

Omar Fakhri

Business Ethics

Course Description

For many, business ethics might seem like an oxymoron. How can business, the aim of which is the pursuit of money, be ethical? No doubt much of the way current business is conducted is unethical. And this is exactly why we need this kind of class.

This class has four main parts, and each part ends with an application section that looks at real-life cases in the business world that are relevant to the reading. The first part focuses on theories of economic justice and decision making in business. The other three parts focus on the corporation. In particular, we will investigate the nature of the corporation, the work in the corporation, and the environmental affects and sustainability of the corporation. Again, we will conclude each part by looking at particular real-life cases from the business world. For example, in the section on work in the corporation, we will consider important questions about family rights, discrimination, and harassment. At the end of the section we will examine and evaluate the famous Heineken NV: Workplace HIV/AIDS Programs in Africa case, and the Boeing Chief is Ousted after Admitting Affair case. The goal of examining these real-life cases is that the student can practice applying what they learned to real-life situations. This will help the student develop necessary skills and tools for the workplace in their future carrier.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance and Participation 10% - Attendance and participation is mandatory. Come to sections and class having done all the assigned reading.
2. Ten Reading Outlines 15% - You are required to write 10 reading outlines. A reading outline summarizes the *structure* of a given text. Aim at summarizing the main arguments and the author's train of thought. You must summarize all the main content in the reading that you decide to write an outline on. At the end of each outline, you must include one philosophically critical question that deals heavily with the main points of the text. The entire outline should not be shorter than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page or longer than 1.25 pages, *single-spaced* (font 12). You get to pick *any* 10 readings you would like to write an outline on (with the exception of the logic reading assignment). You are not allowed to write an outline on a reading we already covered. That is, when you write an outline, you must write it on the reading that is due the day you wish to turn the outline in.
3. Précis 20% - A précis is a concise and clear summary of the main claims and arguments of a given text. Being able to identify the main moves and arguments in a difficult text and putting them in your own words is an important skill to have. *The précis should not be shorter than 590 words and no longer than 610 words*, double-spaced. The word limit range is important because it will force you to make difficult choices about what to include or exclude in the précis. It will also force you to write concisely and to avoid being verbose. You are also not allowed to quote verbatim from the text. It is important that you put things into your own words.
4. Shorter Critical Paper 25% - This paper should have two clearly identifiable sections: an expository and critical section. The prompt will ask you to exposit an argument or a view and to critically evaluate it. The paper will be about 3 double-spaced pages, with 12pt font and regular margins.

5. Longer Critical Paper 30% - This is the final paper, and it will function as your final for this class. Like the shorter paper, this paper should also contain two clearly identifiable sections: an expository and critical section. The prompt will ask you to deal with the views or arguments of two or more of the readings. The paper will be about 5-6 double-spaced pages, and it will be due the day your final exam is scheduled.
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Required Text:

Business Ethics: Readings and Cases in Corporate Morality. Edited by W. Michael Hoffman, Robert E. Frederick, and Mark S. Schwartz. Wiley Blackwell Publisher.

Course Schedule

Part 1: From Theory to Practice

Week 1: Theories of economic justice

John Rawls: Justice as Fairness
Jan Narveson: The "Invisible Hand"

Week 2: Ethics and business decision making

Steven Kelman: Cost-Benefit Analysis: An Ethical Critique
Leonard and Zeckhauser: Cost-Benefit Analysis Defended

Week 3: Cases

Bowen H. McCoy: The Parable of the Sadhu
W. Michael Hoffman: The Ford Pinto
Manuel Velasquez: The Ok Tedi Copper Mine

Part 2: The Nature of the Corporation

Week 4: Corporate responsibility

Lynn Stout: Commentary on the Social Responsibility of Corporate Entities
Robert Frederick: Ethics in the Business: Two Skeptical Challenges

Week 5: Corporate governance

Nader, Green, and Seligman: Who Rules the Corporation?
Henry Mintzberg: Who Should Control the Corporation?

Week 6: Corporate accountability

Irving Shapiro: Power and Accountability: The Changing Role of the Corporate Board of Directors
Schwartz, Dunfee, and Kline: Tone at the Top: An Ethics Code for Directors?

Week 7: Cases

Anonymous: First Destroys Malden Mills
Kristen Martin and Scotto: Bailouts and Bonuses on Wall Street
Jessica Greenberg and Schwartz: Citigroup's Chief Rebuffed on Pay by Shareholders

Part 3: Work in the Corporation

Week 8: Employee rights and duties

Ronald Duska: Employee Rights

Tibor Machan: Human Rights, Worker's Rights, and the "Right" to Occupational Safety

Week 9: The modern workplace and family rights

Domenec Mele: Organization of Work in the Company and Family Rights of the Employees

Claudia Mills: Workplace Wars: How Much Should *I* be Required to Meet the Needs of *Your* Children?

Week 10: The modern workplace and harassment

Myrtle Bell, Mary McLaughlin, and Jennifer Sequeria: Discrimination, Harassment, and the Glass Ceiling

Colin Boyd: The Debate Over the Prohibition of Romance in the Workplace

Week 11: Cases

Diana Barrett and Ballou: Heineken NV: Workplace HIV/AIDS Programs in Africa (A)

Leslie Wayne: Boeing Chief is Ousted after Admitting Affair

Smith and Deborah Kidder: You've Been Tagged!

Part 4: The Corporation in Society

Week 12: The Environment

Norman Bowie: Morality, money, and Motor Cars

W. Michael Hoffman: Business and Environmental Ethics

Week 13: Sustainability

Hart and Milstein: Creating Sustainable Value

Gomis, Parra, and Hoffman: Rethinking the Concept of Sustainability

Week 14: Extra time