

## Business: Moral Issues PHIL 3314

Prof. Rachel McKinney  
Email: [rachelannmckinney@gmail.com](mailto:rachelannmckinney@gmail.com)  
Course: Business: Moral Issues  
Meeting time: Tues/Thurs 9:30-10:45 AM

Semester: Spring 2013  
Classroom: 4145 Boylan  
Section: TR9  
Credits: 3.0

Office: Brooklyn College Library Cafe  
Office hours: Thursdays 5-6 pm and by appointment

### **Introduction**

This course is an introduction to philosophical ethics as it relates to business and professional issues. This course has both theoretical and practical aspects. We will look at distinct philosophical approaches to moral questions and their applied contexts.

### **Required Text**

The text for this course will be a coursepack that includes all of the readings for the semester. This will be provided to you online. You are expected to come to class each day with the text to refer to during discussion.

### **Website**

All of the readings and other information for the course will be available at the following URL. Please be sure to bookmark this page:

<https://sites.google.com/site/rachelannmckinney/business-ethics>

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

Grades are determined as follows:

Short Quizzes/Attendance: 10%  
Participation/Group Work: 20%  
First Essay (Assigned Topic): 20%  
Midterm: 15%  
Second Essay (Case Study): 20%  
Final: 15%

The grade distribution is as follows:

A+, A, A- = 90 – 100%  
B+, B, B- = 80 – 89%  
C+, C, C- = 70 – 79%  
D+, D, D- = 60 – 69%  
F = 0 – 59%

### *Short Quizzes*

Every day I will begin class with a short question about readings or the previous meeting's discussion. If you answer the question at least partially correctly, you will receive 0.5 points for the quiz. If you score badly, or if you are absent or late for class, you'll get no points. At the end of the semester, I'll add up all of the points you received for all the quizzes, and the total, to a maximum of 10, will be factored into your final grade percentage. The maximum number of points is 10 because I know that everyone may be late, absent, or unprepared from time to time. But if you are absent, late, or unprepared often enough, it will be

reflected in your grade.

### *Participation/Group Work*

This class is a mix of lecture and discussion, and -- as such -- I expect you to come to class ready and willing to ask questions, raise objections, offer responses, and in general to discuss the readings assigned. Sometimes I will have you pair off or join small groups to review arguments, summarize, give examples, etc. Participation/Group work is 20% of your grade.

### *Response Papers*

There are 2 response papers due during the semester. The first paper is due October 15 and the second is due December 17. I will provide a few different essay prompt options for the first essay. For the second essay you will be asked to write a review of a case study analyzing a specific moral dilemma. These papers should be 2-3 pages, and each one is 20% of your grade (40% total).

### *Midterm/Final*

These are each 15% of your grade. They will be blue book-style, and include vocabulary, multiple choice, short answer and one or two short essay questions. The final is not cumulative.

### *Attendance*

Attendance and timeliness are MANDATORY. If you are going to be absent from class, you must email me beforehand ([rachelannmckinney@gmail.com](mailto:rachelannmckinney@gmail.com)) and let me know. In-class quizzes and response papers are collected at the beginning of class.

### *Extra Credit*

Periodically I will announce extra credit opportunities. These usually come in the form of attendance at NYC-area philosophy events (e.g. public lectures, colloquia, conferences) and a short (1-2 page) summary/response about what you've learned there. Extra Credit will count toward your participation, attendance or response paper grades, at my discretion.

## **Course Expectations**

### *Classroom Behavior*

I expect you to come to class having read the material and prepared to discuss it. Further, I expect you to help me maintain a respectful and professional learning environment. To this end, I will not tolerate cellphone use (set them on "silent" during class, no texting) or lateness. Other behavior that is a distraction to both your fellow students and your professor include: doing work from other classes, sleeping in class, listening to iPods, playing on Facebook on laptops, etc.

Many of the topics discussed in this class are controversial, taboo and "button-pushing." Please remember that we are all engaged in a process of mutual inquiry, and as such we ought to respect each other. This means that in discussion I will expect all of us to regard each other's statements as open to critique, but not personal attack or name-calling. Comments such as "that is just stupid" and "only a moron would believe that," etc., are not appropriate responses. In philosophy we engage in a dialectic: that is, a process of giving and accepting reasons, not of personal attack or aggression.

