

PHIL 120

ETHICS OF ENTERPRISE & EXCHANGE

FALL 2016

Instructor: Joshua August Skorburg

Meets: MTWR, 9:00 - 9:50 AM, FEN 105

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Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-3:00PM in SCH 158A, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Who built my computer? How did this avocado get here from Mexico? Who's the right person for the job? Why does my t-shirt cost so little? Why does my education cost so much? These questions are bound up with our daily lives. Thinking about these questions and our answers to them, can make or break our attempts to live a good life. This means that ethics and enterprise are necessarily intertwined. *This course provides an opportunity to slow down, take a step back from everyday activities of enterprise and exchange and submit them to philosophical reflection and inquiry.* We will think together about the (sometimes hidden) ethical dimensions to our daily economic lives, and consider what the implications of those ethical dimension are, and what they mean for living a good life.

MORE SPECIFICALLY

This course begins with a (very) brief introduction to philosophical methodology. We will then explore the main ethical theories from the history of philosophy, discussing their strengths and weaknesses from both theoretical and empirical points of view. With these tools in hand, we will then examine the various ethical dimensions of economic life, including: the role of business in democracy, the ethics of management and leadership, sweatshops, fair trade, the possibility of ethical consumerism, the environmental impact of enterprise, the ethics of marketing and advertising, and the various ways bias operates in business settings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After taking this course, you should be able to: recognize and identify moral arguments (and non-arguments), analyze and evaluate moral arguments (and non-arguments), recognize and identify fallacies in moral reasoning, formulate original and coherent moral arguments in a variety of media, and most importantly, actively participate in respectful and critical public discourse about contemporary moral problems. As an intro-level philosophy course, the course should teach you to think critically, read and understand difficult material, and write clearly and carefully. As a course in applied ethics, it should give you the conceptual tools and skills necessary to reflect on a specific aspect of your experience – namely, participation in a globalized capitalist economy.

READING

We will be using a combination of a textbook and .pdf documents in this class:

Required Text: Audi, R. (2009). *Business Ethics and Ethical Business*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780195369106

The textbook can be purchased at the university bookstore, or online. The .pdf assigned readings will be posted in the modules on Canvas.

ASSESSMENT

This is a lower-level undergraduate course in philosophy, so I have two main goals for you: to establish a baseline of knowledge, and to start to hone your philosophical skills. To that end, I will assign two exams and two papers. The breakdown of the value of assignments is as follows:

Take home exams	35%
Papers	35%
Attendance/participation	30%

TAKE HOME EXAMS

There will be two take home exams, each worth 17.5% of your final grade. You will receive the exam a few days in advance of the due date. The exams will be based on all material covered up until that point. They will involve both short answers and a few longer essay-style questions.

TERM PAPERS

You will write two short term papers (~4 double spaced pages) on a topic I will assign. Each paper will be worth 17.5% of your final grade. Paper prompts, writing strategies, grading criteria, etc., will be discussed in class in advance of the due dates.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION

Philosophy happens through discussion. It is therefore of the utmost importance that you attend class and participate. If you accrue more than FOUR unexcused absences, you fail the course. Excused absences will be granted for documented emergencies, or matters discussed with me AHEAD of time.

In addition to showing up, you need to be prepared to participate. This includes **showing up on time, actively speaking or listening, paying attention** to what the other students have to say, **taking notes, asking questions**, etc. And of course it includes **not** sleeping, texting, snapchatting, emailing, tweeting, facebooking, instagraming, yikyaking, etc.

Participation also includes **weekly responses**: you are required to e-mail me a response by 10 PM every Wednesday evening. The subject line of your email MUST read "PHIL 120 Weekly Response." These responses should be between 100 and 200 words. The content of the response is up to you, but all responses should deal with the reading assigned for that week and/or the discussion in class. You may want to choose a sentence or paragraph you found especially provocative, difficult, or remarkable, then explain why you found it so. Alternatively, you may want to argue that one of the authors is right or wrong in making some particular claim. Or you may wish to connect two passages in the reading that illuminate each other. You may even just pick a passage and ask questions about it. You may also highlight points that arose in class discussion that you think warrant further discussion. Given that this is an election year, you will likely find plenty of

relevant material in the news, and I encourage you to engage with it, when appropriate. Your responses will guide what we address in class, and I will sometimes quote from them, so please take them seriously.

