

Rhodes College
Department of Economics and Business Administration

Ethics: Business & Society
Business Administration 680, Section 01
Course number: 20192

Instructor: Allan Ryan, Ph.D. **Spring:** 2005/06
Office: 315 Buckman **Classroom:** Buckman 108
Telephone: 843-3568 (office) **Time:** M 15:00-17:30
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Course web site: To be announced

TEXTS

Beauchamp, Tom L., & Norman E. Bowie, 2003, *Ethical Theory and Business*, 7th ed., Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Since students will be asked to be active in raising issues of current concern or interest in the sphere of business ethics, I suggest that all students become regular readers of business publications that often cover ethical issues. Some possible sources include: WSJ, NYT, Business Week, The Economist, Fortune and Forbes.

SPECIALIZED SUPPORT AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Melissa B. Butler of the Office of Student Disability Services (Tuthill Hall, Phone: 901-843-3994, E-Mail: MButler@rhodes.edu).

COURSE CONTENT

This is neither a comprehensive course in ethical philosophy nor is it a course in which I will pretend to be able to confer on students a previously undiscovered ability to tell right from wrong. Instead, this course is designed to give you the opportunity to think about applying your own moral code to a wide variety of business situations. This process will be enriched by allowing you to compare your opinions and arguments to those of other students and to those that have currency in society or in academic discussions drawn from philosophy, economics and other disciplines. While much of the emphasis in the classroom will be on learning through consideration of real or simulated examples (cases, role playing, presentations, and videos), I will also direct your attention to ethical philosophy. Among the more abstract questions we will examine are such issues as whether corporations (as opposed to individuals) can have moral responsibilities and whether there are moral limitations on the exercise of free enterprise.

During the semester I will make every effort to bring up some the most provocative issues that businesses and managers face in real life. These include, but are not limited to, issues related to: discrimination, product safety, worker safety, environmental impacts of business activity, strike behavior (including discussion of picket-lines and use of replacement workers), worker privacy, industrial espionage, bribery, animal rights, final use or abuse of products (e.g. armaments, drugs, pornography), insider trading, expense account padding, malingering, plant closures, and bankruptcy. I will show videos and movies extensively in order to help stimulate and direct class discussion. Student presentations will also be used to orient the examples and discussions to accounting and finance professionals.

Given the nature of the issues addressed, it is unlikely that an ethical consensus is achievable on all, or perhaps even any, of the issues to be discussed. In some cases, students may not even agree that a given issue is one of ethics. In all cases, however, I will argue that being sensitive to the kinds of issues that have the potential to cause moral outrage will not only help you decide how to act morally in business situations, but will also help you to recognize the strategic threats and opportunities that ethical issues can represent for individuals and for companies.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

Short Paper on the Shareholder vs. Stakeholder perspectives (15%)

Group presentations on the “Lessons from Scandals” (10%)

Starting in week 3, groups of 2 students will be responsible for doing a presentation on a recent or historical business or financial scandal. The presentation should cover a description of the scandal and its background, how it was discovered, whether it led to any permanent changes, whether it is possible to assign clear blame, and whether better the scandal could have been prevented. Grades will be assigned based in large part by feedback from other students in the class based on their assessment of the value of what you have presented.

Take-home mid-term exam (25%)

The format and content of the exam will be discussed in the weeks leading up to the exam.

QUIZZES ON READINGS (15 % OF GRADE)

At the beginning of each class meeting for which reading has been assigned from class 2 on a short quiz will be administered relating to the readings assigned for that class. Each quiz will include up to 10 true/false or multiple choice questions (designed to determine whether you have a basic familiarity with, and understanding of, the readings) and up to one short answer question (i.e., there won't always be a short answer question). The average of your best 8 of the 10 (or 11) quizzes will determine your grade.

