

Syllabus

Business Ethics

PHIL 1040 | Fall 2017
Department of Philosophy
Auburn University

Instructor:	Dr. Nicholas (Nic) Koziolk		
Email:	nkoziolk@auburn.edu		
Office:	Haley 3058		
Office Hours:	M: 3:00–5:00pm and by appointment		

Class Meetings:	Section 009	TR 11:00–12:15	Haley 3220
	Section 010	TR 2:00–3:15	Haley 3046
	Section 011	TR 12:30–1:45	Haley 3034
	Section 012	TR 3:30–4:45	Haley 3174

Final Exam:	Section 009	Wednesday, Dec 13, 12:00–2:30
	Section 010	Thursday, Dec 14, 4:00–6:30
	Section 011	Monday, Dec 11, 12:00–2:30
	Section 012	Wednesday, Dec 13, 4:00–6:30

Required Texts:	Andrew Kernohan, <i>Business Ethics: An Interactive Introduction</i> , (Broadview Press, 2015).
	Fritz Allhoff, Alexander Sager, and Anand J. Vaidya (eds.), <i>Business in Ethical Focus: An Anthology</i> , Second Edition, (Broadview Press, 2017).

Assignments:	Participation (15% of final grade)
	Short-essay quizzes, ungraded (daily, 15% total)
	Short-essay quizzes, graded (two, 25% each)
	Final exam (20%)

1 Course Description

In this course, we will explore a wide range of issues concerning the place of business in society. Questions we will address include (but are not limited to) the following: What responsibilities do businesses have to society at large? What responsibilities do businesses have to individual members of that society, be they employees, consumers, shareholders, or merely (present or future) citizens? What responsibilities does the society at large have to businesses? What responsibilities do individuals (employees, for example) have to businesses? How do laws and public policies affect everyday business behavior? How does everyday business behavior influence legislators and policymakers? What are the ethical ramifications of these relations between business and government?

2 Course Objectives

The overall goal of the course is not to provide definitive answers to any of the questions posed above; it is, rather, to develop a sense of the complexity of those questions, and of the interrelations between the different issues raised by each of them. The goal, in other words, is not to decide what place business should have in society; it is, instead, to become practiced in thinking about the various considerations that are potentially relevant to making particular decisions about the role of business in the real world. We will address this complexity by thinking about each business-ethical problem we discuss from a variety of perspectives, including those of employees, consumers, business managers, shareholders, politicians, policymakers, and citizens. We will see that different facets of each business-ethical problem come into view from each of these different perspectives. Our working assumption will be that a truly satisfying solution to any business-ethical problem would be one that takes into account every single one of these perspectives.

3 Learning Outcomes

In this course—*if* you put in the work, i.e., if you read and reflect on the material, come to class, participate in discussion, and put time and effort into your written work—you will acquire and/or hone some important and widely applicable skills, in particular, how to read and think analytically and critically, and how to construct and critique arguments effectively. But you will learn to apply these skills primarily in relation to views about the interface between ethics and business. You will thus learn, most especially, to think more carefully and critically about a range of issues pertaining to living well (i.e., both happily and ethically) as a participant in the modern economy. You will learn how to think about the obstacles (both personal and systemic, both local and global) to making money without harming others or yourself, and without allowing others to harm you. And you will acquire

familiarity with some of the considerations and arguments (on both sides of various debates) that are relevant to (for example):

- acting ethically in your working life,
- integrating your job or career into a satisfying and rewarding *human* life,
- promoting justice and fairness in your society (from the level of individual businesses to that of the global economy),
- assigning responsibility (for the effects of doing business) to businesses and their employees.

4 Course Requirements

4.1 Readings

You are required to complete all assigned readings *prior* to the class meetings for which they are assigned, as indicated in the Schedule of Readings (see section 6 below).

There are two required texts: *Business Ethics: An Interactive Introduction*, by Andrew Kernohan (Broadview Press, 2015) and *Business in Ethical Focus: An Anthology* (Second Edition), edited by Fritz Allhoff, Alexander Sager, and Anand J. Vaidya (Broadview Press, 2017). (If you buy the latter from somewhere other than the AU bookstore, make sure you buy the second edition.) The vast majority of assigned readings will be from these two texts. Occasionally, however, readings will instead be posted to Canvas in PDF format.

