

MORAL ISSUES IN BUSINESS

Phil 3314 • Fall 2016

INSTRUCTOR

Amanda Huminski

EMAIL

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OFFICE HOURS

M 5:30–6:30pm
Boylan Hall 3316B

MEETING TIME & CLASSROOM

M 6:30–9:00pm
Boylan Hall 3109

GRADING BREAKDOWN & SCHEDULE

Quizzes	20%	Weekly
Presentation	20%	TBD
Midterm	20%	11/7/2016
Case Study Memo	20%	12/12/2016
Final Exam	20%	12/19/2016 (6-8pm)

COURSE MATERIALS

Business Ethics: Readings and Cases in Corporate Morality.

Fifth Edition. Edited by W. Michael Hoffman et. al.

Other digital materials as assigned, available on Blackboard or by email.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE COURSE

1. Students will develop their critical reasoning skills. This includes general skills relating to the identification of premises, conclusions, and valid arguments, as well as specific practice in identifying these elements in discussions of moral issues in business as examined in this course.
2. Students will be able to critically engage with philosophical arguments. This includes the general ability to evaluate the validity of philosophical claims and provide reasons in support of or in opposition to such claims, as well as specific practice in applying these skills to the moral issues in business as examined in this course.
3. Students will become familiar with a variety of basic ethical theories and gain skills in applying these theories to moral issues in business.
4. Through engagement with current events, students will become familiar with a variety of contemporary moral issues and debates in business, and will be able to discuss the ways in which critical reasoning skills and familiarity with ethical theories might be utilized in articulating their thoughts regarding these issues.
5. Students will improve their ability to articulate and organize their thoughts in written form.

ASSIGNMENTS

Quizzes: These quizzes will be given in the first 5 minutes of each class and will incorporate both your attendance and class participation. Each quiz will be very short (3 questions) that should be extremely easy if you've completed the reading for that class. Each quiz is worth five points, two points for writing your name, and one point per question. You can miss up to 2 quizzes without penalty. If you arrive late for class and miss the quiz, I will record your name, but you will automatically miss the points available for answering the questions correctly.

Presentation: You and a partner will be required to present on one case study from the text, to be chosen at the beginning of the semester. You should briefly summarize the situation described in the case study (less than 5 minutes) and offer 3 discussion questions relating the case study to the readings from the course. If you need to change your presentation day, you and your partner must find a replacement for your slot and let me know.

Case Study Memo: You are required to submit a 4 page (double-spaced) "memo" that addresses a real life contemporary moral issue in business or economics. The memo should be written in the style and format of a consultant or advisor who has been asked to address the stakeholders involved in the issue you've chosen. The memo should state the facts of situation, describe the conflict between parties, offer an analysis of the situation in accord with the ethical theories and frameworks discussed in class, and propose a potential solution to the conflict or dilemma. Your case study should address a real life example that we haven't discussed in class.

Midterm & Final Exam: The midterm and final exam will each be 30 questions, including multiple choice, true/false, and short essays. These exams will test your knowledge of the moral issues and ethical frameworks that we've discussed throughout the semester. Final grades are not curved. There will be no makeup exams.

GRADING STANDARDS

"Expecting an A because you turned in an assignment is like expecting to lose weight because you bought exercise equipment."

Late Assignments: I am amenable to altering individual due dates in VERY extenuating circumstances, but these arrangements must be made FAR in advance. If you haven't previously made arrangements with me, each day that an assignment is late will result in the loss of 5 points. For example, a paper that would normally deserve a 90 but is three days late will receive a 75.

Writing Mechanics: I am primarily concerned with your ability to absorb and interpret course materials and produce cogent arguments and analyses of your own. That said, as you are presumably taking this course en route to a business degree, I will attempt to evaluate and grade your writing mechanics thoroughly for the purpose of assisting you in refining and honing your writing skills.

Grade Disputes: If you believe that I have made an error in grading an assignment, you are welcome to request a re-evaluation. I will accept grade disputes *by email* no earlier than *24 hours* after you receive your grade. Grade disputes requested in person or sooner than 24 hours after you've received your grade will be denied. Please include references to specific sections of your assignment and an explanation as to why you should have received a higher grade. Note: If you would just like to chat with me to further understand my comments or discuss how you might do better in the future, my door is open.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

General Professionalism: As students in the business school, it's likely that your ultimate goal after graduation is a career in business or professional services. As such, I expect a level of general professionalism in this course. This includes meeting deadlines (as you would do for a supervisor), being attentive in class (as you would be in a professional meeting), and communicating with others courteously and respectfully (as you would be expected to do in a professional setting).

