

Professional and Business Ethics

Ph 330 A01 Spring 2018

CRN 22334

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Course description

Objectives

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, and aim to develop a critical vocabulary to enable fruitful discussion of ethically problematic situations. In this context, we will 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 may be useful in the assessment of ethically problematic issues. We begin by surveying ethical theories, which we then apply to issues that may arise in the professional and business context. As far as time permits, we will explore alternative ways of creating work, products and services, as represented by social enterprises, cooperatives, fair trade organisations and ethical sourcing. Critical analysis of assumptions and arguments, supported by case analysis, will be engaged in 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 who are not shareholders?
- Why are whistleblowers important and when is it ethically right to blow the whistle?
- 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?

Course organisation

Texts

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

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 and contribute to the participation grade credit. Students are responsible for class lectures covered, and for informing themselves about announcements missed if absent. Class time will be devoted to brief presentation of key points from the material assigned, and to class discussion.

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

Mid-term test, worth	30%
A final, comprehensive, take-home exam, worth	40%
Participation, including weekly assignments, worth	20%
Experiential group work	10%

1. **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. 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.

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, and possibly true-false and multiple choice questions.

3. **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 required in the case of guest speakers (justified absences during guest presentations should be discussed with the instructor ahead of time).

Assignments

You are expected to produce one paragraph-long responses to questions regarding the upcoming week's readings. These assignments are intended to help you engage with the material and concepts to better prepare you for lectures and class discussions. Responses are due on the first day of classes of the week (usually Tuesdays), and 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 points found in the readings should be written up.) It is essential that what you write is in your own words (you should not quote material from the textbook or other texts).

As you hand in the assignments, you should clearly indicate a) the number of the assignment, b) the topic of the readings being discussed, c) the date due, and d) your last and first name (in this order). Feedback will be given on the first sets of assignments, and possibly thereafter (depending on TA help available). Both quantity and quality of assignments, and of contributions to class discussion, will be taken into account in grading. At the end of the semester the total of the assignments minus the two lowest will be graded on a scale of fail, ok (65%), good (75%), very good (85%).

4. **Experiential group work**. Groups of 4-6 students a) select a local business, social enterprise or a professional from the list provided, b) determine criteria for socially and environmentally upstanding business or for professionally excellent behaviour, c) assess the selected business by those criteria, and d) make presentations on their insights and

conclusions. Presentations will be scheduled for a date within the last two weeks in the course. By **2 February** groups need to select a business to visit. On **2 March** one-page reports on realised visits are to be handed in. Presentations will be evaluated on care of development of criteria, on application of those criteria, on completeness and engagement in the (on site and background) research of the enterprise or professional, and on clarity of presentation to the class. For further information, see the handout on the Coursespaces site.

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.**

Academic integrity

The University Calendar states that "Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. ... Any action that contravenes this standard, including misrepresentation, falsification or deception, undermines the intention and worth of scholarly work and violates the fundamental academic rights of members of our community." Violations of academic integrity include plagiarism, multiple submissions, falsifying materials subject to academic evaluation, cheating on work, tests and examinations, and aiding others to cheat. Penalties for these violations vary, with first violations generally resulting in a failing grade on the work. Please familiarise yourselves with the policies at <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-05/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html>

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 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
3-7 Jan **Course introduction, ethics and moral hazard**
Readings: Preliminaries and Foundational Issues, sections 1-2
Reading: TBA
Wednesday 3 Jan: FIRST DAY OF CLASSES

Week 2
8-14 Jan **Approaches to ethics**
Readings: Glatz, "Aristotelian Virtue Ethics", Mill, "Utilitarianism", O'Neill, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics"
Friday 12 Jan: groups for experiential learning to be explored

Week 3 15-21 Jan	Approaches to ethics (continued) Readings: Rawls, "Justice as Fairness", Manning, "Caring Ethics", Brown, "Buddhist Ethics", Solomon "Basic Business Virtues" *19 Jan, last day for adding courses*
Week 4 22-28 Jan	The professions and the professional-client relationship Readings: Bayles & Hughes, "The Professions", Bayles, "The Professional-Client Relationship" CASE: Professionalism and police
Week 5 29 Jan - 4 Feb	Corporations as persons and corporate social responsibility Readings: French "The Corporation as a Moral Person", Friedman, "Social responsibility", Freeman, "Stakeholder theory of corporation" CASE: Westray Mine Disaster discussion ** Friday 2 February: Final date for groups to select businesses to visit**
Week 6 5-11 Feb	Whistleblowing, review and midterm Readings: DeGeorge, "Whistleblowing" **9 February: Mid-term**
Week 7 12-18 Feb	READING BREAK
Week 8 19-25 Feb	Whistleblowing (continued), globalisation Readings: Larmer, Duska, Edward Snowden, interview in 'Nation' journal, Donaldson, "Values in Tension" CASE: Olivieri vs. Apotex
Week 9 26 Feb - 4 Mar	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 28 February: GUEST SPEAKER Royal Roads University Prof. Michael Pardy, (to be confirmed) ATTENDANCE REQUIRED** **Friday 2 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 5-11 Mar	Environmental responsibility, the role of work Readings: Heyd, Dyllick, Schumacher. Optional: Simms CASE: TBA **Friday 9 March: GUEST SPEAKER: TBA, ATTENDANCE: REQUIRED **
Week 11 12-18 Mar	Sexual harassment, bluffing, the social economy/cooperatives Readings: Superson, "A Feminist Definition of Sexual Harassment", Carr, "Is Business Bluffing Ethical?", Allhoff, "Business Bluffing Reconsidered". Optional recommended: Peredo and McLean **Friday 17 March: GUEST SPEAKER Prof. Murdith McLean (to be confirmed), on the social economy and cooperatives, ATTENDANCE: REQUIRED**
Week 12 19-25 Mar	The origin of property, the creation of national wealth, work Readings: selections of Locke, from <i>The Second Treatise of Government</i> , Smith, from <i>An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations</i> , Marx, "Estranged Labour"
Week 13 26 Mar-1 Apr	Student presentations, Course Experience Survey
Week 14 2-6 Apr	**Friday 6 April: LAST DAY OF CLASSES: Final take-home exam handed out** ***By NOON Friday 11 April: Final exam submission (hardcopy AND on Coursespaces)***