

**Special Topic: Business Ethics**  
**Phil/Acct 297, Fall 2015**

**Instructor:** Dr. Arash Naraghi

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**Office Hours:** Wednesday 10:30-11:30am, Thursday 2:30-3:30pm, and by appointment.

**Lectures:** TR 01:10-2:20pm. Main Street Campus, Priscilla Payne Hurd Academic Complex, 330.

**Course Description:**

Business Ethics is a branch of moral philosophy, in which we explore the moral aspects of business and management. The purpose of this course is to help students improve their ability to make ethical decisions in business by providing them with a framework that they can use to identify, analyze, and resolve ethical issues in business decision making. In this course, we explore topics such as, the ethics of cooperate downsizing, some paradoxes of whistleblowing, drug testing in employment, ethics of sales, ethics of manipulative advertising, and the like. In addition to these selected topics, we are going to discuss some more general topics, such as the meaning of business ethics, the moral responsibilities of businessmen, and the relation between business and environmental ethics.

**Course Objectives:**

1. An awareness of the complexity of moral issues related to principle-based leadership from top management and purposeful actions that include planning and implementation of standards of appropriate conduct, as well as openness and continuous effort to improve the ethical aspects of a business. Also an awareness of the moral foundations for decision making, and of the need for interdisciplinary understanding for such decisions in business.
2. A grappling with the student's own values and moral position-taking:
  - a) We will have class discussions in which students will be encouraged to articulate not only their own positions but also they must be able to articulate objections to their views as per their studies, and respond to the challenges that are raised.
  - b) Students do a class presentation, doing research and then taking a specific position related to the themes of our study. In a process of class debate, they must be able to defend their position.
  - c) The entire class encourages students to juxtapose their own moral and philosophical convictions and perspectives with the various theories and perspectives in business ethics that we will be studying. In one major long paper that is assigned, they must outline one of the views we have been studying, and compare and contrast with their own and other alternatives, and apply the theories to some real-case examples. Through all three of these methods described above, students develop increased awareness of the meaning of main moral concepts, and moral issues related to business, such as the moral foundations of ethical decision making in leadership, cooperate downsizing, manipulative advertising, and treating the environment, and have the opportunity to grapple with their own values and moral positions.
3. An enhanced capacity for moral and philosophical discernment, criticism, and argument.

**Required Texts:**

Ethics at Work: Basic Readings in Business Ethics, William Shaw, ed. Oxford University Press, 2001.

ISBN-13: 978-0195139426

(Some additional material will be posted on Blackboard. Please make sure you have access to Blackboard.)

Note: You will find that you get the most out of the course if you read each assignment before lecture and then re-read the assignment after the lecture.

**Lecture attendance:**

It is not possible to perform well in the course without attending lectures regularly. We will cover substantial amounts of material in the lectures not necessarily included anywhere in the readings. It is highly unlikely that you will learn this material adequately by, e.g., borrowing your friend's lecture notes. You have two class sessions you can miss with no question asked. Beyond those two class sessions, any further missed classes without a really good excuse (involving a note from your doctor, psychiatrist, parole officer, etc.) will cost you 2% of your final grade.

**Academic honesty:**

Students are required to honor academic integrity. The course imposes the application of Moravian College's Academic Honesty Policy. The policy is to be found at Moravian College's Student Handbook.

Important Note: Please turn off your cell phones before walking into class! If you are having an emergency that requires you to have your cell phone on, please tell me at the beginning of class. No text messaging is allowed during the class, and the use of computers should be strictly confined to the things directly related to the class.