Both books will be available in the AU Bookstore. The Kernohan book will also be made available via Open Access, and so will be available to you through Canvas at the start of the semester. If you don't want the electronic Open Access version, you'll need to opt out of the OA program; instructions about opting out will be sent to you early in the semester.

You are required to bring the day's assigned reading with you to class. You may access the reading on an electronic device, but that device cannot be your cell phone; please use either a computer or a tablet. If you'd prefer to print the electronic readings, the AU bookstore has reasonably-priced printing services.

4.2 Participation

Our classroom time will be divided between interactive lecture and small group discussion. Thus, anytime I'm lecturing, I invite and encourage you to raise your

hand and, when called upon, ask questions or request clarification about, or offer an alternative (perhaps even conflicting) perspective on, anything I've said. These "interruptions" to lectures are crucial to the success of the course. The more I know about what you're thinking, what sense you're making of the course material, and what you think about it, the more I can tailor my lectures and our discussions to what interests and concerns *you*.

Because there are quite a few of you, and because productive discussion amongst so many people can be difficult to maintain, we'll also frequently break up into small groups, where you can discuss material from the readings, and questions raised in class, with your peers. When we're working in small groups, I'll move from group to group, participating occasionally, but frequently simply listening and taking in your points of view.

I also encourage you to use my office hours, especially if you don't like speaking in front of large groups. This too counts as a form of participation; it's a way of showing me that you're engaged with the material and putting effort into the course.

4.3 Short-Essay Quizzes

Most of your work this semester will consist in reading the assigned texts and completing open-book short-essay quizzes. These quizzes will be available on Canvas, and are to be completed *before* you come to class. The idea behind these quizzes is to allow you to engage with the material before you come to class, which will better prepare you for class discussion, which will often focus specifically on the questions posed on the day's quiz. Generally speaking, these quizzes will check your understanding of key concepts and central arguments in each day's reading. You will thus be asked to explain distinctions, identify important claims, and analyze and evaluate crucial arguments.

For the most part, you will receive points simply for completing these short-essay quizzes on time (you will receive only half credit for quizzes submitted after the deadline, unless you have an official university-recognized excuse). But I will also read and grade two of them at random (not necessarily the same ones for every student). Your grades on those sets of questions will be a separate—and significant—component of your overall grade for the course. You will receive your grade on one set of questions after approximately the first seven weeks of the semester, and your grade for the second after approximately the first fifteen weeks.

Although you need to complete each quiz before class, you will have a chance to revise and resubmit your answers after class, and before I grade the quiz. So class is an opportunity to ask questions about the quiz that will help you to ensure that your answers are correct. I will also allow you to revise your answers again after I

grade the quiz. I will then re-grade the new submission, and your score for that quiz will be the average of your scores for the two submissions. Quizzes will be graded on a 100-point scale at five-point intervals—so you will receive either 100 points, 95, 90, 85, 80, etc. Because you have opportunities to revise your answers in light of class discussion (and visits to my office hours) before they're graded, and again after they're graded, my grading of these quizzes will be quite demanding: you need, of course, to get things right; but you also need to write clearly and persuasively. Your grades on the two graded short-essay quizzes will make up 50% of your final grade. So these quizzes are important, and you should take them seriously and put serious work into them.

4.4 Final Exam

Finally, there will be a final exam. The exam will be administered at the assigned time during exam week (see p. 1). I will give you more information about the final exam later in the semester. For now, the important thing to know is that the exam will be a reading comprehension exam, with a focus on the analysis and evaluation of arguments, and so will test the skills in reading and analysis that you'll have been practicing throughout the semester.

5 Grading

Your final grade will be determined according to the following weighting of individual assignments and assignment of letter grades to the resulting percentage scores. Calculated percentage scores will not be rounded.

Participation:	15%
Ungraded short-essay quizzes:	15%
First graded short-essay quiz:	25%
Second graded short-essay quiz:	25%
Final Exam:	20%

$90 \leq \text{Score} \leq 100$	A
$80 \leq \text{Score} < 90$	B
$70 \leq \text{Score} < 80$	C
$60 \leq \text{Score} < 70$	D
$\text{Score} < 60$	F

6 Schedule of Readings

This Schedule of Readings is subject to revisions. Changes from the original schedule will be in blue (so be careful if you print in black and white). You are responsible for checking Canvas for changes to the schedule, as well for other announcements pertaining to the course, our schedule, and your assignments.

