

Ethics and Business

PHIL213

Spring 2009

COURSE INFORMATION

Class Time: TTH 1:00-2:20

Location: Daniel 203

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: None

DESCRIPTION

In this course, students will be introduced to the contemporary issues of ethics and social responsibility that face the business community. What are the ethical responsibilities of corporations, employers, and consumers? When global corporations operate in a third-world country, are they morally obligated to pay wages that would be considered fair in America, or is it morally permissible if they simply abide by local laws and regulations? These, and other questions, will inform our class discussions and assignments.

COURSE GOALS

By the end of the course, students are expected to:

- demonstrate a good understanding of the major theories of ethics;
- identify ethical values and perspectives in the reading and analysis of business cases;
- effectively communicate in both oral and written form their position on a controversial business matter.

INSTRUCTORS

Dr. Nancy Williams (Philosophy Department)

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Office hours: MW 2:30-3:30 or by appointment.
E-mail: WilliamsNM@Wofford.edu

Dr. Philip Swicegood (Accounting/Finance Department)

Office: Olin 216B
Phone: 864-597-4378 (W) anytime; 704-434-4887 (H) before 10 p.m.
Office hours: TR 10:00 a.m. – noon, 2:30 p.m. -3:30 p.m. I try to maintain an open-door policy. You are encouraged to stop by at any time or make an appointment.
E-mail: SwicegoodPG@Wofford.edu

REQUIRED TEXT

Business Ethics: People, Profits, and the Planet, by Kevin Gibson (McGraw-Hill, 2006)

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Exams: There will be two in-class exams in this course. The purpose of the exams is to assess your application of philosophical ethics to controversial business cases.

Analysis Paper: a 5-7 page paper is due on the last day of class. The paper should critically examine a business case from Tom Beauchamp's Case Studies in Business, Society, and Ethics, located at the Reserve Desk in the library. Students are also asked to offer an analysis based on their research of specific, relevant articles in a reputable business ethics journal.

Interview Project: Students are required to interview a local business executive (a non-family member) about any ethical traps that she/he may have experienced in the course of her/his professional life. The book, *The Ethical Executive* by Robert Hoyk and Paul Hersey (2008), which is also located at the Reserve Desk in the library, should serve as a guide for framing the paper. That is to say, the 3-5 page paper should not only highlight the main points of the interview but also offer a personal reflection as to how it connects with the ethical traps described in the book.

Group Presentations: On March 10 and April 14, groups will present on employee discrimination issues and non-western and religious perspectives on business practices, respectively. The group should supply the class with a handout which highlights key points/terms.

DISTRIBUTION OF GRADED WORK

20%	Exam 1
20%	Exam 2
25%	Analysis Paper
15%	Interview Project
20%	Group presentations

Grades are assigned on the following basis:

100.0-90.0	=	A
89.9 -80.0	=	B
79.9 -70.0	=	C
69.9 -60.0	=	D
59.9 -00.0	=	F

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

- It will be expected of you to read the chapters and complete assignments before coming to class.
- Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. The Honor Code is in force and will be upheld. Dishonest work through cheating or plagiarism may result in failure of the exam, project, or class. See Wofford's honor code at http://www.wofford.edu/studentlife/honor_code.pdf

- As in the “real world,” *punctual* and *consistent* attendance is expected. Please be on time for class, stay for the entire class, and refrain from talking unnecessarily in class.
- Please turn off cell phones during class. The professors reserve the right to answer any incoming calls made during class.
- Attendance is required in this class. You are allowed two absences with no grade reduction, thereafter five points off your final paper grade for every absence. We will record attendance at every class meeting.
- Late Work/Missed Exams/Extra Credit
One letter grade will be deducted for every day your work is late. If you know in advance that you will not be attending class when an exam is scheduled you must see us as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for a make-up exam. If we don't hear from you by the next class period you will have forfeited the exam. Extra credit work will not be given under any circumstances

Disability

If you have a disability that requires our attention please let us know as soon as possible.

SCHEDULE

BE = Business Ethics: People, Profits, and the Planet, by Kevin Gibson (McGraw-Hill, 2006)

Week 1---Feb. 3-5

- Introduction
- BE 1 → “Elements of the Market System” and “The Invisible Hand” (NW)

Week 2---Feb. 10-12

- BE 1 → “Socialist Democracy” and “The Right to Eat and the Duty to Work” (NW)
- BE2 → “Utilitarianism” and “Ethics of Duty” (NW)

Week 3---Feb. 17-19

- BE 2 → “Ethics as Virtue” and “Feminist Morality” (NW)
- Handouts: “Capitalist Heroes” and “Benevolent Capitalism” (Pura Vida) (PS)

Week 4---Feb. 24-26

- BE 7 → “Creating Ethical Corporate Structures” and “What Can We Learn from the US” (PS)
- BE 5 → “Collective Responsibility” and Handout: “Mauldin Mills” (PS)

Week 5---March 3-5

- BE 4 → “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits” and “A Stakeholder Theory of the Modern Corporation” (PS)
- Select readings from BE10 (TBA) (PS)

Week 6---March 10-12

- Group Presentation #1: Discrimination in the Workplace (see BE 8)
- Open

Week 7---March 17-19

- BE 9 → “Paternalism in the Marketplace” and “Consumer Protection” (NW)
- Advertising (Video) – (NW)

Week 8---March 24-26

- Exam #1
- BE 3→ “Ethical Leadership” and “Linking Groupthink to Unethical Behavior” (PS)

Week 9---March 31-April 2

Spring Break

Week 10---April 7-9

- Handout: “To Gain Weight”/Interview Project Due (selected presentations) (PS)
- Handout: “The Conscientious Investor” (additional handouts TBA) (NW)

Week 11---April 14-16

- Group Presentation #2: WWBJMD (religious perspectives in business)
- Open

Week 12---April 21-23

- Globalization and Micro credit (PS)
- Field trip to 10,000 villages in Greenville, SC

Week 13---April 28-30

- BE 14→ “People or Penguins” and “Sacrifice to Slaughter” (NW)
- Handouts: “GE’s Environmental Push” and “China...Carbon Credits” (PS)

Week 14---May 5-7

- Open (PS and/or NW)
- Analysis paper due/wrap-up

Exam #2---Monday, May 11 at 2:00 pm.