CRITERIA

What kind of paper deserves an “A,” “B,” etc.?

The following rubric reflects the general standards of the Philosophy Department at the University of Oregon:

A - excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

B - good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

C - OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.

D - poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.

F - failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Grading Scale:

A = 100-93%	B+ = 89-87%	C+ = 79-77%	D+ = 69-67%	F = 59%
A- = 92-90%	B = 86-83%	C = 76-73%	D = 66-63%	and below
	B- = 82-80%	C- = 72-70%	D- = 62-60%	

ACCESSIBILITY

Any student needing accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss specific needs. Students with documented disabilities should contact the Accessible Education Center (online: <http://aec.uoregon.edu>)

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

From the University Policy on Academic Misconduct: “Plagiarism” means using the ideas or writings of another as one’s own. It includes, but is not limited to: (a) The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement; and (b) The unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

In order to avoid plagiarizing from a source, both direct quotations and paraphrases or summaries of material found in traditional print media or on the internet must be fully acknowledged. If you have any questions about how this definition will be interpreted, ***please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me.*** Also, you can look to the UO Libraries Student Guide to Plagiarism: <http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>

Plagiarism and cheating on exams undermines the integrity of the academic community. When undetected, it gives the perpetrator an unfair advantage over students who are graded on the basis of their own work. In this class I will do my best to detect plagiarism and cheating. Students who are aware of violations by others should bring this to my attention. This is the right thing to do. It is also in your own self-interest. There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism in this course. ***Plagiarized papers will receive a 0, the student will automatically fail the course, and their name will be***

given to the university authorities. For more on the University of Oregon's policy on plagiarism, see the following website: <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>

ELECTRONICS

You are all adults, and I trust that you can make the best decision for you about how to take notes in this class. For some of you that will mean old-fashioned paper and pen. For others, that will mean a laptop, tablet, or other electronic device. (For what its worth, a recent study indicates that taking notes by hand (as opposed to on a laptop) is more effective for the kinds of tasks you'll encounter in this course: <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/take-notes-by-hand-for-better-long-term-comprehension.html>)

Here's the deal: by using your electronic devices in class, you hereby consent that at any time during class, you are willing to send me a copy of the notes you have taken on that electronic device. Your ability to do so (or not do so) will be reflected in your participation grade. If you can't agree to these terms, you can't use electronic devices in class.

COMMUNICATION and EXPECTATION

I WILL DO MY BEST TO CREATE AN OPEN, SAFE, AND PRODUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT TO ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING AND DEBATE THROUGHOUT THE COURSE. I WILL TREAT EVERYONE FAIRLY AND WITH RESPECT. IN RETURN, I EXPECT YOU TO DO YOUR BEST TO TREAT EVERYONE FAIRLY AND WITH RESPECT. I WANT ALL OF US TO HOLD EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE. FOR THIS, COMMUNICATION IS KEY. PLEASE COME AND TALK TO ME IF ANYTHING IS BOTHERING YOU. THE SUBJECT MATTER WILL AT TIMES BE SENSITIVE AND THE DISCUSSIONS MAY BE HEATED – AND THIS IS FINE, AS LONG AS WE DON'T STOP COMMUNICATING. YOU CAN EXPECT ME TO ARRIVE PREPARED AND ON TIME FOR CLASS. I WILL EXPECT YOU TO ARRIVE PREPARED AND ON TIME FOR CLASS. YOU CAN EXPECT ME TO REPLY PROMPTLY TO E-MAILS, AND I WILL EXPECT THE SAME OF YOU.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week & Topic	Day	Assignments
1: Introduction and Philosophical Methods	Monday, September 26	Read Syllabus
	Tuesday, September 27	“King - Letter From a Birmingham Jail” .pdf (11 pgs)
	Wednesday, September 28	“Hurley - Basic Concepts” .pdf (33 pgs)
	Thursday, September 29	
2: The “Big Three” Ethical Theories	Monday, October 3	“Shafter-Landau - Ethical Egoism” .pdf (11 pgs)
	Tuesday, October 4	“Shafer-Landau - Consequentialism” .pdf (15 pgs)
	Wednesday, October 5	“Shafer-Landau - Deontology” .pdf (19 pgs) <i>DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS DUE BY 10pm</i>
	Thursday, October 6	“Shafer-Landau - Virtue” .pdf (18 pgs)
3: Beyond the “Big Three”	Monday, October 10	“Lindemann - What is Feminist Ethics?” .pdf (16 pgs)
	Tuesday, October 11	“Metz & Miller – Relational Ethics” .pdf (10 pgs)
	Wednesday, October 12	“Dewey – Three Independent Factors in Morals” (6 pgs) <i>DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS DUE BY 10pm</i>
	Thursday, October 13	Discussion & Exam Prep
4: The Role of Business in Democracy	Monday, October 17	Take Home Exam One DUE Audi, Chs. 1 & 2 (18 pgs)
	Tuesday, October 18	Audi, Chs. 3 & 4 (10 pgs); “Friedman – The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits” .pdf (5 pgs)
	Wednesday, October 19	“De George - Can Corporations have moral responsibility?” (12 pgs) <i>DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS DUE BY 10pm</i>
	Thursday, October 20	Familiarize yourself with Citizens United v. FEC (links on Canvas)
5: Management & Leadership	Monday, October 24	Audi, Chs. 8 & 9 (19 pgs)

