

# U22 Phil 234: Business Ethics

Fall 2014  
Wednesday 6:00-8:30pm  
Eads 103

Instructor: Tyler Paytas  
E-mail: tylerpaytas@wustl.edu  
Office: Wilson 116  
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-4:00 and by appointment

## Course Description

This course covers a wide range of business topics and real-world examples that have ethical elements and consequences. We begin with an overview of ethics, morality, and justice. We then consider the nature of capitalism and the justness of the current global economic order. Narrowing our focus, we consider the moral responsibilities of corporations and consumers, including responsibilities to the environment. We finish with a look at moral issues related to the workplace such as discrimination, harassment, and whistle-blowing.

## Learning Objectives

Students who take this class can expect

- to learn how to think in a rigorous philosophical way about important issues and positions in business ethics.
- to gain a deeper understanding of philosophical methodology.
- to experience a learning environment that encourages independent thought and discussion.
- to hone their critical reading and writing skills.

## Expectations

This course has no prerequisites. Students are expected to attend all lectures, read the required texts, and do the best work they can on all assignments. Students are also expected to take an active role in their learning by raising questions in class and participating in discussion. The instructor will attempt to provide interesting and informative material for students to read, give helpful lectures, provide assignments and activities that challenge and stimulate interest, be available to answer any questions, and provide fair and timely evaluations of student achievement.

## Required Texts

- *Moral Issues in Business – 12th Edition* by William H. Shaw and Vincent Barry. Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, 2013.
- Additional readings will be distributed in class or via email.

## Evaluation

10%	Participation
15%	Case Presentation
25%	Midterm Exam (10/22)
25%	Term Paper (11/19)
25%	Final Exam (12/17)

*Participation* – Much class time will be spent discussing the assigned readings (either as a class or in small groups). For that reason, it is essential that each student come to class prepared with questions, comments, or objections. To ensure that this is the case, there will occasionally be pop quizzes at the start of class. The quizzes are designed to be very easy if you have completed the reading, and very difficult if you have not. The lowest quiz score for each student will be dropped. Participation grades will be determined by the quality and frequency of contributions to class discussion, regularity of attendance, and quiz scores. Please do not be afraid to share your thoughts with the class—undeveloped ideas often lead to fruitful discussions.

*Case Presentation*—Each student is required to present a case study to the class. A list of case studies is included in the list of readings. The presentation and discussion should last about *10 minutes* which includes the Q&A where you will act as the “class expert” on the case. During the presentation you will cover the following points of the case:

- Who are the key players? (The most important people or organizations).
- What are the most significant events or decisions that have caused an ethical dilemma?
- What are the particular ethical issues in the situation? (I recommend that you correctly apply at least three of the Seven Ethical Theories.)
- What two or more things should the key players have done differently to resolve the ethical issues? (Avoid merely saying that they should *not* have done what they did. Be creative.)
- Pose *three* questions about the case for the class to discuss. Avoid questions that can be answered "yes" or "no" unless you also ask, "Why?"
- *\*\*Note: You do **not** need to answer the questions that are included in the book.*

*Term Paper* – Students are expected to write one paper with a length of 1,200 – 1,500 words. Students can either choose a topic suggested by the instructor, or come up with their own paper idea. Anyone who wants to do the latter must have the paper proposal approved by the instructor. I will provide further details about the paper assignment and expectations later in the semester. Some class time will be devoted to discussion of strategies for writing papers. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Papers not received then will be penalized 5% off their base grade immediately, and another 5% for every 24 hour period thereafter until they are received.

*Academic Integrity* – All students are expected to adhere to high standards of academic integrity. In this class especially, that means that all work presented as original must, in fact, be original, and the ideas and contributions of others must always be appropriately acknowledged. Quotations must, of course, be acknowledged, but so must summaries, paraphrases, and the ideas of others. *Course Listings* and *Bearings*, and the [University Policies website \(www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html\)](http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html) all contain full statements of the University's policy on academic integrity. The policy is summarized at [www.ja.wustl.edu/academicintegrity/resources-policysummary.php](http://www.ja.wustl.edu/academicintegrity/resources-policysummary.php). If you have any doubts or questions about documentation requirements, please ask me. Don't guess.

*Electronic Devices* – Cell phones, music players, and computers may not be used during class. Ringers should be turned off before entering, and texting is prohibited.

## **PART I: Ethical Theory**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Due</u>
8/27	Introduction to Business Ethics	None
9/3	The Nature of Morality	1-28; 45-52
9/10	Ethical Theory	53-81; 89-95

## **PART II: Justice and Capitalism**

9/17	Distributive Justice	104-127; 142-148
9/24	The Nature of Capitalism	149-172; 186-198
10/1	Global Poverty	TBA
10/8	<u>Midterm Exam</u>	None

## **PART III: Moral Responsibility**

10/15	Corporations	199-223; 235-242; 254-259
10/22	Consumers	260-293; 320-326
10/29	The Environment	327-350; 361-366

## **PART IV: Workplace Issues**

11/5	Civil Liberties & Labor Unions	373-401; 414-426
11/12	Whistle-Blowing	485-490; 502-510 518-523; 540-546
11/19	Discrimination and Harassment	547-555; 564-568 581-595
11/26	<b>No Class (Thanksgiving Break)</b>	
12/3	Affirmative Action	555-563; 577-581
12/17	<u>Final Exam</u>	None