

Professional and Business Ethics

Ph 330 A01 Fall 2018

CRN 12530

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Course description

In this course we explore ethical issues that arise in professional and business life. We start from the assumption that those involved in the professions and business co-create, and are dependent on, the well-functioning of contemporary societies. We aim to develop a critical vocabulary to enable fruitful discussion of ethically problematic situations, while also pursuing a vision of the contribution that responsible professionals and business persons can make to society in balance with personal and corporate benefits. Students from all faculties are welcome.

Course objectives

- To learn about ethical theories and their application to the complexities of issues in the professional and business world.
- As far as time permits, to explore alternative ways of creating work, products and services, through social enterprises, cooperatives, fair trade organisations and ethical sourcing.
- To sharpen our ability for critical analysis of assumptions and arguments, and how to assess their strength and weaknesses, supported by consideration of realistic cases. The aim is to carefully examine the *philosophical arguments* that arise surrounding the issues discussed in the course.

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 who are not shareholders?
- When is it ethically right to blow the whistle on one's own company?
- Do businesses have special responsibilities when operating globally?
- What ethical responsibilities does business have concerning the environment?
- What is bluffing and why is it problematic?
- What is bribery and how can it be avoided?
- Why is sexual harassment of special concern in business and the professions?
- What is the social economy, and what characterises cooperative businesses?
- What is the foundation of property rights and how are work and private property related?

Texts

Required: Primary texts are on **Coursespaces**. Additional resources may be found in the Reserve Room in the McPherson Library (TBA in class).

Course organisation and student engagement

To facilitate class discussion, assigned weekly readings are to be read *ahead of class lectures*. Attendance during class periods, constructive participation and tolerance of the views of others are expected. Students are responsible for

materials covered if classes are missed and are expected to ask classmates about any announcements while absent. Everyone is encouraged to be self-reflective about his or her own beliefs, and to constructively contribute to class discussion. Class time will be devoted to brief presentation of key points from the material assigned, and to class discussion. In general, all graded work will be assessed on the basis of A) care in the explanation of key points, B) quality of development of points presented, C) clarity, neatness, and organisation of points.

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.

Graded student activities

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

1. **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, and possibly true-false and multiple choice questions.

2. **The final exam** will be a comprehensive take-home exam with long as well as short answer questions that will be handed out on the last day of classes. Completed, printed, exams must be delivered to the instructor at the Department of Philosophy **no later than NOON, 5 days after the last day of classes**. Late exams will **NOT** be accepted (**they will receive 0%**). Additionally you may be asked to submit **through Coursespaces** (further information on this will be provided at the end of the semester.) Understanding of material covered and reflective analysis will be expected.

3. **Participation**. Assessed on the basis of a) *regular attendance*, b) *constructive participation in class discussion*, c) *weekly assignments* based on the course readings and analysis of the issues under discussion. *Class attendance will be taken, and is particularly encouraged in the case of guest speakers* (justified absences on those days should be discussed with the instructor ahead of time).

Weekly response assignments

You are expected to write up a brief response to a question regarding each week's readings to help you engage with the material and concepts before the lecture. Responses should be brief, and handed in on the first day of classes every week (usually Tuesdays). Your response should be in your own words and **not** be copied from the textbook or other texts.

At the head of the page please state, in this order, a) your last and first name (e.g. JONES, Peter), b) the date assignment is due (e.g. 9 January 2018), c) the particular readings discussed (e.g. Singer and Taylor). 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 the two with the lowest grades will be graded on a pass or fail basis. Both quantity and quality of assignments will be taken into account in grading.

4. **Experiential group work**. Groups of 4-6 students (depending on class size) a) visit a relevant site in the Victoria area from the list provided, b) determine criteria for socially and environmentally excellent behaviour, c) assess the selected site by those criteria. By **5 October** groups select a site/activity to visit and have it approved by the instructor. Students write 2-3 page group papers (worth 50% of this grade) justifying how criteria were selected and why the site received the assessments made, to be handed in on **2 November**. Presentation of group reports on the discussions (worth another 50% of this grade) will be scheduled for the last two weeks of classes. Presentations can be organised as the group best sees fit, and not everyone needs to speak as long as work is divided fairly. Reports and presentations will be evaluated on 1) justification of the selection of criteria, 2) correctness in the application of those criteria, 3)

completeness and engagement in the on site visit and background research, and 4) clarity of presentation to the class. For further information, see the handout on Coursespaces.

Grading scale and interpretation

Percentages will convert to a letter grade according to the standard University scheme:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 65-69	D = 50-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 60-64	F = 0-49
A- = 80-84	B- = 70-72		

What the Grading Scale Means:

- A+, A, or A-** Earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
- B+, B, or B-** Earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
- C+ or C** Earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
- D** Earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
- F** Work that is not worthy of course credit toward the degree.

Interpretation of these grade definitions is up to the discretion of the instructor. If you receive a grade during the course that you believe is unfair, please begin by discussing the matter with the instructor (or TA) in a respectful, open-minded manner. Rest assured that if you still believe the grade you received is unfair you can appeal the matter to the chair of the department. For additional information regarding grades, please see pp. 51-53 of the most recent edition of the *Uvic Undergraduate Calendar*.

All evaluations of tests and assignments will be calculated according to *percentage scores*. Letter grades and grade point scores are listed purely for reference. Final examinations are the property of Uvic and are not returned. They are available for viewing at the Records Office according to Uvic procedures and regulations (pp. 49-51 of the calendar).

