

2015

PHIL 321-1S Business Ethics

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Recommended Citation

Brownlee, Timothy, "PHIL 321-1S Business Ethics" (2015). *Philosophy Syllabi Summer 2015*. Paper 1.
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Business Ethics
PHIL321 1S, Summer I, 2015
Syllabus

Instructor Information

Professor: Dr. Timothy Brownlee

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Office: Hinkle 228

Office Hours: Available for in-person and online meetings by appointment. To set up an appointment, please send me an email. In general, you can expect a response to emails and voicemails within 24 hours, but usually within 12, including evenings and weekends.

Course Information

Course Description

A host of laws and regulations controls and limits financial and commercial activities. However, defenders of free market principles argue that many legal controls imposed on business are unjust. In this course, our central aim is to investigate and understand the extent to which issues of justice are relevant to the conduct of business.

We will focus on two major questions:

1. *Ethics in business*: What, if any, ethical concerns face those engaged directly in commerce and finance? We will devote specific attention to the role that normative ethics can help us to address questions of conduct within business practice.
2. *Ethics of business*: To what extent can philosophy help us to understand the central principles and purposes which commerce and finance themselves promote? Are these aims just?

In endeavoring to answer these questions, we will focus, on the one hand, on historical conceptions of the meaning and value of economic practice and, on the other hand, on specific issues and problems which contemporary economic practices raise. We will devote special attention to questions concerning the value and importance of labor to individual development and flourishing, the centrality of corporate and financial institutions to the contemporary social and political world, the relation between commerce and the environment, and issues concerning justice between nations which international trade and commerce raise.

E/RS Program

This course is an E/RS "Focus Elective." As part of the E/RS program, which is a central part of the Xavier "Core Curriculum," this course is intended to promote reflection on questions of moral

significance. For those interested, more information about E/RS can be found at their web site:
<http://www.xavier.edu/ers/>

Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify similarities and differences between paradigmatic conceptions of the purposes of and justifications for economic institutions.
- Compare and contrast different approaches to understanding the justice of economic and commercial institutions and practices.
- Analyze specific ethical issues arising in the conduct of business in light of theories of political economy and conceptions of economic justice.
- Recommend specific responses to ethical issues arising in the conduct of business, justifying your responses by appeal to a clearly articulated conception of justice, and defending that conception against competing ones.
- Compare and contrast moral questions and problems that arise in different spheres of economic and commercial life.
- Argue in favor of a thesis in clear and concise prose.

Course Materials

Three required texts are available for purchase from the Xavier University bookstore:

Arnold, Denis G., Tom L. Beauchamp, and Norman E. Bowie. Ethical Theory and Business, 9th Ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2013. (ISBN: 978-0-205-16908-5)

Marx, Karl. Selected Writings. Ed. Lawrence H. Simon. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1994. (ISBN: 978-0-87220-218-4)

Smith, Adam. Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1982. (ISBN: 978-0865970069)

Other course materials will be made available through the course modules on Canvas.

Time Commitment Expectations

This course is six weeks in duration, with a few hours required prior to the beginning of the course for introductory activities, and is entirely online. Plan to spend a minimum of 8-10 hours per week (probably more during some weeks) working on the course. Participants are expected to log on to the course 4-5 days per week, and some weeks will require daily log-in to complete

the required assignments. Try to let 48 hours be your maximum absence from the course but do plan on checking your Xavier email daily for professor communications.

This class is certainly no easier than a typical class with in-person meetings, and in some cases it may prove more challenging. Since it is an intensive, 6-week course, you'll need to devote much more time on a weekly basis than you would for an in-person class. It requires a commitment to work independently. While the course materials, our discussions, and other forms of interaction will help you to work through the readings and topics, you'll need to commit to work hard on your own. If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let the course facilitator know as early as possible.

Technical Requirements

- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable)
- Access to **Canvas** through a supported Web browser (recent version of Firefox, Chrome or IE).
- Check your computer against Xavier's suggested minimum computer requirements: <http://www.xavier.edu/ts/students/Computer-Recommendations.cfm>

Technical Assistance

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with **Canvas**, contact the HELP Desk at (513) 745-HELP/4357 or visit the [HELP Desk Web site](#) .

