

PHIL 322 – Business Ethics

Fall 2016, online

Instructor: Mr. Tristan Rogers, Ph.D. Candidate

Course website: <http://d2l.arizona.edu>

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Office hours: By email or appointment, Department of Philosophy, SS 130

Course description: In this course we will study ethical and political issues arising in the context of business practice. Issues discussed include (but are not limited to) the morality of markets, personal ethics in business, sexual harassment in the workplace, sweatshop labor, and the moral status of property rights. In order to better understand these issues from a philosophical and economic perspective, we begin with an introduction to ethics and the market context in which business operates.

Course Objectives: Dedicated students will come away from the course with an understanding of:

- Theories of ethical decision-making
- The nature and creation of wealth
- The moral hazards of increased prosperity
- Different perspectives on major issues in business ethics
- The moral role of business in a just society

Students will also develop their critical reading, writing and reasoning skills. My hope is not that you come away from the course with a particular set of opinions, but that you are able to intelligently discuss and develop informed opinions on complex and difficult ethical issues.

Intro/Exit surveys: for course participation credit (1%) I will ask everyone to write a short paragraph in the first week of class on your ideal of a good businessperson. I will do the same at the end of the course, so you can have some perspective on your intellectual development.

Course format: This is an online course. Everything we do will be coordinated through D2L. There will be two core readings each week on a particular topic. Supplementary short videos will help you understand the finer points of the reading, while the quizzes will give you steady feedback on your comprehension and progress. Students will be required to make a short “blog-style” post in response to a weekly discussion question. On Friday mornings, we will hold live online “discussion sessions” on D2L that I will moderate and take part in. You are expected to participate in these sessions having prepared by completing the week’s readings/activities. Careful preparation and diligent participation are essential to doing well in the course, both in terms of course credit (see below) and developing your reasoning/writing abilities.

Readings: There is no physical textbook for this course. All readings will be posted to D2L in PDF format.

Email policy: Feel free to email me about anything related to the course. Anything of substance is better discussed in person, and I will make myself available to meet at your convenience for this purpose. This syllabus contains everything you need to know about the mechanics of the course. It is your responsibility to acquaint yourself with it.

Assessment:

10 % – Online discussion attendance. Points will be earned *quantitatively* by consistently attending **one** of the Friday online discussion sessions for which attendance will be taken. Three sessions will be held to accommodate your schedules:

9:00-10:00 (AZ time)
10:00-11:00 (AZ time)
11:00-12:00 (AZ time)

If you can't consistently make any of these times, you should drop the course. Three unexcused absences will be granted without penalty.

15% – Online discussion participation. Points will be earned *qualitatively* by participating meaningfully in the online discussions. Meaningful participation consists of thoughtful questions, responses, or comments relevant to the discussion topic.

20% – Reading and lecture quizzes. Every reading and lecture video is accompanied by a comprehension quiz. These can be completed *anytime* before Friday's online discussions. Each quiz allows two attempts. I will drop five of your lowest scores.

25% – Weekly blog posts. These are short written responses to discussion questions I will post after our Friday discussions. Please post in the blog section of the D2L discussion board by 5 pm Monday evening. They should be no less than 250 words, no more than 500 words.

30 % – Papers. There will be three short papers (3 pages each) at the end of each course unit (except the first). Paper topics will be posted 10 days prior to the due dates (see below).

Please submit papers via the Assignment tab on D2L. They will be checked for plagiarism through turnitin.com

There is no final exam for this course.

Grading policy: University policy regarding grades and grading systems is available at:
<http://catalog.arizona.edu/201415/policies/grade.htm>

Grade Distribution for this Course:

A: 90 – 100%
B: 80 – 89%
C: 70 – 79 %
D: 60 – 69 %
E: > 60 %

I will, as a matter of policy, round up grades to the next letter grade if you are within 1% (e.g. 79.1 to 80%, but **not** 78.9 to 80%)

Late work policy: As a rule, work will not be accepted late except in case of documented emergency or illness. You may petition the professor in writing for an exception if you feel you have a compelling reason for turning work in late.

Attendance policy: The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance and Administrative Drops is available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/classatten.htm>

The UA policy regarding absences on and accommodation of religious holidays is available at <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/accommodation-religious-observance-and-practice>.