**Course requirements:**

- (1) Regular Midterm (tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup>**), and Final exams (scheduled for **Monday, December 14, 1:30PM.**) You will receive Study Guide for the Midterm and Final Exams prior to the exams to know what kind of questions you should expect on the Midterm and Final Exams. Make up final exam will be administered only under the most extraordinary of circumstances, and only in light of appropriate supporting documents.
- (2) One Project: For your project you can choose one of the two following options: (1) Individual Project, which is writing one paper (700-1500 words) on the topic assigned to you. (2) Group Project: If you choose this option, then (i) you need to form a group with at most 5 members, (ii) you need to choose a moral topic related to business; (iii) and upon my approval, make a 15 min movie on that subject. The movie could be in form of a play, documentary, interviews, etc. Please note that if the paper/project is turned in late without prior permission, the grade will be adjusted downwards by a third of a grade for each day the paper/project is late (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+, B+ to B, etc.). It is always helpful to discuss your work-in-progress with your friends, roommates, or classmates so as to solicit feedback.
- (3) You will be required to write some short paragraphs (roughly two pages) consist of your critical evaluation of the material to be discussed in the class. In the paragraphs, you should concentrate on a specific concept, theme or question. I am to assign 12 assignments throughout the semester, however, you are required to complete only 10 assignments of this sort by the end of the semester, that is, you have the option of choosing 10 out of 12 assignments. The topic for the reflecting paper will be posted on Thursdays and the due date will be the following Thursdays (There would be no assignment for the first week).
- (4) You will be divided into two groups, and groups are required to participate in 4 class debates. As a group you receive a grade between 0 and 10 for each discussion. If you miss a debate, you individually receive 0 for the missing debate, unless you have an extremely good excuse for your absence. If your absence is excused, then I will decide how you may make up for the missing debate. However, if you miss more than one debate, the make- up policy applies only to one of them, and you will receive 0 for the rest.
- (5) Class Participation: It includes active participation in the class discussions, and also in all discussions and activities on Business Ethics Community on Google+. Note: I created a Community for this class on Google+. You will receive an invitation from me to join the community. We use this community for announcements, posting Video-lectures, sharing links, Discussions, preparation for class debates, Hangouts, etc.

**Grading:**

Final Exam: 25% - Midterm Exam: 20%- Paper/Project: 20% - Class debates: 10% - Weekly Assignments: 15%- Class Participation: 10%.

The grading scale is as follows:

Points	Grade	4-point conversion
95-100	A	4
90-95	A-	3.7
87-90	B+	3.3
84-87	B	3
80-84	B-	2.7
77-80	C+	2.3
74-77	C	2
70-74	C-	1.7
67-70	D+	1.3
64-67	D	1
60-64	D-	0.7
0-60	F	0

### Tentative Lecture Schedule:

- I. **Preliminary Remarks:** Sept 1, 8, 10,15.
- What is Business Ethics
  - Major Moral Theories
- (Reading: "A Defense of Philosophical Business Ethics", pp. 1-14.)

**Note 1:** There would be no class on Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> due my attending a conference.

- II. **The Responsibilities of a Businessman:** Sept. 17, 22 (Reading: pp. 15-30)  
III. **The Ethics of Corporate Downsizing:** Sept 24, 29 (Reading: pp. 31- 48)  
IV. **International Sweatshops:** Oct. 1, 6 (Reading: pp. 49-66.)

**Note 2:** Your Midterm Exam is scheduled for Thursday October 8<sup>th</sup>.

- V. **The Ethics of "Everyone's doing it":** Oct. 15, 20. (Reading: pp.67-84.)

**The first class debate is scheduled for Oct. 22.**

**Note 3:** On October 22, the paper topic would be posted on the Community of Business Ethics page on Google+ and also on Blackboard.

**Note 4:** (i) Those students who decide to work as a group on a movie project must submit the names of the group members by Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>. (ii) Also they must get the topic of their project approved by Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>.

- VI. **The Paradoxes of Whistleblowing:** Oct. 27, 29. (Reading: pp. 85-99.)  
VII. **Drug Testing in Employment:** Nov. 3, 5. (Reading: pp. 100-111.)

**The second class debate is scheduled for Nov. 10.**

- VIII. **Ethics of Sales:** Nov. 12. (Reading: pp. 112-128.)  
IX. **Manipulative Advertising:** Nov. 17. (Reading: pp. 129-149.)

**The third class debate is scheduled for Nov. 19.**

**The due date for the term paper/class project is Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>.**

- X. **Insider Trading:** Dec. 1 (Reading: pp. 150-165.)  
XI. **Responsibility toward Environment:** Dec. 3, 8. (Reading: pp.166-180.)

**The fourth class debate is scheduled for Dec. 10**

**The Final Exam will be held on Monday, December 14, 1:30PM, Main St. Campus, Priscilla Payne Hurd Academic Complex, 330.**

#### **Important Notes:**

- Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Laurie Roth, Assistant Director of Academic & Disability Support, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support office.
- The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392. The Writing Center tutors will make arrangements with the student who needs tutoring services to meet in an accessible location, such as the library or a study/conference room in PPHAC.