

Philosophy 121
Ethics in the Workplace - Online
iPace, Fall 2017
James Brusseau

Class Meetings	Online
Communication	Blackboard Interface/Pace Email
Office	41 Park Row
Email	jbrusseau@pace.edu
Hours	By appointment

Course Description

This course offers a survey of key issues that face the whole range of corporate stakeholders, from shareholders to the general public. We begin with a study of principal ethical theories. We continue with ethical issues involving individuals and the relationship between the employee and the company, such as selecting a career path, the ethics of applying for work and hiring, conflict of interest, whistle-blowing and management decisions. Finally, general issues of the relationship between the corporation and society are considered. They include: discrimination, affirmative action, sexual harassment, issues involving the consumer and employee protection, corporate social responsibility and the economic star system.

Required Text

The Business Ethics Workshop. Brusseau, James. Flat World Knowledge.

The textbook is an ebook, though a hard copy is available and easy to get from the publisher directly. The book can be purchased at the bookstore or, perhaps more conveniently, at:

<https://students.flatworldknowledge.com/course?cid=2564891&bid=2467781>

Learning Outcomes

Learn how to clearly reason through and debate ethical dilemmas. Specifically:

Analysis

- Students will be able to locate core ethical issues at the root of dilemmas connected with our working lives
- Students will be able to compare possible decisions as structured by the principal theories of philosophical and business ethics
- Students will be able to justify decisions made by reference ethical theory
- Students will be able to elaborate decisions with clear reasoning

Communication

- From course texts as well as online discussion, students will improve ability to join in debates
- From clear analysis – cognitive and verbal – students' analytical writing will improve

Social Interaction

- Students will improve the ability to think collaboratively with others

National and International Perspectives

- Students will encounter some business issues that cross national borders

Valuing

- Students will become familiar with the facts/values distinction
- Students will begin to understand mainstream ethical philosophies and theories
- Students will become more effective practical reasoners

Class Schedule

Because this course focuses on the skill of reasoning more than the acquisition of factual knowledge, we will move at the pace our own discussion dictates. Also, every class has its own dynamic and interests. As a result, we may change the course plan slightly on the fly. Students are required to know where we are in the syllabus. Obviously, decisions about syllabus tweaking will be clearly noted for all participants. If there are any doubts, email the professor.

Class Schedule

Please see below. If there are any doubts, email the professor.

Part I

Ethical theories and application

Week 1 September 28 -> October 4

- Overview of syllabus, book, course
- Chapter 1, What is Business Ethics
- Overview of philosophical ethical theories

Week 2 October 5 -> 11

- Chapter 2: Theories of Duties and Rights
- Duties, Kant & fairness
- Case studies

Week 3 October 12 -> 18

- Chapter 2: Theories of Duties and Rights
- Rights
- Review
- Case studies

Week 4 October 19 -> 25

- Chapter 3: Theories of consequence ethics
- Utilitarianism
- Case studies

Week 5 October 26 -> November 1

- Chapter 3: Theories of consequence ethics

- Egoism & Altruism
- Case studies

Part II

The ethics of the workplace: employees and managers

Week 6 November 2 -> 8

- Chapter 5: Employee's Ethics: What's the Right Job for Me?
- Chapter 6: Employee's Ethics: Getting a Job, Getting a Promotion, Leaving
- Chapter 7: Employee's Ethics: Making the Best of the Job You Have as You Get from 9 to 5
- Chapter 8: Manager's Ethics: Getting, Promoting, and Firing Workers
- Case studies

Week 7 November 9 -> 15

- Review
- Midterm Exam

Part III

The ethics of business in society

Week 8 November 18 -> 22

- Chapter 4: Theories responding to cultural relativism
- Review all theories
- Case studies

Week 9 November 23 -> November 29 (We pretty much keep going through T-giving.)

- Chapter 12: The Selling Office: Advertising and Consumer Protection
- Case studies

Week 10 November 30 -> December 6

- Chapter 13: The Responsible Office: Corporations and Social Responsibility
- Case studies

Week 11 December 7 -> 13

- Chapter 15: The Domination Office: The Star System and Labor Unions
- Case studies

Week 12 December 14 -> 20

- Review
- Final Exam

Grading Policy

There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. These exams will account for 90% of the final grade.

A detailed preview of the exam format will be provided in a video. It will be available on the class site throughout the semester.

Briefly, the exams will have 6 short answer questions and 3 essays. Students will choose 4 of the short answers and respond for 5 points each. Students will choose 2 of the essays and respond for 40 points each. The short answers will typically be questions asking you to provide definitions or quick summaries of class fundamentals. The essays will be similar to the ethical dilemmas discussed throughout the semester. You will receive a dilemma (for example: *Should I embellish my resume with some technically true but misleading information?*). Then you will respond with the ethical tools developed in class.

Participation in the discussions hosted online on blackboard will account for 10% of the grade.

A base grade will be established as the average of the two exams and participation. Grades may be elevated by one third (example: from a B to a B+) through extra credit. The specifics of the extra credit work should be arranged in consultation with the professor. Typically, this involves writing a short paper on a specific ethical debate.

To be successful in this course...

- Because the exam questions will closely resemble those discussed in class, focus in the online seminars, and robust discussion board participation are the best ways to prepare.