PARTICIPATION (10 %)

Throughout the semester there will be a number of activities that hinge on active student participation. These activities will include: preparing mini assignments, impromptu debates where groups of students will be called upon to argue one side or other of an issue,

general discussions, role-playing exercises, in-basket exercises, and critiques of articles or of video material. All students will be expected to participate. Much of this participation will require that the student has prepared for class by completing the assigned readings. Just being in class and occasionally opening your mouth should guarantee at least a 6. Any regular participation will result in a “satisfactory” mark (probably around 8), beyond that point “premium” grades will be based on both the quality and quantity of the contributions as judged by the instructor.

Final Paper (30 %)

Research paper on a business ethics topic of your choice that is explicitly related to financial and accounting issues.

Marking

A 94-100%	A- 90-93%	
B+ 87-89%	B 84-86%	B- 80-83%
C+ 77-79%	C 74-76%	C- 70-73%
D+ 67-69%	D 64-66%	D- 60-63%
F Below 60%		

ATTENDANCE

Given the subject matter of this course, attendance and participation in class discussions is critical. Attendance will not form part of the mark but excessive absence may result in mark penalties or failure. Up to 2 classes can be missed without penalty (although missing any classes is strongly discouraged). Any absences beyond that allotment will be penalized in the following fashion: first two half-classes missed—2% each; next two half-classes—3% each; any further absences (beyond 4 classes) will result in a failing grade being awarded in the class. Special circumstances that lead to excessive absence should be discussed with the instructor. Illness and family emergencies will be considered valid excuses for absence but since the provision for missing classes without penalty is meant to allow for illness, religious observance and emergencies, release from attendance penalties will be assessed over the full period of the course. In order to avoid any possibility for misunderstanding, any student believing that they have received any special dispensation should put the particulars of their understanding in writing and secure the instructor’s signature as proof that the agreement is understood by both parties.

Honor Code and Plagiarism

All students are expected to abide by the honor code. Plagiarism in any form will not be countenanced. Scrupulous referencing will be expected in all written work. If in doubt—reference!

Class	Date	Topics	Readings & materials
1	Monday Jan. 23	Discussion of relevant philosophy: utilitarianism, Mill, Kant, Plato, Locke, Hume, Rawls, Nozick. Tragedies of choice vs. living with the consequences of your choices or "Sophie's Choice vs. Buridan's Ass." The rise of consumer and community advocacy.	Background reading: Beauchamp & Bowie pp. 1-44. New Yorker article by John Cassidy entitled "The Greed Cycle" Summary of types of ethical arguments. Newshour Series on Executive Compensation Part 1 http://www.pbs.org/perl/media.cgiir?t=w&f=virage/newshour/pbsnh12020_220k.asf&s=1181920&e=1940573&extn=.asx Part 2 http://www.pbs.org/perl/media.cgiir?t=w&f=virage/newshour/pbsnh120302_220k.asf&s=1249616&e=1953653&extn=.asx Part 3 http://www.pbs.org/perl/media.cgiir?t=w&f=virage/newshour/pbsnh120402_220k.asf&s=1835769&e=2389322&extn=.asx Part 4 http://www.pbs.org/perl/media.cgiir?t=w&f=virage/newshour/pbsnh120502_220k.asf&s=787721&e=1595962&extn=.asx
2	Monday Jan. 30	The Minimalist View of Corporate Obligations Philosophical issues related to corporate morality. Are there good and bad companies? Economics and business ethics. Problems of choice: voter's paradox, Arrow's Impossibility theorem, Pareto optimality. The proper goals of the corporation: Profit maximization vs. stakeholder capitalism.	Beauchamp & Bowie pp. 45-50. Friedman: The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Profits (pp. 50-55). R. Edward Freeman, A Stakeholder View of the Corporation (pp. 55-64). Possible video. Hasnas, Two Normative Theories of Business Ethics: A Critique, pp. 65-74, Boatright, What's So Special About Shareholders? Or Fiduciary Duties and the Shareholder-Management Relation, pp. 75-83 Dodge v. Ford Motor Co. pp 83-85, A.P. Smith Manufacturing Co. v. Barlow, pp. 85-87, Johnson & Johnson: Our Credo, p. 88; Merck & River Blindness, pp. 90-91 Adelphia