Course Schedule

Each module consists of learning activities and the assignments listed below. Activities should be completed sequentially within the timeframe designated for each module. Activity and assignment details will be explained within the corresponding course modules in **Canvas**. If you have any questions, please contact the professor.

Start Here (opens May 11)

Due: 5/18/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: Icebreaker
Due: 5/19/15 at 8 p.m.	Syllabus Quiz
Due: 5/19/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: Reply to icebreakers

Module 1: Political economy, ancient and modern (May 20-June 2)

Due: 5/20/15 at 8 p.m.	Assignment: Plato's <u>Republic</u> Discussion Paper (<i>selected students</i>)
Due: 5/21/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: Plato's <u>Republic</u> Discussion
Due: 5/21/15 at 8 p.m.	Quiz: Plato's <u>Republic</u>
Due: 5/24/15 at 8 p.m.	Assignment: Smith's <u>Wealth of Nations</u> Discussion Paper 1 (<i>selected students</i>)
Due: 5/25/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: Smith's <u>Wealth of Nations</u> Discussion 1
Due: 5/27/15 at 8 p.m.	Assignment: Smith's <u>Wealth of Nations</u> Discussion Paper 2 (<i>selected students</i>)
Due: 5/28/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: Smith's <u>Wealth of Nations</u> Discussion 2
Due: 5/28/15 at 8 p.m.	Quiz: Smith's <u>Wealth of Nations</u>
Due: 5/28/15 at 8 p.m.	First Essay Test: Plato and Smith
Due: 5/31/15 at 8 p.m.	Assignment: Marx's <u>Capital</u> Discussion Paper (<i>selected students</i>)
Due: 6/1/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: Marx's <u>Capital</u> Discussion
Due: 6/1/15 at 8 p.m.	Quiz: Marx's <u>Capital</u>

Module 2: Economic Justice (June 3-5)

Due: 6/3/15 at 8 p.m.	Assignment: Rawls and Nozick Discussion Paper (<i>selected students</i>)
Due: 6/4/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: Rawls and Nozick Discussion
Due: 6/4/15 at 8 p.m.	Quiz: Economic justice quiz

Module 3: Ethics in Business (June 6-23)

Due: 6/7/15 at 8 p.m.	Assignment: Managerial Responsibility Case Study Paper (<i>selected students</i>)
Due: 6/8/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: Managerial Responsibility Discussion
Due: 6/8/15 at 8 p.m.	Quiz: Managerial Responsibility quiz
Due: 6/10/15 at 8 p.m.	Assignment: Employment Case Study Paper (<i>selected students</i>)
Due: 6/11/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: Employment Discussion
Due: 6/11/15 at 8 p.m.	Quiz: Employment quiz
Due: 6/11/15 at 8 p.m.	Second Essay Test: Marx, Economic Justice, Managerial Responsibility
Due: 6/14/15 at 8 p.m.	Assignment: Finance Case Study Paper (<i>selected students</i>)
Due: 6/15/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: Finance Discussion
Due: 6/15/15 at 8 p.m.	Quiz: Finance quiz
Due: 6/17/15 at 8 p.m.	Assignment: Environment Case Study Paper (<i>selected students</i>)
Due: 6/18/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: Environment Discussion
Due: 6/18/15 at 8 p.m.	Quiz: Environment quiz
Due: 6/21/15 at 8 p.m.	Assignment: International Business Case Study Paper (<i>selected students</i>)
Due: 6/22/15 at 8 p.m.	Discussion: International Business Discussion
Due: 6/22/15 at 8 p.m.	Quiz: International Business Quiz

Final Essay Test (June 22-25)

Due: 6/25/15 at 8 p.m.	Third Essay Test: Employment, Finance, Environment, International Business
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Note: The schedule is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. You are expected to check announcements regularly and adhere to the established course deadlines.

Grading Policy

Graded Course Activities

Major assignments for the course, as well as course participation, are required and will factor into your grade.

Module	Assignment	Grade Breakdown
1 or 2	Discussion Paper and Discussion	10%
3	Case Study Paper and Discussion	15%
All	Discussion Responses and Participation	20%
All	Quizzes	10%
1	First Essay Test	15%
1 & 2	Second Essay Test	15%
3	Third Essay Test	15%

Assignment Details

You can find the details for each assignment posted on the course Canvas Site.

