

LGST 1000 Ethics and Social Responsibility

Course Description

This class provides a general introduction to business ethics. We will investigate a variety of claims about the moral responsibilities of businesses. What does it mean to be a moral corporate leader, employee, or consumer? Questions to be addressed include: To whom, if anyone, do businesses have moral duties? Is it acceptable for corporations to mislead consumers? Should they employ undocumented workers, or operate sweatshops? What constitutes a fair wage? What kind of working conditions do businesses owe their employees? Do you have a duty to take a job? Are there jobs that it is wrong for you to take or legally sold products that you ought not buy?

This course aims to teach students how to analyze complex moral issues, how to engage in productive discussion on controversial topics, and how to advance careful and clearly defended claims in oral and written argument.

Assessment

- **Participation: 15%**
 - **Oral** - This is a discussion-oriented class. You are expected to actively debate and discuss the course material both with me and with each other throughout the course. Your participation will be actively assessed for quality and quantity.
 - **Written** - Each student will be responsible for raising one question about the reading each week. These questions should be printed out and brought to class to be turned in *at the start of class* each week. Questions must be substantive and show engagement with the author's argument.
- **Quiz on Validity and Soundness: 4%**
- **Argument Reconstructions: (10%)**
You are responsible for an argument *reconstruction* (2 pages or less), rebuilding an author's *conclusion* and the *premises* she advances in defense of this claim.
- **Analysis Papers (24% each)**
You are responsible for **two** short papers (3-5 pages) developing an objection to an argument that we encounter in class.
- **Final Paper: 23% (5-7 pages)**
- **Response Paper: 5% (2 pages)**
You are responsible for writing a response paper developing an objection to an assigned classmate's analysis paper.
- **Group Project: 5%**
Each student is responsible for presenting on one case study of a relevant ethical case issue (selected by the group).

Preliminary Readings

Unit 1: What is Business Ethics? Introduction to the Field and Methodology

August 31 - Introduction

September 5- no class

September 7

Jeffrey Moriarty, "Business Ethics: An Overview" (Sections 1-3)
Amartya Sen, "Does Business Ethics Make Economic Sense?"

September 12

Mark Timmons- Moral Theory: An Introduction (pgs 1- 8,13-17)

September 14—

A Very Brief Introduction to Logic (8 pgs)

Unit 2: To Whom do Businesses owe responsibility?

September 19th

Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations, Book 1 Chapters 1 and 2, (12 pages)

September 21st

Milton Friedman: The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits (3 pages)
Lynn Stout- The Problem of Corporate Purpose

September 26th

Peter Singer: "Famine, Affluence and Morality (14 pages)

September 28th

Freeman: Stakeholder theory of the Modern Corporation (11 pages)

October 3

Joseph Heath- Business Ethics without Stakeholders (or Abraham Singer, check....)

Unit 3: How do Businesses Have to Behave?

October 5

Can corporations lie?

Albert Carr: Is Business Bluffing Ethical? (9 pages)

http://www.cracked.com/article_19485_5-outrageous-lies-companies-are-legally-allowed-to-tell-you.html

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/16/companies-lied-to-you_n_5318940.html

October 10th

Can Corporations lie, part two

Alan Strudler, Deception Unraveled (15 pages)

Reed V. King

October 12

Can Corporations Manipulate?

Arrington: Advertising and Behavioral Control (8 pages)

Roger Crisp: Persuasive Advertising, Autonomy, and the Creation of Desire (5 pages)

October 17

What must corporations do for the environment?

Robert Solow: Sustainability: An Economists Perspective (10 pages)

Joe DesJardins: Corporate Environmental Responsibility (Selections)

October 19

Norman Bowie, "Money, Morality, and Motor Cars" Denis Arnold and Keith Bustos,
"Business, Ethics, and Global Climate Change" (skip section on Global Climate Change, pp.
104-6)

Unit 4: Hiring

October 24th

Who is it acceptable to hire?

Javier Hidalgo: The Duty to Disobey Immigration Law (169-183)

October 26th

What must employees be paid?

Matt Zwolinski, "Sweatshops, Choice, and Exploitation"

October 31

Chris Meyers, "Wrongful Beneficence: Exploitation and Third World Sweatshops"

November 2

Jeffrey Moriarty- What's in a wage: A New Approach to the justification of Pay

November 7

What is fairness in hiring?

Sophia Moreau: What is Discrimination (37 pages)

Specific further readings will be assigned to groups:

Group 1- "Are older applicants less likely to be invited to a job interview? - an experimental study on ageism" -[Éva Berde, Mánuel László Mágó](#)

Group 2: “Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?” Shelley Correl, Stephen Benard, In Paik

Group 3: “Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination.” M. Bertrand, S Mullainathan

Unit 5: What working conditions do businesses need to provide?