Electronics: Please turn all of your devices to silent while you are in the classroom. Please refrain from excessive texting, checking your cellphone, using headphones, or using your laptops for non-class-related purposes. There will be times in class when laptop use is unnecessary, such as during small group discussions or presentations, and I may ask everyone to put their laptops away at that time. Generally, if it becomes obvious to me that you are using Facebook, shopping, chatting, etc. on your laptop (believe me, it's fairly obvious when this happens), I may ask you to put it away for the remainder of class.

Discussion: Many of the topics we discuss in class will have no clear right and wrong answers, however, many of us will nonetheless have very strong feelings and opinions on these matters. Classroom discussion should be conducted respectfully, in the spirit of mutual understanding and learning. We are here to discuss ideas, theories, and concepts, and the conversation should never turn towards chastising or disparaging individual participants.

Attendance & Tardiness: Ideally, the daily quiz will provide an incentive to attend class and arrive on time.

"Technical Difficulties": Occasionally I will provide supplemental digital materials on Blackboard or via email. It is *your responsibility* to make sure you have received these materials. "Technical difficulties" will not be an acceptable excuse for late or missing assignments, as it is your responsibility to make sure that your computer software, printer, Blackboard login, etc., are functional well in advance of assignment due dates.

READING SCHEDULE

Ethical Theory and Practice	
8/29/2016	Introduction, Business Ethics and Philosophy
9/5/2016	LABOR DAY – NO CLASS
9/12/2016	John Stuart Mill: Utilitarianism (bb) Emmanuel Kant: Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals (bb)
9/19/2016	John Rawls: Justice as Fairness (textbook, pg. 43) Robert Nozick: Distributive Justice (textbook, pg. 49)
9/26/2016	Steven Kelman: Cost Benefit Analysis An Ethical Critique (textbook, pg. 120) Herman B. Leonard: Cost Benefit Analysis Defended (textbook, pg. 127)
10/3/2016	ROSH HASHANAH – NO CLASS
10/6/2016	THURSDAY CONVERSION DAY Philosophy, Business Ethics, and Film (no reading)
10/10/2016	COLUMBUS DAY – NO CLASS
10/17/2016	Case Presentations (Parts 1 & 2)
Employers and Employees	
10/24/2016	Ronald Dushka: Employee Rights (textbook, pg. 307) W. Sean Kelly: What If The Road to Inclusion Were Really an Intersection? (bb)
10/31/2016	Richard T.De George: Whistle-Blowing (textbook, pg. 320) Carson, Thomas L: Conflicts of Interest (textbook, pg. 350)
11/7/2016	MIDTERM
11/14/2016	Case Presentations (Part 3)
Business and Society	
11/21/2016	Manual G. Velasquez: The Ethics of Consumer Protection (textbook, pg. 488) George C. Brenkert: Marketing and the Vulnerable (textbook, pg. 504)
11/28/2016	Stuart L. Hart: Creating Sustainable Value (textbook, pg. 529) Jason Hickel: The Microfinance Delusion: Who Really Wins? (The Guardian Online)
12/5/2016	Case Presentations (Parts 4 & 5)
12/12/2016	MEMO DUE Andrew Stark: What's the Matter with Business Ethics? (textbook, pg. 669)

CUNY POLICIES

Disability Policy: In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services (CSDS). Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the CSDS please provide me with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with me as soon as possible and at an appropriate time.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism consists of copying something and not giving credit to the author and will not be tolerated. If you plagiarize, you fail. *No exceptions.* The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member **MUST** report the violation.

Religious Absences: Any student in an institution of higher education who is unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes on a particular day or days shall, because of such absence on the particular day or days, be excused from any examination or any study or work requirements. It shall be the responsibility of the faculty to make available to each student who is absent from school, because of religious beliefs, an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirements which they may have missed because of such absence on any particular day or days. Any student who is aggrieved by the alleged failure of any faculty or administrative officials to comply in good faith shall be entitled to maintain an action or proceeding in the supreme court of the county in which such institution of higher education is located for the enforcement of their rights.