

## ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

### **Course description**

This course is open only to students admitted to the Intensive Evening Degree Program. It examines major ethical theories and explores the application of those theories to current business, moral, and social issues. Illustrative case studies are used as well as other group exercises to enable the student to identify justice issues involved in specific problem areas of the work environment.

### **Text**

Fritz Allhoff and Anand J. Vaidya (eds.) Business in an Ethical Focus: An Anthology. Broadview Press; Toronto, Ontario. 2008.

Various handouts

### **Requirements**

Attendance and participation (20%)  
Oral presentations (20%)  
Papers (60%)

### **Absence and Make-up Policy**

Intensive courses have a maximum of 28 contact hours, as opposed to the traditional 45-48 contact hours in a 15-week course. Therefore, all in-class time is utilized. Program guidelines stipulate that missing more than one full class (or the equivalent) will result in an automatic drop from the course. If you miss a class, you should contact me immediately so that you can make up missed work.

### **Office Hours**

My office is Campus Center 8. I will be available to students before and after class, and by appointment. You can contact me at [mrende@ndnu.edu](mailto:mrende@ndnu.edu).

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

### **Session One:** Introduction to the course and to ethical theory

**Readings:** Anthology: Vaidya and Allhoff, “Volume Introduction, pp. 11-13; Vaidya, “Ill-founded Criticisms of Business Ethics”, pp. 15-20; Sen, “Does Business Ethics Make Economic Sense?”, pp. 20-28; Donaldson, “Values in Tension: Ethics Away from Home”, pp. 170-180.

**Writing Assignment:** Define relativism and offer some support of it. Critique its limitations. (3-4 page paper due session two)

### **Session Two:** Natural Law and the objectivity of ethics

**Readings:** Anthology: Allhoff, “Distributive Justice”, pp.465-466; Hobbes, “Exerpts from Leviathan”, pp. 465- 474.  
Exerpts from Aquinas’ Treatise on Law - a handout.

**Writing Assignment:** Explain St. Thomas Aquinas’ definition of law and the principles by which he classifies and divides the various types of laws. (3-4 pages due session three)

### **Session Three:** Utilitarianism

**Readings:** Anthology: Meeler, “Utilitarianism” pp. 53 – 60; Adam Smith, “Exerpts from the Wealth of Nations” pp. 483- 490.  
Exerpts from Louis Pojman, “Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong” – a handout.

**Writing Assignment:** Discuss the differences among the ethical terms “egoism”, “self-interest”, and “altruism” Give examples. (3-4 pages due session four)

### **Session Four:** Kantian Ethics

**Readings:** Anthology, Salazar, “Kantian Business Ethics” pp.29- 34; Vaidya “Corporate Social Responsibility”, pp. 63-65; Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits” pp. 65- 69.  
Exerpts from Kant’s “Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals” - a handout.

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**Writing Assignment:** What does Kant mean by the “categorical imperative”? Discuss his three distinct ways of formulating it. Give examples of the relevance of these formulations of Kant’s principle in your own life. (3-4 pages due session five)

### **Session Five:** Virtue Ethics

**Readings:** Anthology, Glatz, “Aristotelian Virtue Ethics and the Recommendations of Morality” pp. 46 – 53; Freeman, “A Stakeholder Theory of the Modern Corporation”, pp. 69- 78.  
Exerpts from Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics - a handout

**Writing Assignment:** How does Aristotle define virtue? Give some examples of what he means by virtue and vice. How would you apply his analysis to an area of your own life; e.g. work, school, family, relationships? (3-4 pages due session six)

### **Session Six:** Feminist Ethics

**Readings:** Anthology, Manning “Caring as an Ethical Perspective” pp. 35-42; Hasnas, “The Normative Theories of Business Ethics: A Guide for the Perplexed”, pp. 79- 99; Wall, “The Definition of Sexual Harassment”; Superson, “A Feminist Definition of Sexual Harassment”, pp. 356 – 380.

**Writing Assignment:** On issues and ideas relating to sex and gender. Discuss some of the issues facing women in the workplace and in their professional lives. (3-4 pages dues session seven)

### **Session Seven:** The Human Good

**Readings:** B. Lonergan, “The structure of the human good”- a handout.