

**PHILOSOPHY 2NO3: Business Ethics**  
**(Fall 2018)**

**Class meets: Tuesday and Wednesday, 9:30-10:20 plus tutorials, location CNH 104**

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Office hours: Tuesday 10:30-11:30 or by appointment

### **Course Description and Course Objectives**

This course introduces students to ethical reasoning as it applies to the complex world of business in a globalized world. The course will develop frameworks for parsing ethical questions both internal to and external to business organizations as they arise in a plural and diverse society. Business ethics applies to both employee and employer conduct, conduct on behalf of a business and conduct within a business. We will use ethical framing and ethical theories to examine dilemmas that arise at different stages and phases of business conduct. Topics to be covered likely include: why be ethical?; Standards of ethics; stockholder v. stakeholder theory; standpoint theory; bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace; affirmative action; privacy/data protection; collective responsibility and environmental responsibility.

This course has been designed with the following learning outcomes in mind:

- 1) To develop critical reading and critical analysis skills;
- 2) To understand the fundamental ethical principles necessary to evaluate and analyze contemporary issues in business ethics;
- 3) To encourage the synthesis of this new understanding with your own moral perspective in the consideration of both contemporary issues in business ethics;
- 4) To develop skills necessary to discuss and defend, in both verbal and written forms, your own ideas and the ideas of others, while being sensitive to and tolerant of the diversity of opinions on these issues.

### **Textbooks, Materials, & Fees**

*Course readings available on Avenue to Learn*

### **Method of Assessment**

- Tutorial Attendance, Participation & Preparedness – 10%
- Critical Reflections (5 x 5% each) – 25% (Due in Tutorial)
- Mid-Term Exam 25% (In Class Wednesday October 3)
- Letter Writing Assignment (Due November 7, In Class)– 15%
- Final Exam – (Date TBC – Scheduled in December 7-20 Exam period) 25%

### **Tutorial Attendance, Participation & Preparedness (10%)**

Tutorial attendance is mandatory in this course. You should arrive on time, prepared to participate, and having completed the readings. Tutorial attendance, participation, and preparedness will be assessed by your TA.

### **Critical Reflections (5 x 5%)**

These assignments (maximum 500 words each) offer students a chance to reflect on the week's reading prior to their seminar discussion. For each reflection, the student should provide a brief summary of the theoretical reading and reflect on the content of the reading in the context of this course. A completed reflection will clearly and concisely explain the following:

1. A summary of the central claim or argument of the article.
2. Two reactions to the reading:
  - a. A point of agreement or a point of interest demonstrating reflection on the reading. Why do you find this point interesting or noteworthy?
  - b. A question or point of disagreement raised by the reading with an explanation of why.
3. (Optional) You may wish to include or discuss an example from the news or from your own experience that illustrates your reactions.

Further details, submission schedule, and submission formatting guidelines will be distributed in class and through Avenue to Learn. Reflections over the word limit of 500 words will be returned unmarked, and a late penalty will apply.

### **Letter Writing Assignment (15% - Due November 7, in class)**

Further specific expectations will be discussed in class and on Avenue to Learn. In short, on behalf of a business entity, the assignment requires you to write an open letter explaining an ethical position taken by the business.

## **Topics and Readings**

Tentative weekly reading schedule subject to revision with prior notice.

### **Week 1 September 4-7 – Motivating the Questions**

1. Duska, Ronald (2000) "Business Ethics: Oxymoron or Good Business?" *Business Ethics Quarterly*
2. Chris MacDonald "Doing the Right thing: a brief guide to the jargon" *Canadian Business* 7 July, 2011.
3. Apply the theory: Starbucks incident [Forbes](#)
4. Apply the theory: Unconscious bias in the workplace [Forbes](#)
5. Apply the theory: #metoo backlash [Global News](#)

### **Week 2 September 10-14 - Business Ethics – What is it? Why be ethical?**

#### **First Tutorial**

6. Friedman, Milton "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits"
7. Sen, Amartya (1993) Does Business Ethics Make Economic Sense?

