

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2011-12

Philosophy 2074F – Business Ethics
Previously Philosophy 162F

Fall Term 2011
Mon, Wed and Fri 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Classroom: UCC 56

Instructor: Dean Proessel
Office Hours: M and W 1:30 to 2:30
dproesse@uwo.ca

DESCRIPTION

It is sometimes said that the phrase “business ethics” is an oxymoron. In this course we will attempt to dispel this popular conception. By working our way through many of the moral issues to which the practice of business gives rise, we will show that the interests of business people and moral philosophers converge. Topics include: What is the nature of moral reasoning? Do corporations have social responsibilities? What social responsibilities do corporations have when operating in the global context? Are there universal ethical principles which can guide the conduct of multinational corporations? Do international sweatshops violate human rights? What are the rights of employees in the workplace? Do employees have the right to due process? Is affirmative action morally justifiable? Is business bluffing ethical? When is advertising ethically questionable? How much information about a product is a corporation morally obligated to disclose to consumers, and how and to whom should this information be disclosed? Can the free market be justified? What is the appropriate level of taxation? What constitutes a just distribution of the goods and services produced by society?

TEXTS

Business In Ethical Focus, An Anthology, edited by Fritz Allhoff and Anand Vaidya, Broadview Press, 2008

OBJECTIVES

In examining the topics and questions mentioned above, students will be expected to achieve the following course objectives:

- Develop an understanding of ethical theory, in particular utilitarianism, deontology, relativism and human rights.
- Develop the ability to reflect on the practice of business from a critical, moral point of view.
- Develop critical reading and writing skills by preparing 2 term papers.

REQUIREMENTS

In addition to keeping up with class readings and participating in class discussions, students will be expected to fulfill the following course requirements:

Paper 1	30%
Paper 2	30%
Final Exam	40%

Submission Guidelines

All written work must be submitted to *turnitin.com*.

The penalty for late papers is 3% a day.

No papers will be accepted after the last day of classes.

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.