

LGST 1000 Ethics and Social Responsibility

Professor: Brookes Brown

Office Hours:

T/Th: 1:30-3

Or by appointment

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Office Location: 6th floor, Huntsman Hall

Course Description

This class provides a general introduction to business ethics. We will investigate a variety of claims about the moral responsibilities of businesses. At heart our topics is this: 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? Is it ok for them to 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 available products that you ought not buy for ethical reasons?

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

- **Quiz:** 5% (January 31)
There will be a quiz to cover the basic principles of argumentation, including validity and soundness.
- **Participation:** 20%
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 (thoughtful questioning or debating is the key—simply speaking often will not earn you a high grade, but of course you cannot make an excellent point if you do not actively participate.)
- **Discussion Forum:** 5%
Each course unit will have a discussion forum. Student will be responsible for making at least **two** contributions per unit. Contributions can take the form of asking or answering substantive questions, extending, or challenging points made in the material or by classmates, and so on. *Contributions must be submitted before the final day of the class in which we discuss the relevant unit.*
- **Analysis Papers** (20% each)
You are responsible for **two short papers** (1100-1300 words) developing an objection to an argument that we encounter in class. **(First is due by February 16th, Second is due by April 4th)**

- ***Final paper draft: April 13***
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- ***Final Paper draft response: 5% (600-800 words) (April 20)***
You are responsible for writing a response paper developing an objection to an assigned classmate's final paper draft.
- ***Final Paper: 25% (2300-2500 words)***
You are responsible for fully fleshing out an independent argument on one of the topics discussed in class.

Readings

Additional readings in the form of newspaper clippings on current events and suchlike will regularly be provided. Those should also be read before class.

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

January 12 - Introduction

Hershey, Nestle, and Mars broke their pledges to end child labor (28 pages)

America's richest school serves low-income kids. But much of its Hershey-funded fortune isn't being spent. (23 pages)

Cocoa child slavery lawsuit against Hershey, Nestle, Cargill dismissed by US judge. (1 page)

January 17

Summary- The Ford Pinto: <https://www.tortmuseum.org/ford-pinto/>

Jeffrey Moriarty, "Business Ethics: An Overview" (Sections 1-3) (9 pages)

Amartya Sen, "Does Business Ethics Make Economic Sense?" (10 pages)

January 19

Some basics of Logic (8 pgs)

The Form of an Argument (18 pages)

January 24

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

January 26

No class

Unit 2: To Whom do Businesses owe responsibility?

January 31 **Quiz**

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

February 2

Milton Friedman: The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits (3 pages)
Lynn Stout- The Problem of Corporate Purpose (14 pages)

February 7

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

February 9

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

February 14

Joseph Heath- Business Ethics without Stakeholders (26 pages)

Unit 3: How do Businesses Have to Behave?

February 16

Can corporations lie?

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

February 21

Can Corporations lie, part two

Alan Strudler, Deception Unraveled (15 pages)

Reed V. King (4 pages)

February 23

Can Corporations Manipulate?

Arrington: Advertising and Behavioral Control (8 pages)

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

February 28

What must corporations do for the environment?

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

Joe DesJardins: Corporate Environmental Responsibility (Selections)

March 2

Norman Bowie, "Money, Morality, and Motor Cars" and response (514- 528)

Unit 4: Hiring

March 14

Who is it acceptable to hire?

Javier Hidalgo: The Duty to Disobey Immigration Law (14 pages)

March 16

What must employees be paid?

Matt Zwolinski, "Sweatshops, Choice, and Exploitation" (27 pages)

March 21

Chris Meyers, "Wrongful Beneficence: Exploitation and Third World Sweatshops" (15 pages)

Christopher Blattman and Stefan Dercon: Everything We Knew About Sweatshops Was Wrong (2 pages)

March 23

Jeffrey Moriarty- What's in a wage: A New Approach to the justification of Pay (19 pages)

March 28

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](#) (18 pages)

Group 2: "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?" Shelley Correl, Stephen Benard, In Paik (43 pages)

Group 3: "Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination." M. Bertrand, S Mullainathan (40 pages)

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

March 30

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

April 4

Elizabeth Anderson- Private Government (30 pages)

April 6

Guest Lecturer: Pascal Brixel on Freedom in Work. Readings TBD.

Unit 6: The Ethical Lives of Employees

April 11

Does doing good business make us good people?

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

April 13

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

April 18

Do you have to take a job?

Lawrence Becker: The Obligation to Work (15 pages)

April 20

Tommie Shelby: Justice, Work, and the Ghetto Poor (26 pages)

David Graeber- Bullshit Jobs (selections)

Unit 7: Ethical Consumption

April 25:

Brian Berkey- Ethical Consumerism, Democratic Values, and Justice (38 pages)

Course Policies

Electronics Policy:

Research shows that the presence of laptops in the classroom decreases student participation and reduces retention of material. In short, there is reason to believe you will get less out of the class and your grade will suffer if you are on your computer or phone.

(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.

You look silly trying to hide your phone under your desk. I can see that you have an apple watch.

Participation

Philosophy is fundamentally a dialogue between different points of view, each seeking to point out flaws in others' positions in the hope that by doing so they can arrive at the truth. You *will* disagree with each

other. Far from being simply acceptable, that is desirable. Not only would it be boring if we all agreed, 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.

Consequently, 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 much less an excellent one. Instead, participation means raising questions or concerns that reflect *serious* and *charitable* engagement with the material and with the views advanced by your fellow classmates.

Attendance

It is not my job to decide what is important in your life. I therefore 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 or seems more important to you than class. 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 you had planned appropriately will count against your grade. (Basically, think “are my classmates likely to face the same challenges in balancing their lives and course-work.”)

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

Covid Policies

Like many of you, I have vulnerable people in my life. The fall as students gather is likely to be a time of high transmission, especially as additional boosters are not currently available to many of us. I ask you to please exercise serious care. Do not come to class if you feel sick, at all---even if you have tested negative on a rapid. Please wear a mask if you have any known or suspected exposure. It will be disruptive to our experience if members of our class get sick. Please do your part to keep our class together and to keep each other healthy. I will not hold your efforts to quarantine against you and will work with you to make sure you have all the information you need to succeed in the event that avoiding transmission or illness keeps you from class.

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. Sometimes there are cookies.

Don't Mess Around

Do. Not. Pretend. To. Do. The. Reading.

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. There is no shame in that! 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

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. The range is:

94%-98% =A	87%-89%= B+	80%-83%=B-	74%-77%C
90-93%= A-	84-87%=B	77%-79%= C+	70%-73%=C-