The location of each reading is indicated in parentheses. “K” refers to Kernohan’s *Business Ethics: An Interactive Introduction*. “BiEF” refers to Allhoff, Sager, and Vaidya’s *Business in Ethical Focus*. Readings marked “Canvas” can be found in the “Files → Readings” folder on Canvas, in PDF format.

Each reading is to be completed *before* the class meeting on the date for which it is assigned, as is the corresponding quiz, which will be available on Canvas at least 36 hours before class begins.

Introduction

August 22

- No Reading

August 24

- René Descartes, “First Meditation” (Canvas)
- Bertrand Russell, “The Value of Philosophy” (Canvas)

August 29

- Stephen Toulmin, “The Layout of Arguments” (Canvas)

What is Business Ethics?

August 31

- Kernohan, Chapter 1: “Ethical Decisions in Business” (K: pp. 1–18)

Ethical and Non-Ethical Reasoning

September 5

- Kernohan, Chapter 2: “The Nature of Ethical Reasoning” (K: pp. 19–35)

September 7

- Kernohan, Chapter 3: “Self-Interest and the Dilemmas of Cooperation” (K: pp. 37–52)

September 12

- Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, selections (Canvas)

Ethics and Management

September 14

- Milton Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits” (BiEF: pp. 74–78)

September 19

- Lynn A. Stout, “The Shareholder Value Myth” (BiEF: pp. 79–84)

Utilitarianism

September 21

- Kernohan, Chapter 4: “Calculating Consequences and Utilitarian Reasoning” (K: pp. 53–71)

September 26

- David Meeler, “Utilitarianism” (BiEF: pp. 35–42)

September 28

- Ian Maitland, “The Great Non-Debate Over International Sweatshops” (BiEF: pp. 207–219)
- Kernohan, Chapter 11 (selections): pp. 196–202 (“The Economic Utilitarian Argument for Free Trade,” “Winners and Losers in International Trade,” and “Distributive Justice in International Trade”)

Deontology

October 3

- Kernohan, Chapter 5: “Motivations, Duties, and Rights” (K: pp. 73–87)

October 5

- Heather Salazar, “Kantian Business Ethics” (BiEF: pp. 43–48)

October 10

- Joseph DesJardins and Ronald Duska, “Drug Testing in Employment” (BiEF: pp. 369–379)

October 12

- NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

October 17

- Roger Crisp, “Persuasive Advertising, Autonomy, and the Creation of Desire” (BiEF: pp. 571–577)
- Kernohan, Chapter 10 (selection): pp. 166–170 (“Interferences With Autonomy”)

Distributive Justice

October 19

- Kernohan, Chapter 6: “Fairness and Distributive Justice”(K: pp. 89–107)

October 24

- John Locke, excerpts from *The Second Treatise of Human Government* (BiEF: pp. 627–634)

October 26

- Adam Smith, “Excerpts from *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*” (BiEF: pp. 635–642)

October 31

- Karl Marx, *Capital*, Part I, Chapter I, Sections 1 and 2 (Canvas)

November 2

- Karl Marx, *Capital*, Part III, Chapter VII (Canvas)

Virtue Ethics

November 7

- Kernohan, Chapter 7: “Virtue Ethics and Community Membership” (K: pp. 109–127)

November 9

- Richard M. Glatz, “Aristotelian Virtue Ethics and the Recommendations of Morality” (BiEF: pp. 49–55)

November 14

- Juan M. Elegido, “Does It Make Sense to Be a Loyal Employee?” (BiEF: pp. 340–351)

Care Ethics

November 16

- Kernohan, Chapter 8: “Feminism, Equality, and Care Ethics” (K: pp. 129–145)

November 21 and 23

- NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 28

- Rita C. Manning, “Caring as an Ethical Perspective” (BiEF: pp. 56–61)

November 30

- Anita M. Superson, “A Feminist Definition of Sexual Harassment” (BiEF: pp. 476–487)

Personal Responsibility

December 5

- Kernohan, Chapter 9: “Moral Accountability” (K: pp. 147–161)

December 7

- Helaine Olen, excerpts from *Pound Foolish: Exposing the Dark Side of the Personal Finance Industry* (Canvas)