deadline or exam missed**.

**Plagiarism and other policies**
Academic honesty will be expected in this course. Plagiarism (e.g. copying from others or working together on the take-home exam) may lead to dismissal from the course and the university. Any matters not covered in this handout will be handled in accordance with University and Department policies.

Course Experience Survey (CES)
Towards the end of term students have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding their learning experience. It is intended to provide feedback to the university regarding the course and my teaching. In the last two weeks of classes, you will receive an e-mail about this. If you do not receive such an invitation, you can go directly to http://ces.uvic.ca. Class time will be set aside to do the CES.

Transition and inclusivity/diversity
New students needing assistance may contact the Transition Office, www.uvic.ca/transition. This course is committed to inclusivity and diversity, in line with University Senate policy (1999) that “UVic is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.”

Schedule of lectures and tests
This schedule is subject to change. Weekly reading assignments will be confirmed during class periods. Readings are from the course textbook or to be downloaded from Coursespaces, unless otherwise indicated.

Week 1  
9-13 Sept  
Course introduction  
Readings: Preliminaries and Foundational Issues, sections 1-2  
Reading: Plato, “Ring of Gyges”, Aristotle, “The Good Life” (Coursespaces)

Week 2  
14-20 Sept  
Approaches to ethics  
Readings: Glatz, “Aristotelean Virtue Ethics” (Section 6), Solomon, “Basic Business Virtues”, Meeler, “Utilitarianism” (Section 7), Mill, “Utilitarianism” (Coursespaces)

Week 3  
21-27 Sept  
Approaches to ethics continued  
Readings: skip reading 3 and replace with Onora O’Neill, “A Simplified Account of Kant’s Ethics” (Coursespaces), Brown, “Buddhist Ethics” (Section 5), Manning, “Caring” (Section 4)  
*25 Sept, last day for adding courses*

Week 4  
28 Sept – 4 Oct  
The professions and the professional-client relationship  

Week 5  
5-11 Oct  
Corporate social responsibility and whistleblowing  
Required readings: Vaidya introduction, Friedman (65-), Freeman (69-), DeGeorge (267-); recommended optional reading: French (Coursespaces)  
CASE: Westray Mine Disaster

Week 6  
12-18 Oct  
Whistleblowing, review and MID-TERM EXAM  
Readings: Larmer (274-), Duska (Coursespaces)  
Recommended optional: Edward Snowden, interview in ‘Nation’ journal (Coursespaces)  
**Mid-term in-class test on the last class day of the week, 16 Oct**  
*12 Oct Thanksgiving Day*  
**Columbus’ Encounter with the Americas Day**

Week 7  
19-25 Oct  
Globalisation, safety in the workplace, the role of work  
Readings: Donaldson, “Values in Tension” (Section 16), McCoy, “The Parable of the Sadhu”, Schumacher (Coursespaces), Superson, “Safety in the Workplace” (Section 28)  
CASES: Bangladesh Disaster and “You Love Cheap Clothes”
Week 8
26 Oct - 1 Nov

Environmental responsibility
Readings: Heyd, Dyllick (Coursespaces)
CASE: Fashion, people and the environment
*31 Oct: Last day for withdrawing from courses without penalty of failure*

Week 9
2-8 Nov

Bribery, affirmative action, and sexual harassment
Readings: Fadiman (447-), Dimock and Tucker on affirmative action (Coursespaces), and Superson (Section 34)

Week 10
9-15 Nov

Bluffing and advertising / targetting of products
Readings: Carr (400-), Allhoff (432-), TBA (Coursespaces), L. Sharp Paine (615-)
Optional recommended: Canadian Bribery Law (Coursespaces)
*9-11 Nov READING BREAK*
**11 Nov Remembrance Day**

Week 11
16-22 Nov

Origin of property, wealth, and their relation to work
Readings: Selections of Locke (475-482), Smith (487-490), Marx (490-497)
CASE: Uzbek cotton (Coursespaces)

Week 12
23-29 Nov

The social economy, cooperatives, and Course Experience Survey
GUEST SPEAKERS: TBA, and Murdith McLean, Ph.D. ATTENDANCE: Highly recommended
Readings: Peredo and McLean (Coursespaces)

Week 13
30 Nov – 4 Dec

Review and summary-conclusion
**2 Dec, Last Day of Classes. Final take-home exam questions handed out **
**4 Dec, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**

***7 Dec, before 3:30 p.m., final exam submission (hardcopy AND on Coursespaces)***