

Professional and Business Ethics

Ph 330 A01 Spring 2017

CRN 22415

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THERE IS
NO RIGHT WAY
TO DO
A WRONG THING.



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 to enable appropriate discussion of ethically 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. We will also seek to develop a vision of the contribution that responsible professionals and business persons can make to society, even while pursuing their own benefit.

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 issues that may arise in the professional and business everyday. As far as time permits, we will explore some alternative modes of creating work, products and services, 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.

Sample of the types of 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?
- What does environmental responsibility require?
- Who is responsible for the safety of products, of employees and of customers?
- What are ethical problems in advertising and targetting?
- What is the foundation of property rights?
- How are work and private property related?
- What is the social economy, and what characterises cooperative businesses?
- Why is fair trade fair? What makes ethical sourcing ethical?

Texts

Required: Allhoff and Vaidya, *Business in ethical focus* (Broadview Press, 2008), ISBN 978-1-55111-661-7. A number of additional texts will be placed on **Coursespaces**, and possibly on reserve in the McPherson Library (TBA in class).

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 class lectures 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

- Do readings ahead of class periods, and do weekly assignments.
- Come to class, and constructively participate in class discussion.
- Speak to the instructor if failing to understand the material.

Grading

1. Participation, including weekly assignments, worth	20%
2. Mid-term test, worth	30%
3. Participation in group presentations	10%
4. A final, comprehensive, take-home exam, worth	40%

1. **Participation** is assessed on the basis of a) *regular attendance*, b) *constructive participation in class discussion*, 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.

Assignments

You are expected to write on each week's readings to help you to engage with the material and concepts before the lecture. Answers should be about a paragraph long, and handed in on the first day of classes every week (usually Tuesdays). The paragraph should address the questions that will be announced as the course progresses. (If no questions have been set for a particular week, a paragraph with a summary of key arguments found in the readings should be written up.) It is essential that what you write is in your own words (it should **not** be copied from the textbook or other texts).

You should clearly indicate a) the week the assignment is for, b) the particular readings being discussed, c) the date due, and d) your last and first name. Feedback will be given on the first sets of assignments, and occasionally thereafter. At the end of the semester the total of the assignments minus two will be graded on a scale of fail, ok, good, very good.

2. **The mid-term test** covers both readings and further points raised in lectures. Both understanding and recall of material covered, and reflective analysis, is expected. Test questions will likely consist of a combination of shorter and longer answer questions.

3. **Participation in group presentations.** Groups of 5-6 students a) select a local business, social enterprise or NGO from Victoria or nearby, b) determine criteria of ethically upstanding business and professional behaviour, and c) assess the selected business by those criteria. Presentations will be scheduled for the **last week in the course**. By **3 February** groups need to select a business to visit. On **10 March** one page reports on realised visits to businesses are to be handed in.

4. **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 10 April, by NOON**. Late exams will **NOT** be accepted (they 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) explanation of key points, (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. 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

Please note that this schedule is *subject to changes*. Weekly reading assignments will be confirmed in class, so please be attentive to announcements both in class and on *Coursespaces*. *Informed* participation in class discussion will be expected, so *please read the assigned texts in advance*. Readings are from the Coursepack and from the Coursespaces website, unless otherwise indicated. Going through cases is recommended, but will only be discussed in class if there is sufficient time.

Week 1 2-8 Jan	Course introduction, ethics and moral hazard Readings: Preliminaries and Foundational Issues, sections 1-2 Reading: Plato, "Ring of Gyges" (Coursespaces), Aristotle, "The Good Life" (Coursespaces) Wednesday 4 Jan: FIRST DAY OF CLASSES; Friday 6 Jan: groups for presentations may be explored
Week 2 9-15 Jan	Approaches to ethics Readings: Glatz, "Aristotelean Virtue Ethics" (Section 6), Mill, "Utilitarianism" (Coursespaces). <u>Skip reading 3 from the textbook and replace with O'Neill, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics" (Coursespaces)</u>
Week 3 16-22 Jan	Approaches to ethics continued Readings: Rawlsian ethics (TBA), Brown, "Buddhist Ethics" (Section 5), Manning, "Caring" (Section 4), Solomon, "Basic Business Virtues" (Coursespaces) *20 Jan, last day for adding courses*

Week 4 23–29 Jan	The professions and the professional-client relationship Readings: Bayles & Hughes, “The Professions” (Coursespaces), and Bayles, “The Professional-Client Relationship” (Coursespaces) CASE: Professionalism and police
Week 5 30 Jan – 5 Feb	Corporations as persons and corporate social responsibility Readings: Vaidya introduction, French (Coursespaces), Friedman (65-), Freeman (69-) 3 February: Final date for groups to select businesses to visit
Week 6 6-12 Feb	Whistleblowing, review and midterm Readings: DeGeorge (267-) **10 February: Mid-term**
Week 7 13-19 Feb	READING BREAK
Week 8 20-26 Feb	Whistleblowing continued, globalisation Readings: Larmer (274-), Duska (Coursespaces), Edward Snowden, interview in ‘Nation’ journal (Coursespaces), Donaldson, “Values in Tension” (Section 16) CASE: Olivieri vs. Apotex
Week 9 27 Feb – 5 Mar	Bribery, leadership, Readings: Fadiman (447-), Optional recommended: Canadian Bribery Law (Coursespaces), Ciulla, “What is Good Leadership?” (Coursespaces), McCoy, “The Parable of the Sadhu” (Coursespaces), C.S. Lewis, “The Inner Ring” (Coursespaces), **Friday 10 March: GUEST SPEAKER Royal Roads University Prof. Michael Parady, ATTENDANCE REQUIRED** **Friday 10 March: Deadline for one page report on realised visits to businesses* *28 February: Last day for withdrawing from courses without penalty of failure*
Week 10 6-12 Mar	Environmental responsibility, the role of work Readings: Heyd (Coursespaces), Dyllick (Coursespaces), Schumacher (Coursespaces). Optional: Simms (Coursespaces) CASE: Fashion, people and the environment: A case about ethics in sourcing
Week 11 13-19 Mar	Sexual harassment, bluffing Readings: Superson (Section 34), Carr (400-), Allhoff (432-) **Friday 17 March: GUEST SPEAKER: TBA, ATTENDANCE: REQUIRED **
Week 12 20-26 Mar	The origin of property and wealth, work, the social economy/cooperatives Readings: selections of Locke (475-482), Smith (487-490), Marx (490-497). Optional: Peredo and McLean (Coursespaces) **Friday 25 March: GUEST SPEAKER Prof. Murdith McLean (to be confirmed), on cooperatives and the social economy, ATTENDANCE: REQUIRED**
Week 13 27 Mar – 9 Apr	Student presentations, Course Experience Survey Final take-home exam handed out on last day of classes **Tuesday 4 April: LAST DAY OF CLASSES**
Week 14 10-16 Apr	***Monday 10 April: Final exam submission (hardcopy AND on Coursespaces), by NOON***