

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY **Summer Term 2019**

Course description

Students learn the relationship between law and morality, develop individual core values, and study various business decision-making models. This course examines major ethical theories and explores the application of those theories to current organizational, economic and social issues. Case studies and critical thinking are used to enable the student to apply concepts learned to moral issues raised by contemporary professional practices.

Texts

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

Gene Ahner. Business Ethics: Making a Life, Not Just a Living. Orbis Books; Maryknoll, New York. 2007.

Various handouts

Requirements

Papers (60%)
Oral Presentations (20%)
Participation (20%)

CLASS ATTENDANCE: Do not miss more than one class session. Your attendance is very important to your studies at the University. Nonattendance or lack of participation in class will be considered during the grading process. Two missed classes (or major portions of those classes) will yield an automatic “F” for the course.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Do not plagiarize. Academic honesty is a cornerstone of our values at NDNU. Please note the description of plagiarism from the NDNU Student Handbook: “Plagiarism: The inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. Examples of plagiarism include the taking of any portion of a document, article, or book and representing it as one’s own work; the lifting of a well-phrased sentence(s) and including such as an example of one’s own work. Plagiarism includes using unpublished work as well as published sources; using another’s term paper; handing in work that was taken from a paper purchased from an individual or agency, including internet services.”

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LATE HOMEWORK: Assignments are to be completed and submitted at the start of each class meeting. Assignments not turned in on time are considered late. Late assignments will be accepted only one week after the due date, after which time the assignment will not be accepted. Only up to two assignments may be turned in late during the duration of the class.

PARTICIPATION: Both lecture and classroom activities are organized to maximize student involvement in the learning process. You will be evaluated on your comprehension of the material as well as your contributions to classroom discussion.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: This course is designed to develop the student's ability to read and understand classical and contemporary philosophical texts; to discuss topics relevant to ethics within the work place; to write clearly and creatively; and to reflectively integrate abstract ideas within the concrete dimensions of his or her living and working.

DISABILITY REFERRALS: If you have a learning disability or other circumstance that requires accommodations in this class, you must bring it to the attention of Disability Services to arrange for possible accommodations. Disability Services has recently become part of Counseling, Health and Disability Services, located in New Hall E18 and New Hall E19. The main number for Counseling, Health and Disability Services is 650-508-3714. The Disability Services Specialist is Alice Wong and she may be contacted directly at awwong@ndnu.edu or 650-508-3670.

Office Hours

I will be available to students before and after class, and by appointment. You can contact me at mrende@ndnu.edu.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Session One: Introduction to the Course and to Ethical Theory (6/26)

Readings: G. Ahner. Business Ethics, Ch. 1 “A Free-Market Economy” pp. 1-24. Anthology: Milton Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits”, pp. 65- 69. Amartya Sen, “Does Business Ethics Make Economic Sense?” pp. 20 – 28.

Writing Assignment: What is the purpose of work: to make a living or to make a life? What is the best job you’ve ever had; what’s the worst? In your opinion, what makes a job good? (3-4 page paper due session two)

Session Two: Can Business Be Ethical? (7/3)

Readings: Ahner, Ch. 2 “A Better Way to Think about Business”. pp.25- 43. Anthology: R. Edward Freeman. “A Stakeholder Theory of the Modern Corporation, pp. 69 -78. Thomas Donaldson. “Values in Tension: Ethics Away from Home.” pp. 170 – 180.

Writing Assignment: What is the purpose of business? Is it wrong to want to be rich? Is it perhaps foolish to want to be rich, if it is meant as an answer to the question of happiness? Might it, in fact, be right to want to be rich? (3-4 pages due session three)

Session Three: Aristotelian Ethics (7/10)

Readings: Aristotle. excerpts from “Nicomachean Ethics” (a handout). Ahner: Ch. 3 “Core Values and Culture” pp. 44 – 65. Anthology: Richard M. Glatz, “Aristotelian Virtue Ethics and Recommendations of Morality.” pp. 46 - 53

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 four)

Session Four: Kant and Deontological Ethics (7/17)

Readings: Excerpts from Immanuel Kant's *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. (a handout) William F. Lawhead, "Kant's Ethics" (a handout) Anthology: H. Salazar, "Kantian Business Ethics" pp. 29- 34.

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: Authenticity and Self-transcendence (7/24)

Readings: Ahner, Ch. 4 "Leadership and Ethics", pp. 66- 82. Bernard Lonergan, "Self-transcendence: Intellectual, Moral, Religious." (a handout)

Writing Assignment: Both Ahner and Lonergan agree that one of the most important characteristics of a moral person is authenticity. What do they mean by the terms "moral drifter" and "a genuine or authentic person"? Describe a transformational experience that you have had. Did it cause you to grow and have a radically different point of view? (3-4 pages due session six)

Session Six: Catholic Social Ethics (7/31)

Readings: Ahner. Ch. 10 "When More Is Not Enough", pp. 214 – 243.

Writing assignment: Explore the meaning of "what does it profit a person to gain the whole world and lose his soul" in the light of one's identity as a consumer-producer. How can it be possible to confuse the desire for consumer goods and the desire for God? What is a workaholic; does this characterize anyone you know? Why is the notion of human dignity important for us? (3-4 pages due session seven)

Session Seven: Conclusions (8/7)