Each student is responsible for writing two discussion papers in the course. Students will sign up to submit papers on specific topics on specific days according to a schedule determined near the outset of the course. The first discussion paper will concern a topic covered in module 1 or 2. It should be between 300-500 words long. The second discussion paper will concern a topic in module 3 and will include a reflection on a case study drawn from the course textbook. It should be between 800-1000 words long.

Students are required to respond to each of the tutorial paper discussions for each reading assignment on the website's discussion boards.

Students must complete short, multiple-choice quizzes on each of the topics covered in the course.

Students must write three essay tests. The questions for the three tests will become available at the start of the week they are due. These tests will concern central topics concerning the readings. Students should anticipate writing 3-5 double-spaced pages for each.

Viewing Grades

Points you receive for scored activities will be posted to the Canvas Grade Book.

Grade Posting Policy

In general, you should expect to receive feedback on assignments within 72 hours of submission. Exceptions to this will noted in the course announcements in Canvas.

Assignment Submission

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through **Canvas** unless otherwise instructed.

Late Work/Make-Up Work

It is expected participants will complete all assignments by the posted deadlines. Contribution from all participants is crucial in an online course. Therefore, late participation assignments will not be accepted. If there is an issue with completing an assignment on time, you must contact the course facilitator.

Incomplete Policy

Please discuss with the course facilitator if you feel you are unable to complete the course requirements according to the deadlines.

Course Policies/Guidelines

Netiquette

The discussion boards are created to provide an opportunity for students to actively engage in meaningful conversation on a particular topic or issue. You are encouraged to provide your honest viewpoint, but be respectful of the views of your classmates.

Do's

1. Do use correct grammar and spelling.
2. Do read the prompt, reflect on what you would like to say, and review what you've written before posting!
3. Do respect the privacy, beliefs, and opinions of your classmates.
4. Do challenge each other's ideas but not each other personally.
5. Do remember to treat others as you would want to be treated, and that you should want to be treated with decency.
6. Do stick to the discussion prompt at hand when posting to a forum.
7. Do use humor and sarcasm carefully. Others cannot see your facial expressions or hear any voice inflections.

Don'ts

1. Don't type in ALL CAPS. This is regarded as shouting.
2. Don't rant or insult others. This is not the place to vent your anger or start a fight.
3. Don't make inappropriate comments. Objectionable, sexist, or racist language will not be tolerated.

In the discussion forums you will post assignments and discuss your work with others in the class or in your groups. These are public forums, so whatever is posted can be seen by everyone in the course, including the professor. If you want to send a private message to the professor, use individual email. The Class Lounge discussion forum is a public space for conversation with your classmates on any topic or question.

University Policies

Academic Honesty Policy

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited, as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own.

Copyright Policy

Copyright laws and fair use policies protect the rights of those who have produced the material. To help you familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit the [library copyright Web page](#) and download the following for reference purposes: http://www.xavier.edu/library/copyright/copyright_policy_2009.pdf

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Students with Disabilities

Any participant who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should notify the course facilitator and contact Cassandra Jones in the Learning Assistance Center at 513-745-3280 or e-mail jonesc20@xavier.edu to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Philosophy Department Grading Standards

The Philosophy Department has adopted the following standards for the evaluation of all forms of written work:

A = Work that not merely fully and accurately reproduces class discussion, the main thread in the argument or the major philosophical significance under discussion, but which goes beyond these and indicates a contribution of the student, giving evidence of a deeper understanding of the material in question.

B = Work that shows a more or less complete and exact understanding of the issues, texts and/or arguments as explained in class, clearly and logically formulated, but without advancing beyond these explanations.

C = Work that shows a basic understanding of the material but with errors, omissions and confusions of either a formal or contextual nature.

D = Work that shows a minimal acquaintance with the material, or serious logical or conceptual flaws in formulating responses to the question raised, the argument at issue, or the philosophical text under discussion.

F = Work that indicates inadequate acquaintance with texts, issues, or ideas with little or no valid argumentation; or the work is handed in beyond the point of acceptance or else plagiarized. Cases of plagiarism, which involves the use of published work or other written material without proper citation, must be given a '0'.