November 9

Samuel Arnold: The Difference Principle at work (25 pages)

November 14

Elizabeth Anderson- Private Government

Unit 6: The Ethical Lives of Employees

November 16

Does doing good business make us good people?

Jason Brennan: For-Profit Business and Civic Virtue (12 pgs)

November 21

Brookes Brown: Beyond Profit and Politics: Reciprocity and the Role of For-Profit Business (13 pgs)

November 28

Do you have to take a job?

Lawrence Becker: The Obligation to Work (15 pages)

November 30

Tommie Shelby: Justice, Work, and the Ghetto Poor (26 pages)
David Graeber- Bullshit Jobs (selections)

December 5

Can your job change how you can rightly behave?

Arthur Applbaum - Ethics for Adversaries: The Morality of Roles in Public and Professional Life; Chapter Two: Professional Detachment: The executioner of Paris. (30 pages) (Available as an Ebook through the library)

Unit 7: Ethical Consumption

December 7

Waheed Hussain: Is ethical consumerism a form of vigilantism? (33 pages)
Eric Beerbohm, Chapter 2 Ethics of Participation (selections)

December 12

Sarah Goff- Fair Trade- Global Problems and individual Responsibility (23 pages)

Course Policies

Electronics Policy:

Research shows that the presence of laptops in the classroom decreases students' participation and reduces retention of material. (See, for example, <http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/Journal/Reviews/Pages/Research-In-Class-Devices.aspx#.U8RuVIIIdXXw>) For this reason, **laptops, tablets, and phones are NOT permitted in class.** Please speak with me if you have a documented disability that would make this especially challenging. I take this seriously and will dock your grade if you are on your device at any point during the course without prior approval. Remember, there are no exams in this class, so verbatim notes would not prove useful.

Participation

Philosophy is fundamentally a dialogue between different points of view, each seeking to point out flaws in other arguments to arrive at the truth. You *will* disagree with each other. Far from being simply acceptable, that is desirable. We stand the best chance of figuring out the right answers if each of us does our best to advance what we take to be the strongest claim and takes seriously and charitably the arguments of others. You are expected not only to attend class but also to participate regularly. Participation *does not mean just showing up*. Your mere presence will not earn you a passing grade. Rather, participation means raising questions or concerns that reflect *serious* and *charitable* engagement with the material and with your fellow classmates.

Attendance

I do not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. I allow you **three absences** over the course of the semester. These absences need not be justified to me. These are to be used for illness, job interviews, car accidents, family events, makeup classes, or whatever happens in your life. Use them wisely and plan for the long term. Beyond that, absences that are not *highly unusual such that your permitted absences would not have been sufficient if hoarded and used appropriately* will count against your grade. (Basically, think “are my classmates likely to face the same challenges in balancing their course-work.”)

As evidence that you have read this syllabus, please email me a photo of your favorite dinosaur by the second class meeting.

Plagiarism

Don't plagiarize. Just don't. If you got an idea from somewhere, or someone else, or yourself in a different class, cite it. If you have any questions about this, talk to me *before* acting. I will not hesitate to enact the most severe possible penalties on any misconduct. (And imagine having to explain that you cheated in an ethics class.....)

Office Hours

Please come! Talking things through one on one or in small groups is the best way to think about complicated philosophical ideas. I very much encourage you to bring your questions to office hours— but you also don't have to have a specific question to come by and chat. If you cannot make the scheduled times, please reach out and we can work out an alternative meeting time.

Don't Mess Around

There may be days in which not that many pages of reading are assigned. Do not be deceived. These readings are difficult. You will often have to read them several times to get a sense of what is going on. It is perfectly acceptable to find the material challenging, or to find yourself unsure of what is going on. I'm always happy to answer questions. But do not think you can get away without doing the reading. It will detract from the quality of your classmates' experience—and I can tell. Really.

Late Paper Policy:

Papers will lose 1/3 of a letter grade for every day they turned in past the last due-by date. After 5 days, papers will not be accepted unless there has been prior discussion with the professor.

Grading

Course grades will be graded on a four-point scale. The range is:

3.85-4 =A	3.15-3.5= B+	2.5 2.85=B-	1.85-2.15=C
3.5- 3.85= A-	2.85-3.15=B	2.15-2.5= C+	1.5-1.85=C-

There will be no curve. The entire class could get an A, the entire class could get a C. Grades depend on individual performance. A+ will be awarded only for exceptional work and are extremely rare.