5: Management & Leadership (cont'd)	Tuesday, October 25	Audi, Chs. 10 & 11 (14 pgs)
	Wednesday, October 26	“Doris – Fragmentation of Character” .pdf (20 pgs) DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS DUE BY 10pm
	Thursday, October 27	Discussion & Writing Philosophy Papers
6: Sweatshops	Monday, October 31	Audi, Chs. 12 & 13 (17 pgs)
	Tuesday, November 1	Zwolinski, “Sweatshops, Choice and Exploitation” (40 pgs); Krugman - “In Praise of Cheap Labor” (5 pgs)
	Wednesday, November 2	“Arnold & Bowie - Sweatshops and Respect for Persons” (17 pgs) DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS DUE BY 10pm
	Thursday, November 3	Familiarize yourself with debates about Nike’s sweatshops and the University of Oregon (links on Canvas)
7: Ethical Consumerism	Monday, November 7	Paper One DUE Barnett et al. - Philosophy and Ethical Consumption” .pdf (17 pgs)
	Tuesday, November 8	ELECTION DAY “Dickinson and Carsky – “The Consumer as Ethical Voter” (13 pgs)
	Wednesday, November 9	“Berry - Think Little” .pdf (14 pgs) DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS DUE BY 10pm
	Thursday, November 10	Familiarize yourself with Patagonia’s “Don’t Buy This Jacket” campaign (links on Canvas)
8: The Environment	Monday, November 14	Audi, Ch. 5 (4 pgs); “De George – The Environment, Rights, & Future Generations” (10 pgs)
	Tuesday, November 15	“Hunter & Fewtrell – Acceptable Risk” .pdf (21 pgs); “Baxter – The Case for Optimal Pollution” (6 pgs)
	Wednesday, November 16	Gus away at conference Watch: “This Changes Everything”
	Thursday, November 17	
9: Marketing & Advertising	Monday, November 21	Audi, Ch. 6 (11 pgs)

9: Marketing & Advertising (cont'd)	Tuesday, November 22	“Crisp - “Persuasive Advertising, Autonomy, and the Creation of Desire” .pdf (7 pgs)
	Wednesday, November 23	PAPER TWO DUE “Khatchadourian - We Know How You Feel” .pdf (27 pgs)
	Thursday, November 24	THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS
10: Bias	Monday, November 28	Audi, Ch. 8 (10 pgs)
	Tuesday, November 29	“Thomson - Preferential Hiring” (22 pgs)
	Wednesday, November 30	<i>DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS DUE BY 10pm</i> “MacKinnon - Sexual Harassment: The Experience” .pdf (22 pgs)
	Thursday, December 1	“Washington & Kelly - Who’s Responsible?” .pdf (27 pgs)
	Monday, December 5	<i>TAKE HOME EXAM 2 DUE</i>