### **Week 3 September 17-21 – Who or what? Defining the agent**

#### **September 19 – Yom Kippur. No lecture. Online activity on Avenue to Learn**

8. French, Peter (1979) "The Corporation as a Moral Person" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16.3: 207-215.
9. Mellema (2003) "Responsibility, Taint, and Ethical Distance in Business Ethics"
10. Freeman, Martin, Parmeer (2007) "Stakeholder Capitalism"
11. Apply the theory: Amazon employee and shareholder activism [Independent](#) June 22, 2018

### **Week 4 September 24-28– Objections to Stakeholder theory**

#### **First Critical Reflection Due In Tutorial**

12. Boatright (2006) "What's Wrong - and What's Right – With Stakeholder Management"
13. Apply the theory: MEC and REI [OutsideOnline](#)
14. Apply the theory: Aftermath of Vista Boycott [here](#)
15. Heath "Business Ethics without Stakeholders" (Optional)

#### **Week 5 October 1-5– Triple Bottom Line**

##### **Midterm exam October 3, 9:30 am**

16. Norman and MacDonald, (2003) "Getting to the Bottom of "Triple Bottom Line""
17. Apply the theory: [Patagonia](#)

#### **Reading Week – No Class**

#### **Week 6 October 15-19 – Philosophical Ethics**

18. Norman E. Bowie (1998) "A Kantian Theory of Capitalism" *Business Ethics Quarterly*
19. Maitland, Ian (1997) "Virtuous Markets"
20. Gonzalez (2003) "Ethics in Global Business and in a Plural Society" (Virtue Ethics)
21. Blog and Video excerpt: [Jiro](#) Dreams of Sushi

#### **Week 7 October 22-26– Corporate Culture - Leadership**

##### **Second Critical Reflection Due in Tutorial**

22. Apply the theory: "It takes a Man to Run an Airline" [BBC](#)
23. Apply the theory: GM becomes first major auto company in history to have a female CEO and a female CFO [Business Insider](#) June 13, 2018
24. MacDonald Why Leadership Requires taking responsibility [here](#)
25. Farag and Mallin (2017) "Board Diversity and Financial Fragility"

#### **Week 8 October 29-November 2– Corporate Culture: Representation/Diversity**

##### **Third Critical Reflection Due in Tutorial**

26. Alcoff (1991) "The Problem of Speaking for Others"
27. Ethics in Design <https://slate.com/technology/2018/08/ethics-in-design-what-exactly-does-that-mean.html>

#### **Week 9 November 5-9 – Discrimination**

##### **Letter Writing Assignment Due November 7**

28. Crenshaw Video: [https://youtu.be/ROwquxC\\_Gxc](https://youtu.be/ROwquxC_Gxc)
29. Crenshaw (1989) "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex"

#### **Week 10 November 12-16– Exploitation**

30. Kabeer, N. (2004) "Globalization, Labor standards, and Women's Rights: Dilemmas of Collective (In)action in an Interdependent world."
31. Apply the theory: [Rana Plaza Collapse](#)

#### **Week 11 November 19-23- Sexual Harassment**

##### **Fourth Critical Reflection Due in Tutorial**

32. Keyton and Rhodes (1997) "Sexual Harassment: A matter of Individual Ethics, Legal Definitions, or Organizational Policy?"
33. Jennifer Saul "Stop thinking so much about 'sexual harassment'"
34. Apply the theory:: <https://www.thestar.com/vancouver/2018/07/07/former-flight-attendant-draws-attention-to-sexual-harassment-in-airline-industry.html>

#### **Week 12 November 26-30 - Workplace Bullying**

35. Loreleigh Keashly, (1998) "Emotional Abuse in the Workplace"

#### **Week 13 –Dec 4-5**

##### **Final Critical Reflection Due in Class Dec 4**

36. Wrap up and Exam prep

## **Policy on Missed Work, Extensions, and Late Penalties**

Extensions: All extension requests must be made at least 24 hours before an assignment deadline. Reasonable requests for extensions **including a proposed timeline for alternate submission** will generally be granted.

Late Penalties: An assignment without an extension or without an MSAF will be penalized 10% of the value of the assignment per day late, and will not be accepted more than 1 week (7 days) late. If you use an MSAF, it is your responsibility to contact your TA or Instructor as soon as possible to arrange an alternate submission timeline. Whenever an extension is granted or an MSAF is used, assignments should be submitted according to agreed upon alternate submission guidelines.

Exams: Students should not make any commitments (e.g. vacation, job-related activities, or other travel plans) during the midterm or final examination period. Students are required to be available for all examinations during the periods for which they are scheduled (as published in the course syllabus or university time table).