Class	Date	Topics	Readings & materials
3	Monday Feb. 6	<p>Individual responsibility vs. Corporate responsibility. Should the corporate veil protect managers, employees and directors? Should there be a death penalty for corporations? Is the threat of civil penalties sufficient to discourage unethical behavior by corporations? Is the use of bankruptcy as a protection against public and consumer litigation ethical?</p> <p>Corporate Crime and Punishment: Who do you blame?</p> <p>Morality of products and services (e.g., questions of animal testing, weapons, pornography, drugs). Is ethical behavior always good business? Is it ever? Can corporate responsibility be a source of strategic advantage? If yes, when? Can consumers and the public influence the ethics or behavior of companies? Boycotts</p>	<p>Corporate Character and Individual Responsibility—pp. 95-98</p> <p>Moore, Corporate Culpability under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, pp. 99-109</p> <p>Velasquez, Debunking Corporate Moral Responsibility, pp. 109-122, Federal Sentencing Guidelines, pp. 147-152</p> <p>Boisjoly, Roger Boisjoly and the Challenger Disaster, pp. 123-136, Belkin, How Can We Save the Next Victim?, pp. 136-146</p> <p>Tyco</p>
4	Monday Feb. 13	<p>Attacking an Industry on Moral Grounds</p> <p>Theory of Consumer Protection Cases on Product Safety/Morality</p>	<p>Movie: Pelts: Politics of the Fur Trade (NFB)</p> <p>Acceptable Risk, pp. 166-175, Manuel Velasquez, The Ethics of Consumer Production. 175-183</p> <p>George G. Brenkert, Strict Products Liability and Compensatory Justice. 184-189, Hennington v. Bloomington Motors, Inc. and Chrysler Corporation, pp. 237-241</p> <p>Protecting Consumers Against Tobacco, 247, H.B. Fuller in Honduras, pp. 91-93, The Nestle Corporation, pp. 629-630</p> <p>Other materials to be discussed: Ford Pinto, Tylenol, Single-engine airplanes, handguns, ...</p> <p>Dart Group</p>

Deleted: Dunfee & Donaldson, Untangling the Corruption Knot, pp. 550-558, Facilitation of Bribery, pp. 623

Class	Date	Topics	Readings & materials
5	Monday Feb. 20	Ethical Issues of International Business. Relations between companies and governments. Taxation and ownership of resources	Introduction to chapter 9, pp. 532-538, Bowie, Relativism and the Moral Obligations of Multinational Corporations, pp. 538-544, Werhane, Exporting Mental Models, pp. 544-550 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, pp. 606-609 Maitland, The Great Non-Debate Over International Sweatshops, pp. Arnold & Bowie, Sweatshops and Respect for Persons, pp. 591-606; Adidas-Salomon, pp. 624-628, Nike's Suppliers in Vietnam, pp. 677-678 Foreign Corrupt Practices Act Amendments of 1988, (reference to be provided); Dunfee & Donaldson, Untangling the Corruption Knot, pp. 550-558, Facilitation of Bribery, pp. 623 Parmalat
6	Monday Feb. 27	The Ethics of Determining "Acceptable risks." How safe is safe enough? The environment, deep pockets, Dave Barry on Lawyers. How do you value a life? Comparing risks: danger of delivery trucks vs. danger of nuclear accidents. Dalkon Shield. Hazards in the Workplace Who should choose the appropriate level of workplace safety?	De George, Safety, Risk and Environmental Protection, pp. 222-2227, Velasquez, Ethics and the Environment, pp. 227-237, The McDonald's Polystyrene Case, pp. 249-250. Other material to be assigned Faden and Beauchamp, The Right to Risk Information, pp. 204-211, Boatright, Occupational Health and Safety, pp. 211-221, Automobile Workers v. Johnson Controls, 241-244, Exposing Workers to Plutonium, pp. 248-249 Video or other material to be assigned.

