

The Wharton School
University of Pennsylvania

Responsibility in Global Management
LGST 611
Preliminary Version – subject to change

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Course description: This course asks the question: what is the morally right thing to do in business? We will include substantial discussion of ethics in international contexts.

Other courses at Penn explore the causes of wrongdoing and the institutions that regulate conduct in business. Our focus is on the normative. It is designed to raise difficult ethical and legal conflicts and dilemmas, and to provide plausible frameworks for dealing with those conflicts. It is not intended to convert sinners into saints, preach absolute truths, convey the wisdom of philosophers, or deter the morally vulnerable.

Requirements:

1. Reaction Papers (15% of course grade). Please submit three short reaction papers (between 200 and 250 words). Each paper should address readings for each of these three class sessions: Nov. 4, Nov. 11, and Nov. 30. Papers should be submitted on Canvas no later than noon before the relevant class session. You should identify one argument or theme from the readings, summarize it, and persuasively explain why you agree or disagree with it. Provide your personal reactions. Please do not collaborate or discuss the paper with anybody before class. I want your personal reaction.

I'll generally mark reaction papers with a 1, but in some exceptional circumstances a 2. Missed assignments get a 0, completed assignments get a 1, half-hearted efforts get a 0.5. Each paper gets equal weight.

Discussion/Participation: Students may substantially raise a course grade through excellent class participation. No matter what you say in class, it will not lower your grade. Class participation can only work to your benefit.

Our class is a cooperative enterprise. We can best arrive at well-justified views by working together to think through the arguments that might be made for different, competing views. The

moral issues that we'll discuss are difficult and complex, and there will be disagreements. That's a good thing, since it will help all of us think more carefully about the range of plausible views on the complex issues with which we'll grapple. For discussion to be productive it's essential that we all participate in a spirit of mutual respect. Respecting others is consistent with vigorously challenging their views and the arguments that they offer for them. What matters is that criticisms are presented in a way that interprets the arguments being challenged charitably, and that properly appreciates the status of those being challenged as cooperators in a joint intellectual endeavor.

Consistent attendance through Zoom/Bluejeans is required, except in special circumstances. You are permitted one unexcused absence. Any other absences should be excused for medical reasons, family emergencies, or obstacles to participating in live Zoom/Bluejeans sessions. Students who watch a class recording because of difficulty in videoconferencing will be regarded as attending class. Please let me know if you attend class by watching a recording. In these difficult times, I expect that there will be many excused absences. Still, excessive unexcused absences may result in a failing or low grade for the course. I aim to meet with individuals on an individual basis who face difficulties attend live classes at the regular time. Let me know if you face such difficulties.

Final Paper (85 percent of course grade): The paper should be approximately 1500 words, focusing on a hard moral problem faced by either an individual business decision-maker or a business organization. Explain how the individual or organization responded to the moral problem, and whether you agree or disagree with the approach taken. You may, but need not, discuss a problem that you experienced personally. Papers will be graded based on the clarity and rigor of analysis, and the thoughtful use of class materials. Please make sure that you clearly state a thesis in your first paragraph. Do not plagiarize. Make it clear when you quote or paraphrase someone. Citation style is unimportant, but citations should be informative.

Warning: This syllabus is currently in draft form. Changes may occur. However, this syllabus offers a reasonably clear picture of the structure of the class and the issues that will be examined.

October 26, 28
November 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, 30
December 2, 7, 9

Schedule (subject to change)

Oct 26: Moral ideas

Crockett, The trolley problem

Lin, Why ethics matters for autonomous cars

Donaldson & Werhane, Intro to ethical reasoning

Oct 28: The purpose of the firm

Case: Merck

Friedman, The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits

Freeman, A stakeholder theory of the modern corporation

ALI, Principles of corporate governance

Nov 2: How much should you do?

Singer, Famine, affluence, and morality

Appiah, Kindness to strangers

Nov 4: Corporate tyranny

Anderson, Liberty, equality, and private government

Ihara, Are individual rights necessary? A Confucian perspective

Nov 9: Corporate responsibility

Hasnas, Mirage of product safety

Weiman, Mcdonalds coffee cup case

Nov 11: Corporate reparations

Coates, The case for reparations

Case: Multinational corporations in apartheid-era South Africa: The issue of reparations

Nov 16: Borders

Thompson, Google's China problem

Donaldson, Values in tension

Nov 18: Exploitation

Zwolinski, Sweatshops, choice, and exploitation

Meyers, Wrongful beneficence: Exploitation and third world sweatshops

Krugman, In praise of cheap labor

Nov 30: Intellectual Property Rights

Case: W.R. Grace & Co. and the Neemix patent

Chen, There's no such thing as biopiracy...and it's a good thing too

Dec 2: Honesty

Shell, When is it legal to lie in negotiation?

Dec 7 TBD

Dec 9: You

Wolf, Moral saints
Macaskill, Replaceability and career choice