

PHIL 120: Ethics of Enterprise and Exchange

Instructor: Devin Fitzpatrick

Fall 2018, MTWR, 105 FEN from 9-9:50 AM

Office hours: Thursdays from 10-11:50 AM, at 158A Susan Campbell Hall

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to ethical theories and issues relating to business, work, exchange, production, advertising, sustainability, globalization, and capitalism. We will consider a wide variety of conflicting viewpoints and arguments on these issues, both in terms of practical ethical problems faced by businesses and consumers and of the ethical status of our economic system in general.

This is a highly participation-focused course with challenging required reading assignments. Please read the Course Requirements closely, particularly the section on Participation.

Course Objectives

In this course, students will:

- 1) Learn in detail about ethical theories, business ethics, and ethical issues pertaining to enterprise and exchange.
- 2) Learn to apply these theories to their own lives through specific case studies, thoughtful reflection, and rigorous argumentation.
- 3) Convey their comprehension of the material through argumentative essays.
- 4) Discuss challenging and sometimes volatile philosophical issues in a charitable, generous, and fair-minded manner.

Course Requirements

Reading

No books will be required for purchase for this class. All readings will be posted on Canvas in PDF form or will be linked to as online articles.

Writing

You will be required to write **three 1,250-word essays**, due after Week 3, Week 7, and Week 10. In your essays, you will be expected to develop an argument that clearly asserts a thesis, considers possible objections, and is attentive to the assigned texts and to our discussions in class. I will be writing thorough and constructive comments for your first two essays, and for your third essay if you request them.

There will also be four in-class reading quizzes, each worth 5% of your grade, at the ends of even weeks: Week 2, Week 4, Week 6, and Week 8. These will test your comprehension of the readings and will thereby help to prepare you for the essay assignments.

Attendance

I will be taking attendance every morning in class. You do not directly receive points for attendance or lose points for absences. However, **for every unexcused absence beyond three, your total grade drops by a partial letter grade.** This means that if you have B in the class and you miss four lectures, you will automatically have a B-, and if you miss five, you will automatically have a C+. I will excuse absences for medical emergencies if I am contacted in advance.

Participation

Participation is a significant part of your grade in this class, so please read this section carefully. We have four classes each week. You may earn 1 participation point a day and up to 2 participation points each week, for a total of 20% of your grade over the term. To earn a participation point, you must raise your hand and contribute to the conversation, whether by answering a question or asking one of your own. I will still grant participation points for wrong answers if they are given in good faith (as in, it was a genuinely hard question and you tried).

In sum: You have to ask or answer at least one question in two out of the four classes each week. To make time for everyone to do this, I will structure my lectures around questions to you. I will begin by asking questions about what we learned in the last class, and I will proceed by asking you questions about the reading for that day. **If it's obvious you didn't do the reading, you're not going to get participation points. That's 20% of your grade, so do the reading!**

There is an alternative for those of you uncomfortable speaking up in class. You may attend my office hours on Thursday or make an appointment with me for at least 10 minutes of conversation about philosophy to earn 1 participation point for that week. You may still only earn a maximum of 2 points per week. This means that you only need to speak up once in class per week to earn full participation credit, but you cannot get full credit without speaking up.

Grading

- Participation: 20%
- Reading Quizzes: 20%
- First Essay: 15%
- Second Essay: 20%
- Third Essay: 25%

Academic dishonesty (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is strictly prohibited and may result in severe penalties. Definitions, procedures, and penalties for such cases are spelled out on the UO website for Academic Misconduct.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction of Themes

Monday, September 24: Introduction

Tuesday, September 25: Audi, "The Place of Ethical Theory in Business Ethics" (12 p.)

Wednesday, September 26: Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, selections from Book 1 (15 p.)

Thursday, September 27: Gaus, "The Idea and Ideal of Capitalism" (22 p.)

Week 2: Ethical Theories

Monday, October 1: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, "What Utilitarianism Is" (22 p.)

Tuesday, October 2: Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, "Transition from the Ordinary Rational Knowledge of Morality to the Philosophical" (11 p.)

Wednesday, October 3: Hartman, "The Virtue Approach to Business Ethics" (23 p.)

Thursday, October 4: Held, *The Ethics of Care*, "Care and the Extension of Markets" (17 p.)

Reading quiz on Thursday, October 4 at the beginning of class

Week 3: The Purpose of Business

Monday, October 8: Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits" (6 p.) and Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, "Evaluation" (14 p.)

Tuesday, October 9: Marx, "Estranged Labor" (10 p.)