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean designee) will be honored. See: http://uhap.web.arizona.edu/chapter_7#7.04.02

Participating in course and attending lectures and other course events are vital to the learning process. As such, regular attendance in all online activities and discussions is required. Students who miss class due to illness or emergency are required to bring documentation from their healthcare provider or other relevant, professional third parties. Failure to submit third-party documentation will result in unexcused absences.

Course conduct: You are expected to be respectful toward your fellow students and myself. This course covers controversial and emotionally charged issues. If you are not comfortable rationally discussing them in a thoughtful and respectful way, you should not take the course.

The Arizona Board of Regents' Student Code of Conduct, ABOR Policy 5-308, prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to one's self. See: <http://policy.arizona.edu/threatening-behavior-students>.

Accessibility and accommodations:

It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations. For additional information on Disability Resources and reasonable accommodations, please visit <http://drc.arizona.edu/>.

If you have reasonable accommodations, please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

Student code of academic integrity:

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog.

See: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity>
<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity>

Confidentiality of student records: <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm>

Subject to change proviso: Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and

absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Schedule of activities/readings:

All readings will be posted on D2L as pdfs.

UNIT ONE – An Ethical Marketplace

Week 1: What is Ethics? What is Business Ethics? (August 22nd-26th)

- David Schmidtz, “The Language of Ethics”
- Roger Crisp, “A Defence of Philosophical Business Ethics”

Week 2: Morality and Self-interest (August 29th-Sept. 2nd)

- Plato, Selections from *Republic* Bk. I & II
- Manuel Velasquez, “Why Ethics Matters: A Defense of Ethics in Business Organizations”

September 5th – *Labor Day*

Week 3: The Benefits and Burdens of Social Cooperation (September 5th-9th)

- Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Bk. I, Ch. 1-2, Bk. 5, Ch. 1
- Karl Marx, “Alienation”

Week 4: Does the Market make us Worse People? (September 12th-16th)

- Aristotle, excerpts from *The Politics*
- Deidre McCloskey, excerpts from *The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce*

UNIT TWO – Business and Ethical Decision-making

Week 5: Personal Ethics (September 19th-23rd)

- Jane Pritchard, “Acting Professionally”
- J.R. Lucas, “The Responsibilities of a Businessman”

Week 6: Whistleblowing (September 26th-30th)

- Sissela Bok, “Whistleblowing and Professional Responsibility”
- Ronald Duska, “Whistleblowing and Employee Loyalty”

Week 7: Equality and Gender (October 3rd-7th)

- Heather Clark and Jim Barry, “Business Ethics and the Changing Gender Balance”
- Dawn R. Elm, “Feminism in Business Ethics: Equal and Different”

Week 8: Sexual Harassment (October 10th-14th)

- Edmund Wall, “The Definition of Sexual Harassment”
- Vaughana Macy Feary, “Sexual Harassment: Why the Corporate World Still Doesn’t Get It”

First Paper Due: October 16th, 11:59 PM (AZ time)

UNIT THREE – Business and Society

Week 9: Social Responsibility (October 17th-21st)

- Milton Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits”
- Henry Mintzberg, “The Case for Corporate Social Responsibility”

Week 10: Global Responsibility (October 24th-28th)

- Norman Bowie, “The Moral Obligations of Multinational Companies”
- William A. Bain, “Business Ethics and the Activities of Multinationals”

Week 11: Sweatshop Labor (October 31st-November 4th)

- Karl Marx, “Wage, Labor, and Capital”
- Matt Zwolinski, “Sweatshops”

Week 12: Price-gouging (November 7th-11th)

- John Locke, “Venditio”
- Matt Zwolinski, “The Ethics of Price-gouging”

November 11th – *Veteran’s Day*

Second Paper Due: November 13th, 11:59 PM (AZ time)

UNIT FOUR – Business and Politics

Week 13: Property Rights and Economic Inequality (November 14th-18th)

- John Locke, excerpts from *Second Treatise on Government*
- Stuart White, “The Demand for Equality”

Week 14: Theories of Justice (November 21st-25th)

- John Rawls, excerpts from *A Theory of Justice*
- Robert Nozick, “Distributive Justice”

November 24th-27th – *Thanksgiving Break*

Week 15: Theories of Justice cont. (November 28th-December 2nd)

- G.A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?*

Week 16: Money and Politics (December 5th-7th)

- Milton Friedman, “The Relation between Economic Freedom and Political Freedom”
- Thomas Christiano, “Money in Politics”

December 7th – *Last day of classes*

Third (and final) Paper Due: December 11th (11:59 PM)