

PHIL 3314-0545: Moral Issues in Business

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 class meets Tues/Thurs 3:40-4:55, B 4145

Course description:

We will investigate some of the cluster of ethical questions that arise because of the way we have come to understand and conduct business: How, if at all, should being in a business environment change our standards of right and wrong behavior? In what ways do business activities contribute to and/or detract from the quality of our lives? What must we do to ensure that the practices of business, wealth-building, and employment are fair? What do businesses owe to communities, and who is responsible for making sure they pay this debt? Are there specific ethical problems that arise because of the internationalization of business? Given that businesses have caused or worsened various kinds of environmental problems, what obligation do businesses have to help avoid or solve those problems?

We can only hope to scratch the surface of the field of Business Ethics, which encompasses a huge range of different issues. But we can familiarize ourselves with some of the more important of these issues. Along the way we can also improve our ability to think and write about what morality implies for business.

Required texts:

- Joanne B. Ciulla, Clancy Martin, and Robert C. Solomon, *Honest Work*, 2nd Edition (Oxford 2011)
- *Other supplemental readings either posted on Blackboard or distributed in class.*

Course schedule (tentative):

► Aug 28

Syllabus, Introduction

*****Unit 1: Everyday Ethics at Work***

► Aug 28-Sept 11

pp. 1-14, 17-24

*****Unit 2: The Good Life***

► Sept 23-27

pp. 72-101

*****Unit 3: Fairness and Justice***

► Oct 2-11

pp. 162-198, 201-203

► Oct 16

Catch up/Discussion/Review

► Oct 18

Midterm Exam

*****Unit 4: Social Responsibility/Whistle-blowing***

► Oct 23-Nov 1

pp. 216-241, 267-379

*****Unit 5: International Business***

► Nov 6-13

pp. 406-438

*****Unit 6: Environmental Ethics***

► Nov 15-22

pp. 455-488

*****Unit 7: The Future of the Free Market***

► Nov 27-Dec 6

pp. 619-657

► Dec 11

Catch up/Discussion/Review

► Dec 14-20

Final Exam

Calculation of grades

Midterm examinations-----	25 points
Final examination-----	30 points
Reaction papers-----	30 points
Attendance/Participation-----	15 points

****Final grades will be based on the percentage of the total points earned, on the following scale:**

93-100: A	73-76: C
90-92: A-	70-72: C-
87-89: B +	67-69: D+
83-86: B	63-66: D
80-82: B-	60-62: D-
77-79: C+	Below 60: F

► Exams

Each exam will be a mixture of short answer and essay questions about readings. Any assigned reading is fair game, although I typically emphasize topics discussed in class. The final exam will not be cumulative; it will cover only the material after the midterm. Exams may not be postponed or made-up unless there is a serious illness or emergency, in which case you must contact me as soon as possible and give me the required documentation.

► Response papers

The writing component of the course will consist of five reaction papers, each approximately one page in length. For each paper you will choose one of the cases at the end of current unit in our text and 1) explain the main ethical problem that the case raises, 2) state and give reasons for your own reasoning and conclusion about the and finally 3) explain why you think your conclusion is correct and the best objection to it fails. My advice is to format the paper with four numbered sections corresponding to these four parts of the assignment.

Concision will be critical; I am asking you to comment on several aspects of your case and I expect you to discuss philosophically serious and well-crafted arguments in each of these papers. (Important note: “argument” is not synonymous with “statement of opinion.” Arguing is the activity of giving and evaluating the reasons for accepting or rejecting a belief.)

All written assignments must be submitted to me by email (address above), with the subject line formatted as follows:

PHI 3314—name—1st paper

► Participation

The third part of your grade will be based on my subjective evaluation of your level of participation in class. If you attend regularly and participate in discussion, you will probably get all of these points. If your attendance is good, and you are attentive but quiet, you will probably get most of these points. If you do things like come to class late, leave early, fail to pay attention, miss more than two class meetings, or violate course policies, you’ll be sacrificing this 15% of your grade.

Any quizzes, activities, extra assignments, etc. will be figured into this part of the grade.

Course Policies

Absences/Late Arrival/Early Departure

I will take attendance at the beginning of each class meeting. Anyone who is not present when I take attendance will be marked absent until s/he informs me that she arrived late and requests that I change attendance record from “absent” to “late” for that day.

Late assignments

The penalty for submission after the posted due date will be 5% per day (including weekend days).

Laptops/classroom note-taking

No laptops will be allowed in class; you must take notes the old-fashioned way with paper and pencil/pen. This policy is to encourage your active engagement in classroom discussion by removing potential distractions.

Electronic devices

You may not check email, talk on the phone, view or send text messages, etc. during class. We can tolerate hearing an occasional ringtone by accident, but please remember to turn phones off and put them away before class. Do not leave class to take a phone call. These practices are disruptive and damaging to the classroom culture we want to maintain.

****Most importantly, you must have no visual access to any electronic device during an examination. If I find any such device near you, I will have to assume the worst and give you a failing grade for the exam.

Academic Integrity Policy

Any written work for the class can be submitted to turnitin.com by the instructor.

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.

Students with Disabilities

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. 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 Center for Student Disability Services please provide your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her.

Course Learning Objectives:

- To gain a working knowledge of representative themes, texts, and authors in Business Ethics.
- To develop our ability to recognize philosophical issues and to interpret, scrutinize, and construct philosophical arguments.
- To get better at explaining and developing our thoughts about abstract, foundational, and abstract issues, both orally and in writing, with maximal clarity and precision.