

The Wharton School
University of Pennsylvania
Ethics and Social Responsibility
LGST 1000 05
(ver. 9-18-23)

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Course description: This course asks the question: what is the morally right thing to do in business? Among topics we consider: sweatshops and outsourcing; corporate responsibility to shareholders and others; ethics across borders; workplace ethics; normative moral theory; skepticism about morality in business; honesty; effective altruism; ESG. Readings will be available on CANVAS in “course materials @ penn libraries,” unless noted below.

The aims of this course are 1) to survey a range of important ethical and legal issues that arise for business leaders; 2) to analyze the ways in which these issues ought to figure in decision-making by responsible business leaders; 3) to aid in the critical understanding of your own values and the values of others; 4) to refine your ability to engage in reasonable discussion with people whose moral views differ from your own.

Requirements:

Quizzes (40%): There will be two midterm quizzes.

Final paper proposal, including outline: (10%): Due 11-10.

Final paper (50%): 6-8 page paper. You choose a topic from a list in consultation with your TA. (Fabulous work on final paper may lessen the weight of deficient quiz scores.) Due 12-1.

Plagiarism is a violation of the honor code and will be treated accordingly. Please provide appropriate citations in your final paper, whether for quotes or paraphrases. Also, if you use material generated by an AI program in writing your paper, cite it as reference material, providing in an appendix relevant screen shots of material that you get from the AI program. Departure from these policies on AI will be regarded as plagiarism.

Discussion/Participation may improve your grade and is expected from everybody.

Attendance is required, except for medical issues, family emergencies, or religious holidays. Arriving to class 10 minutes late or leaving 10 minutes early will be regarded as an absence. Unexcused absence beyond three classes will affect your grade. For exceptions, see me.

No use of electronics in class.

SCHEDULE (subject to change)

1 8/29 Intro.

No reading.

2 8/31. Egoism

Feinberg, Psychological egoism

3 9/5 Basic ethics

Nagel, Right and wrong

Sandhu, Dicing with death

Hill, Kantian normative ethics (optional)

4 9/7 Exercise

5 9/12 TBA

6 9/14 Corporate social responsibility,

Friedman, The social responsibility of business is to increase profits

Stout, The problem of corporate purpose

7 9/19 Corporate social responsibility, ESG

Case, Merck & Co. (in-class video)

Freeman, Stakeholder theory of the modern corporation

Kirk, ESG must be split in two (TBD)

8 9/21 Social justice

Rawls, A theory of justice (pp. 52-58: the rest is optional)

Shelby, Justice, deviance and the dark ghetto

9 9/26 Work

Graber, What is a bullshit job?

Danaher, Will life be worth living in a world without work?

10 9/28 Exploitation

Zwolinski, Sweatshops, choice and exploitation

11 10/3. Utilitarianism

<https://www.utilitarianism.net>

12 10/5 The future

Macaskill, The case for longtermism

Setiya, The new moral mathematics

13 10/10 Environmental policy

McKibben, Money is the oxygen on which the fire of global warming burns

Fall Break 10-12 to 10-15**14 10/17 Review session****15 10/19 Midterm****16 10/24 TBA****17 10/26 Exercise****18 10/31 Debrief exercise****19 11/2 Insider trading**

Texas Gulf Sulphur

Bodreaux, Learning to love insider trading

20 11/7 International obligations

Donaldson, Moral minimums for multinationals

21 11/9 Rights and the corporation

Anderson, Liberty, equality, and private government

22 11/14 An Asian perspective on rights

Ihara, Are individual rights necessary? A Confucian response

23 11/16 High tech manipulation

Bhargava and Velasquez, Ethics of the attention economy

24 11/21 TBA

11/23 Thanksgiving break

25 11/28 Review

26 11/30 Midterm #2

27 12/5 TBA

28 12/11 You

Macaskill, Replaceability, career choice, and making a difference

Srinivasan, Stop the robot apocalypse