

Business Ethics (PHIL 1317)—May Term 2017

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Class Location: TBD

Course Description

We will begin with a general introduction to ethics by examining several different ethical theories. We will then discuss a number of ethical issues as they pertain to business. These issues will include: capitalism, socialism, distributive justice, corporate responsibility, the treatment of animals, advertising, and genetic engineering.

Required Text

Shari Collins-Chobanian. *Ethical Challenges to Business as Usual*. Prentice Hall, 2005.

***All other readings will be available on blackboard (smu.edu/cms)

Requirements

- *Two Exams* (40% of final grade)
- *Final Exam* (30% of final grade)
- *Critical Paper* (20% of final grade): one 3-5 page (or, 1000-1500 word) critical paper (to be submitted on blackboard) in which you critically examine at least one of the positions regarding one of the issues we will cover.
- *Participation/Attendance* (10% of final grade): students must exhibit a willingness to think, and be open to revising their current opinions. Frequent absences, sleeping during lecture, and being disruptive will negatively affect your participation grade. Engaging with the material, whether that involves asking questions, contributing to discussion, or simply being attentive, will positively affect your participation grade.

Goals

- PHIL 1317 is a *Philosophical and Religious Inquiry and Ethics Pillar (level I)* within SMU's University Curriculum. As a result of taking this course, students will be able to describe and explain some of the general features and principal theoretical methods of ethics, social and political philosophy, and logic.
- Students will develop techniques of formal reasoning.
- Students will develop the ability to apply techniques of formal reasoning to business related issues.
- Students will develop writing and analytic skills.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1: *Introductory Issues & General Ethical Theories*

1. Arguments/Logic, Cultural Relativism (blackboard), Ethical Egoism (blackboard)
2. Aristotle (blackboard), Utilitarianism (19-25)

Week 2:

1. Kant (28-36), *First Exam
2. Capitalism: Smith (43-45), Lux (46-53), Rawls (55-63), Nozick (blackboard)
3. Singer (301-309), Nielsen (64-71), *The Corporation*
4. Corporate Responsibility: Friedman (224-229), Freeman (258-267), *Second Exam
5. Animals: Singer (423-430), Steinbock (blackboard), Baxter (blackboard)

Week 3:

1. Advertising and want-creation: *The Corporation*, Galbraith (blackboard), Von Hayek (blackboard)
2. Arrington (blackboard), Crisp (blackboard)
3. Genetic Engineering: Heinberg (431-441)
4. *Final Exam

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Violation of SMU's honor code will not be tolerated. Every piece of work you turn in must be entirely your own. Writing a paper means *both* expressing your own thoughts *and* expressing them in your own words. You may not copy unquoted passages from our texts, from any other texts, or from the internet, even if the passages are brief. No one else may write a paper for you, whether in whole or in part. In a typical case (for example, a student turns in a paper mostly cut-and-pasted from web sites), the **penalty** for violating the honor code will be an **F** in the course. On top of this grade penalty, the case may be presented to the honor council, in which case the student may be subject to **further disciplinary action**, such as suspension or dismissal from the university.

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9)

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.