Late assignments, extensions and plagiarism

Late weekly assignments will **not** be accepted and the test will **not** be rescheduled (no make-up exams). If a test is missed serious, **documented**, reasons, the final exam will be weighted so as to incorporate the weighting of the missed exam. 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**. Late papers will have 5% subtracted per working day from grade unless documentation is provided of illness or family emergency. 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. Please familiarize yourself with them at <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-05/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html>.

Other matters

Transition and inclusivity/diversity

Students who are new to the University, and would like assistance may contact the Transition Office, www.uvic.ca/transition. Uvic is committed to providing a safe, supportive learning environment for all members.

Further information regarding Uvic policies on human rights, equity, discrimination and harassment are located in the Uvic calendar (p. 15), but if you have any particular concerns in our course please do not hesitate to contact me.

Counselling Services

Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health during their years as undergraduate students. Make sure you are familiar with Uvic [Counseling Services](#), which is an excellent resource you have at your disposal on campus. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, but if at any point you can benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact *Counseling Services*. They genuinely want to help, and why not take advantage of this free resource?

Important Dates

Please consult the Uvic calendar's [Academic Year Important Dates](#) for information about last possible dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, examinations period start/end dates, etc.

Technology in Classroom

Some students require laptops or voice recognition apps for their learning strategies, so I do not prohibit their use in the classroom. However, studies demonstrate that multi-tasking reduces the performance of *other nearby students*, so anyone caught on social media, internet surfing, etc. will be asked to leave and potentially subject to disciplinary action.

Academic Advising

For information about declaring a program, academic concessions or interpreting your Uvic CAPP report, please visit [Undergraduate Advising](#) or make an appointment with an adviser.

Territory Acknowledgment

The University of Victoria is committed to acknowledging and respecting the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. For information about support for indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the Uvic [Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement](#).

Schedule of lectures and tests

Please note that this schedule is *subject to changes*. Weekly reading assignments will be confirmed as the course progresses, 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 **Coursespaces** website, unless otherwise indicated. Going through cases is recommended, but will only be discussed in class if there is sufficient time.

Week 1 3-9 Sept	Course introduction Reading: Rachels, "The Utilitarian Approach"
Week 2 10-16 Sept	Approaches to ethics Readings: O'Neill, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics", Glatz, "Aristotelian Virtue Ethics", Solomon, "Basic Business Virtues" Explore topics for group visits to Victoria sites **Assignments are due from this week onwards**
Week 3 17-23 Sept	Approaches to ethics (continued) Readings: Rawls, "Justice as Fairness", Manning, "Care Ethics", CASE: Admit it: You love cheap clothes **Friday 21 September: Film: The Corporation** , possible Guest Speaker: Bart Simpson (co-producer) *22 Sept: last day for adding courses*
Week 4	Corporations as persons and corporate social responsibility

24-30 Sept	Readings: French, "The Corporation as a Moral Person", Friedman, "Social responsibility", Freeman, "Stakeholder theory of corporation"
Week 5 1-7 Oct	The professions and the professional-client relationship Readings: Bayles, "The Professions", Hughes, "The Professions", Bayles, "The Professional-Client Relationship" CASE: Professionalism and police **5 Oct: final date for groups to form and select sites to visit**
Week 6 8-14 Oct	Whistleblowing, review and midterm Readings: DeGeorge, "Whistleblowing" CASE: Olivieri vs. Apotex Review **12 October: Mid-term**
Week 7 15-21 Oct	Whistleblowing (continued), globalisation Readings: Larmer, Duska, Edward Snowden, interview in 'Nation' journal (optional recommended), Donaldson, "Values in Tension" CASE: Westray Mine Disaster discussion
Week 8 22-28 Oct	Bribery, leadership, Readings: Fadiman. Optional recommended: Canadian Bribery Law. Ciulla, "What is Good Leadership?", McCoy, "The Parable of the Sadhu", C.S. Lewis, "The Inner Ring" **Wednesday 24 October: GUEST SPEAKER Royal Roads University Prof. Michael Pardy, ATTENDANCE REQUIRED**
Week 9 29 Oct – 4 Nov	The social economy/cooperatives, the role of work, environmental responsibility Readings: Peredo and McLean (optional recommended), Schumacher, Simms (optional recommended), Heyd, Dyllick **Tuesday 9 November: GUEST SPEAKER Prof Murdith McLean, ATTENDANCE: REQUIRED ** **Friday 2 November: Deadline for handing in reports on realised visits** 31 Oct: Last day for withdrawing from courses without penalty
Week 10 5-11 Nov	Sexual harassment, bluffing, Readings: Superson, "A Feminist Definition of Sexual Harassment", Carr, "Is Business Bluffing Ethical?", Allhoff, "Business Bluffing Reconsidered"
Week 11 12-18 Nov	The origin of property, the creation of national wealth, work Readings: selections of Locke, from <i>The Second Treatise of Government</i> , 12-14 November READING BREAK
Week 12 19-25 Nov	The origin of property, the creation of national wealth, work Readings: selections from Adam Smith, from <i>An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations</i> , and from Karl Marx, "Estranged Labour"
Week 13 26 Nov–2 Dec	Student presentations, Course Experience Survey
Week 14 3-9 Dec -	Final student presentations 5 December: LAST DAY OF CLASSES: Final take-home exam handed out** National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women
Week 15 10-16 Dec	***10 December, before NOON, final exam submission (hardcopy AND on Coursespaces)***