### *Missed Exams/Late Work*

In-class quizzes are only given in class. If you miss them (even by being late), there are no make-ups. I will accept late response papers via email, but you will be knocked down a letter grade for each day it is late (e.g., if a B grade response paper is due on a Tuesday and you turn it in via email on Wednesday, you will receive a C on it).

*Online Communication*

Since I will be announcing events and sharing resources online, it is VERY IMPORTANT that I have a working email address for you. If you do not receive any email from me after the first week of class, YOU MUST EMAIL ME TO ADD YOURSELF TO THE MAILING LIST. Please be pro-active about this.

*CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity*

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 that violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

*CUNY Policy on Disability Services*

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 me with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with me immediately.

*Please be aware of the NY State Education Law, which provides that:*

1. Any student in an institution of higher education who is unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes on a particular day or days shall, because of such absence on the particular day or days, be excused from any examination or any study or work requirements.
2. It shall be the responsibility of the faculty to make available to each student who is absent from school, because of religious beliefs, an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirements which they may have missed because of such absence on any particular day or days.
3. Any student who is aggrieved by the alleged failure of any faculty or administrative officials to comply in good faith shall be entitled to maintain an action or proceeding in the supreme court of the county in which such institution of higher education is located for the enforcement of their rights.

## Reading Schedule

**January 29**

introductions, syllabus, what is philosophy, critical thinking, etc

**January 31**

more critical thinking

**February 5**

*Introduction to Ethical Theories*

James Rachels – Elements of Moral Philosophy, selection

**February 7**

*Normative Ethics*

John Stuart Mill – What Utilitarianism Is, selection

**February 12**

NO CLASS

**February 14**

*Normative Ethics, cont.*

Immanuel Kant – “Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals”

**February 19**

*Normative Ethics, cont.*

Aristotle - Nicomachean Ethics, selections

**February 21**

*What is a Market?*

Amartya Sen, “Does Business Ethics Make Economic Sense?”

**February 26**

*What is a Market?, cont.*

Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, excerpt

**February 28**

*What is a Market?, cont.*

David Graeber - The Myth of Barter

**March 5**

*Distributive Justice*

Nozick - Anarchy, State and Utopia - excerpt

**March 7**

*Distributive Justice, cont.*

John Rawls - “Justice as Fairness”

**March 12**

*Labor*

Marx - *Paris Manuscripts*, excerpt

Arlie Hochschild - *The Managed Heart*, excerpt

**March 14**

*Labor, cont.*

Estabrook - *Tomatoland*, excerpt

Ciulla - “Exploitation of Need”

**March 19**

*Responsibility*

Milton Friedman - "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits"

**March 21**

PAPER DUE

*Responsibility, cont.*

R. Edward Freeman - Stakeholder Theory of the Modern Corporation

**March 26**

NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

**March 28**

NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

**April 2**

NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

**April 4**

MIDTERM EXAM

**April 9**

*Responsibility, cont.*

Kenneth Arrow - "Social Responsibility and Economic Efficiency"

**April 11**

*Responsibility, cont.*

Roger A. Dickenson and Mary L. Carsky - "The Consumer as Economic Voter"

**April 16**

*Value and Liability*

Mark Dowie - "Pinto Madness"

Elisabeth Anderson - *Value in Ethics and Economics*, excerpt

**April 18**

*Liability, cont.*

Peter Huber - "Liability"

**April 23**

*Liability, cont.*

Judith Jarvis Thompson - "Remarks on Causation and Liability"

**April 25**

*Honesty and Dishonesty*

Albert Carr - "Is Business Bluffing Ethical?"

**April 30**

*Honesty and Dishonesty, cont.*

Sissela Bok - "Whistleblowing and Professional Responsibility"

**May 2**

*Financialization*

John Boatright - "Conflicts of Interest in Financial Services"

**May 7**

*Financialization*

Film: Inside Job (<http://vimeo.com/32828077>)

**May 9**

CASE STUDY PAPER DUE

*the Limits of Markets?*

Jerry Cohen - "The Socialist's Guide to Camping"

**May 14**

*the Limits of Markets?*

Michael Sandel and critics - "How Markets Crowd Out Morals"

**May 16**

Last day / catch-up / etc

**May 21**

NO CLASS - FINALS WEEK

**Thursday May 23**

Final exam, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM