

## PHIL 3314: Moral Issues in Business

Fall 2012

Instructor: Jeremy Ginsburg

Sections: MW2, MW3

Office Hour: Mondays & Wednesdays 1:30–2:00pm, & by appointment in 3316B

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Basic approaches to moral reasoning and their application to such issues as justice and economic systems; corporate responsibility to society, the environment, and developing nations; and the duties of businesses to their employees, their customers, and their competitors. The course will begin with an introduction to major positions in political economy. Particular ethical problems arising in business will then be discussed, and responses to them considered, in light of debates within political economy.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

- 1) Students will improve critical thinking by developing skills of explaining, critically examining, and responding to theories, issues, and claims in ethics and political economy.
- 2) Students will improve writing skills by explaining, exploring, and critically examining theories, issues, concepts, and arguments in ethics and political economy.
- 3) Students will improve communication skills by orally explaining theories, issues, claims, concepts, and arguments in ethics and political economy.
- 4) Students will improve skills of interpreting and evaluating philosophical writings.
- 5) Students will acquire a familiarity with, and an understanding of, central philosophical positions in political economy, and will be able to explain the relevance of those positions to moral issues in business.
- 6) Students will acquire a familiarity with, and an understanding of, prominent moral issues arising in business, and will be able to explain major philosophical approaches to those issues.
- 7) Students will develop an openness to having their beliefs challenged, will learn to hear and comprehend the views of others, and to entertain objections to their own views.
- 8) Students will be able to show that issues may be regarded from multiple viewpoints, and will be able to present reasons in support of each viewpoint.

### REQUIRED TEXT [also available on reserve]

Clark, Barry. *Political Economy: A Comparative Approach*, 2nd ed. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998.

### REQUIREMENTS

Midterm Exam .....	15%
Article Summary (Draft 5%, Peer Reviews 10%, Final 25%) .....	40%
Paper (Draft 5%, Final 25%) .....	30%
Final Exam .....	15%

### Blackboard

- Using Blackboard is a course requirement. Students are responsible for making sure they have working access to Blackboard at the beginning of the semester and for checking Blackboard on (at least) a weekly basis.
- Update your e-mail address in Blackboard immediately (this is especially important for transfer students!). Check that account on a regular basis.
- If technical difficulties prevent you from submitting work on time, e-mail your work to me with an explanation of the problem and I will waive late penalties. Once technical difficulties have been resolved, work must be submitted via Blackboard in order to receive credit.
- For Blackboard technical support see: <http://library.brooklyn.cuny.edu/blackboard/#problems>.

### Attendance & Participation

- Attendance is mandatory. If you do not attend regularly, do not expect to do well.
- Attendance spot checks will be taken throughout the term. Anyone unable to attend a particular session should e-mail me in advance with a reason for being absent in order to be excused.
- Students with strong records of attendance *and* participation will receive a 10% boost to their final grades.
- Please see p.53 of the *Bulletin* for details on non-attendance because of religious beliefs.
- Use of electronic devices, other than for class purposes, is strictly prohibited.

### Exams

- A choice of questions will be offered. Students answering more than the required number of questions will be graded based on their best answers.
- Partial credit will be assessed on all answers.
- Exams are closed book and notes.

### Topical Assignment

Due dates & checklist for completing the topical assignment:

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1) on Wednesday, 5 September | <input type="checkbox"/> ARTICLE ASSIGNMENTS posted to wiki           |
|                              | <input type="checkbox"/> topic SIGN UP in class                       |
| -----                        |   |
| 2) by Sunday, 9 September    | <input type="checkbox"/> SELECT your article & claim it on wiki       |
| -----                        |   |
| 3) by Sunday, 30 September   | <input type="checkbox"/> post DRAFT SUMMARY to wiki                   |
| -----                        |   |
| 4) by Sunday, 7 October      | <input type="checkbox"/> complete SUMMARY PEER REVIEWS on wiki        |
| -----                        |   |
| 5) by Sunday, 21 October     | <input type="checkbox"/> submit FINAL SUMMARY via Assignments section |
|                              | <input type="checkbox"/> post FINAL SUMMARY to wiki                   |
| -----                        |   |
| 6) by Monday, 29 October     | <input type="checkbox"/> MEET with me to discuss a paper topic        |
| -----                        |   |
| 7) by Wednesday, 31 October  | <input type="checkbox"/> submit PAPER TOPIC via Assignments section   |
| -----                        |   |
| 8) by Wednesday, 21 November | <input type="checkbox"/> submit DRAFT PAPER via Assignments section   |
| -----                        |   |
| 9) by Wednesday, 12 December | <input type="checkbox"/> submit FINAL PAPER via Assignments section   |

Description of assignment stages:

- 1) ARTICLE ASSIGNMENTS & TOPIC SIGN UP: Article assignments for each topic week will be posted to the class wiki on Blackboard. In class, students will sign up in random order for any topic not already filled by other students. Each topic will be covered by a group of between three and five students. *You cannot be guaranteed your choice of topic.*
- 2) SELECT ARTICLE: *Article selections are on a first-come-first-served basis.* Claim your article on the Blackboard wiki (see instructions there). Read the assigned article at least twice before beginning to summarize.
- 3) DRAFT SUMMARY: Strive to be accurate, comprehensive, and illuminating; include and explain the topic, thesis, central arguments and critical evidence of your article. Post a draft article summary to the class wiki on Blackboard. *Drafts are graded as full credit, half credit, or no credit. No credit for late submissions!*
- 4) PEER REVIEW: Review summaries by your fellow group members posted on the group wiki, posting your completed reviews to the wiki as comments. (Instructions will be provided on Blackboard.) *Reviews are graded as full credit, half credit, or no credit. No credit for late submissions!*
- 5) FINAL SUMMARY: Submit your revised summary via the Assignments section of Blackboard *and* post your revised summary to the class wiki (replace your draft with your final version). *Summaries are graded on a whole-letter-grade scale, i.e. no '+' or '-' grades. Late submissions penalized 1/2 letter grade per day (not class!) late.*

- 6) MEET: Make an appointment to discuss topics for your short paper. Short paper topics should address the ethics of an example case of a current business practice, company, litigation, legislation, etc., within the subject of your topic week, bringing to bear the four perspectives on political economy studied earlier in the course.
- 7) PAPER TOPIC: Submit your finalized paper topic via the Assignments section on Blackboard. Paper topics are not graded.
- 8) DRAFT PAPER: Submit your draft paper via the Assignments section on Blackboard. *Drafts are graded as full credit, half credit, or no credit. No credit for late submissions!*
- 9) FINAL PAPER: Submit your paper via the Assignments section of Blackboard. Papers must be 1000–2000 words. *Papers are graded on a whole-letter-grade scale, i.e. no '+' or '-' grades. Late submissions penalized 1/2 letter grade per day (not class!) late.*

#### Extra Credit

- You may give oral presentation of your article summary during your topic week for credit worth 10% of final grade. *See me in advance to gain my approval for an oral presentation.*
- All students may contribute to the wiki by, e.g., adding links between summaries, enhancing formatting and organization, creating additional pages devoted to particular topics, etc. Contributions due by the last day of class. *See me in advance to arrange credit for wiki contributions.*

Academic Honesty: 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. All sources consulted — *including online sources!* — must be cited appropriately and included in a bibliography. Violation of this policy will result in failure of the assignment in question; subsequent violation may result in failure of the course as well as additional penalties.

Students with Disabilities: 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 your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her as soon as possible and at an appropriate time.

#### SCHEDULE & IMPORTANT DATES

*Textbook readings through week 7 are posted below. Additional readings for the first 7 weeks, and all readings thereafter, will be posted to Blackboard. Please check Blackboard regularly for updated reading assignments.*

##### Week 1 — Introduction to Political Economy

- Clark, Chapters 1 & 2 [available at <http://db.tt/69ZdrWpM> ]

##### Week 2 — Classical Liberalism

- Clark, Chapter 3
- **Wednesday, 5 September — TOPIC SIGN UP**

Week 3 — Classical Liberalism (cont.) / Radicalism

- **Sunday, 9 September — Due: Article Selection**
- Clark, Chapters 3 & 4

Week 4 — Radicalism (cont.) / Conservatism

- Clark, Chapters 4 & 5

**Week of 24 September — NO CLASS: Yom Kippur Break**

Week 5 — Modern Liberalism

- **Sunday, 30 September — Due: DRAFT SUMMARY**
- Clark, Chapter 6

Week 6 — Modern Liberalism (cont.)

- **Sunday, 7 October — Due: PEER REVIEWS**
- Clark, Chapter 6

Week 7 — Government & the Market / Ideology & Political Economy

- Clark, Chapters 7 & 16

Week 8 — Catch-up & Midterm

- **Sunday, 21 October — Due: FINAL SUMMARY**
- **Wednesday, 24 October — MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 9 — Duties of Corporations, Corporate Governance, & Investment Ethics

- **Wednesday, 31 October — Due: PAPER TOPIC**

Week 10 — Finance I

Week 11 — Finance II

Week 12 — Employment I

- **Wednesday, 21 November — Due: PAPER DRAFT**

Week 13 — Intellectual Property

Week 14 — Globalization

Week 15 — Arbitration

- **Wednesday, 12 December — Due: FINAL PAPER**

## **FINAL EXAM**

MW2.....Monday, 17 December, 1-3pm

MW3.....Wednesday, 19 December, 3:30-5:30pm