Class	Date	Topics	Readings & materials
7	Monday Mar. 6	<p>Executive Compensation Who own jobs? Labor vs. management. Right to work vs. closed shops, essential services, just wages, loyalty. Labor and Conflict Strikes, collective bargaining, picket-line behavior, replacement workers, "anti-scab" laws. How do you maintain the "rights" of management and strikers at the same time as you discourage violence? Discussion of violent strikes. Who owns jobs? Capital vs. labor. What obligations do employers have to employees? The ethics of downsizing. Plant closures. Lifetime employment promises Marxist views of ownership and surplus value. Andrew Carnegie and Social Darwinism</p>	<p>Werhane and Radin, Employment at Will and Due Process, p. 266-274 In Defense of the Contract at Will, Epstein, 274-282 Baseball Economics, p. 676-677, A matter of Principle, p. 321, Film clips related to theme to be announced. Materials to be assigned Smith: Benefits of the Profit Motive, Locke: The Justification of Private Property Marx: Alienated Labour. Clip from Charlie Chaplin's "Modern Times." Readings Karl Marx, Carnegie: The Gospel of Wealth Enron, Tyco, Disney, ...</p>
	Monday Mar. 13	Spring Break	
8	Monday Mar. 20	Does Business Have a Place in Promoting Social Justice?	<p>Chapter 9 Introduction, p. 630; Rawls, An Egalitarian Theory of Justice, p. 638; Nozick, The Entitlement Theory, p. 6546; Singer, Rich and Poor, p. 650</p>
9	Monday Mar. 27	<p>Sexual Harassment Gender, family and related issues in the workplace. Provision of daycare, mommy tracks, AIDS policies</p>	<p>Video. Introduction to Chapter 6, pp. 325-331; Epstein, Can a "Dumb Ass Woman" Achieve Equality in the Workplace?, pp. 361-369 Judith M. Hill, Pay Equity, p. 379, Ellen Frankel Paul, Resolving the Debate Over Comparable Worth, p. 406, Comparable Worth in the Female Section, p. 451, American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees v. State of Washington, p. 438 Altman, Making Sense of Sexual Harassment Law, pp. 415-421, Vaughana Macy Feary, Sexual Harassment: Why the Corporate World Still Doesn't "Get It." p. 421-427, Harassment at Brademore Electric, pp. 446-447.</p>

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Class	Date	Topics	Readings & materials
10	Monday Apr. 3	Race and the Workplace	Nagel, A defense of Affirmative Action, p. 339, Arnold, Affirmative Action and the Demands of Justice, p. 343, Weber and the Kaiser Aluminum Steelworkers Plan, p. 394 Beauchamp, Goals and Quotas in Hiring and Promotion, p. 352, Local 28 of the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association v. EOP Commission, p. 374, City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Company, p. 379, Firefighters Local Union No. 1784 v. Stotts, p. 395 Astra, Mitsubishi
11	Monday Apr. 10	Marketing/Advertising	Arrington, Advertising and Behavior Control, p. 409; Bishop, Is Self-Identity Advertising Ethical? P. 417, Carr, Is Business Bluffing Ethical? P. 443, Second Thoughts About Bluffing, p. 448 Holley, Information Disclosure in Sales, p. 427; Carson, Deception and Withholding Information in Sales, p. 494, Irving Backman, v. Polaroid, p. 453; Sanfield v. Finlay, p. 456 More Horsepower?, p. 461; Green Advertising, p. 463; Coca-Cola Company v. Tropicana Products, Inc., p. 459; Marketing Malt liquor, p. 465; Sales at World Camera, p. 464
12	Monday Apr. 17	Finance and Ethics (Insider Trading, Information, Adding Financial Risk to Companies, and Asking for Bailouts Workplace and Consumer Privacy Copyright Whistleblowing	Conventions on Lying on Wall Street, p. 465; Other material to be assigned Johnston, Privacy, p. 473, Charters, Electronic Monitoring, p. 487; De George, Intellectual Property, p. 495; Lessig, Controlling the Wired Duska, Whistleblowing and Employee Loyalty, p. 305; Davis, Some Paradoxes of Whistleblowing, p. 297; The Reluctant Security Guard, p. 318 Mutual fund scandal, Merrill-Lynch, ...
13	Monday Apr. 24	Topics to be announced	

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