Wednesday, October 10: Freeman, Martin, Parmar, "Stakeholder Capitalism" (12 p.)

Thursday, October 11: Friedman, Mackey, Rodgers, "Rethinking the Social Responsibility of Business," <https://reason.com/archives/2005/10/01/rethinking-the-social-responsibility/>

First essay due Sunday, October 14 at 6 PM

Week 4: Sweatshops

Monday, October 15: Zwolinski, "Sweatshops, Choice, and Exploitation" (26 p.)

Tuesday, October 16: Krugman, "In Praise of Cheap Labor" (4 p.) and Meyers, "Wrongful Beneficence: Exploitation and Third World Sweatshops" (15 p.)

Wednesday, October 17: Arnold and Bowie, "Sweatshops and Respect for Persons" (14 p.)

Thursday, October 18: Case Study: "Factory Fires in Bangladesh: Who is Responsible?"

<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/business-ethics/resources/cases-in-global-business-ethics/factory-fires-in-bangladesh-who-is-responsible.html>. *Optional but Recommended:* Last

Week Tonight, "Fashion," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdLf4fihP78> (17 mins.)

Reading quiz on Thursday, October 18 at the beginning of class

Week 5: Corporate Responsibility and Whistleblowing

Monday, October 22: Werhane and Freeman, "Corporate Responsibility" (23 p.)

Tuesday, October 23: Davis, "Whistleblowing" (25 p.)

Wednesday, October 24: Teo and Caspersz, "Dissenting Discourse: Exploring Alternatives to the Whistleblowing/Silence Dichotomy" (13 p.)

Thursday, October 25: Case Study: "Reporting Inflated Numbers,"

<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/business-ethics/resources/reporting-inflated-numbers/>

Week 6: Advertising

Monday, October 29: Crisp, "Persuasive Advertising, Autonomy, and the Creation of Desire" (7 p.) and Calfee, "How Advertising Informs to Our Benefit" (7 p.)

Tuesday, October 30: Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, "The New Forms of Control" (18 p.)

Wednesday, October 31: Kirzner, "Advertising," <https://fee.org/articles/advertising/>

Thursday, November 1: Case Study: "Deceitful Movie Trailers or Good Advertising?"

<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/business-ethics/resources/deceitful-movie-trailers-or-good-advertising/>

Reading quiz on Thursday, November 1 at the beginning of class

Week 7: Sustainability and Globalization

Monday, November 5: De George, "The Environment, Rights, and Future Generations" (13 p.) and Klein, "Capitalism vs. the Climate," first half (16 p.)

Tuesday, November 6: Klein, "Capitalism vs. the Climate," second half (17 p.)

Wednesday, November 7: Gould, "Moral Issues in Globalization" (22 p.)

Thursday, November 8: Case Study: "Easy on the Wallet or Easy on the Earth?"

<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/business-ethics/resources/easy-on-the-wallet-or-easy-on-the-earth/>

Second essay due Sunday, November 11 at 6 PM

Week 8: Preferential Hiring and Workplace Discrimination

Monday, November 12: Thomson, "Preferential Hiring" (22 p.)

Tuesday, November 13: Hull, "Affirmative Action and the Choice of Amends" (21 p.)

Wednesday, November 14: Crain and Heischmidt, "Implementing Business Ethics: Sexual Harassment" (11 p.)

Thursday, November 15: Case Study: "Breaking the Bro Code,"

<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/business-ethics/resources/silicon-valley-business-ethics-cases/breaking-the-bro-code.html>

Reading quiz on Thursday, November 15 at the beginning of class

Week 9: Reflections on Capitalism

Monday, November 19: Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*, Ch. 3 and 4 (15 p.)

Tuesday, November 20: Weeks, *The Problem with Work*, Ch. 1, first half (20 p.)

Wednesday, November 21: Weeks, *The Problem with Work*, Ch. 1, second half (21 p.)

Thursday, November 22: Thanksgiving Vacation

Week 10: Choice

Monday, November 26: Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy*, "How Markets Crowd Out Morals," (29 p.)

Tuesday, November 27: Epstein, "Michael Sandel is Wrong on Markets,"

<https://www.hoover.org/research/michael-sandel-wrong-markets>

Wednesday, November 28: Salecl, *The Tyranny of Choice*, "Why Choice Makes Us Anxious" (31 p.)

Thursday, November 29: Schwartz, *The Paradox of Choice*, "Choice and Happiness," (18 p.)

Third essay due Sunday, December 2 at 6 PM