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office hours: MW 12:00–12:30; 3:45–4:15; or by arrangement

Bus/Phil 186: Professional and Business Ethics
sec. 3 MW (10:30–11:45) and sec. 7 MW (16:30–17:45)
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY
Fall Semester 2017

Course Description

Professional and Business Ethics examines some critical philosophical and ethical issues that arise in business and professional practice as well as in the appraisal of our business system as a whole. In addition to wrestling with a number of substantive issues concerning business and society, the course endeavors to improve the ability of students to analyze and assess moral arguments and to think critically and independently about ethical issues. The course also challenges you to reflect both on the nature and role of business in our society and on the values you seek to uphold in your working life. Although the topics to be covered are important, and students should be prepared to work hard, discussing these issues should prove fun as well.

The course begins by looking at the nature of morality, individual moral responsibility, and some basic normative theories. We then examine competing conceptions of justice, the nature of the American business system today, and the fundamental question of what responsibilities corporations have to society. This sets the backdrop for the analysis and discussion in the rest of the course of a variety of more specific moral issues concerning consumers, the environment, and the workplace—issues that employers and employees must often face.

Homework Assignments

During the semester, there will be 16 homework assignments, in which you will be asked to give your own reflections and ideas about some aspect of the reading assignment for that day. Homework assignments will be graded on a credit/half-credit/no-credit basis. (Exceptionally good homework may sometimes receive extra credit.)

Grading scale: 4 or 5 credits = D; 6, 7, or 8 credits = C; 9 credits = C+; 10, 11 or 12 credits = B; 13 credits = B+; 14, 15, or 16 credits = A.

You must submit your homework in class and in person on the day it is due. *Late homework will not be accepted.* However, if for some reason you cannot attend class that day, you can email me your homework before class for half-credit.

Examinations

There will be three exams during the semester, and a final exam at the end of the course. Each exam carries equal weight in determining your semester grade. The exams will be multiple choice, so you will need to bring a scantron with you (the blue T&E 200 answer sheet). The exam questions will cover the assigned readings (whether or not they have been discussed in class) as well as any additional material covered in lectures or class discussion. I will give you more specific guidance before each exam. If you

must miss an exam, you must contact me before the exam to make special arrangements. Otherwise, *missed exams cannot be made up.*

Class Involvement

Because this is a philosophy class, dialogue and discussion are important parts of it. In addition there will be some in-class assignments and small group projects. Therefore it is important that you come to class (with your textbook), prepared, and ready to discuss the course material. In determining your semester grade, I will take into account your preparation for and participation in class discussion. If you are on the borderline between two grades, your class involvement will determine which grade you receive.

Semester Grade

Your semester grade is thus a function of the following factors:

- Three exams during the term (16% each)
- Final examination (16%)
- Homework (36%)
- Class involvement (variable)

Attendance Contest

Students in the class are invited to participate in the attendance contest. You are not required to participate; the contest is purely voluntary. To win the contest (there can be more than one winner), you must have perfect attendance. This means that you have (a) missed no classes, (b) been on time to every class, and (c) been in class for the whole period. It's called a "contest," in part, because there are no excuses whatsoever. No matter how good the reason, if you have to miss class, then you don't have perfect attendance and can't win the contest. (I realize that an element of luck enters into this; that's another reason for calling it a "contest.")

Winners of the attendance contest have the option of not taking the final exam. If they choose not to take the final exam, then their final exam grade will be their highest grade on the first three exams.

Laptop Policy

I want your undivided attention in class; therefore, I do not allow laptops to be used. Taking notes is always a good idea, but do it on paper and then enter them into your computer later when you can revise and expand on them and add your notes on the reading.

Required Text

The required textbook is William H. Shaw and Vincent Barry, *Moral Issues in Business*, 13th edition (Wadsworth/Cengage 2016—ISBN-13: 978-1-285-87432-6; ISBN-10: 1-285-87432-3). You need this edition of the book, not an older, out-of-date edition. New and used copies are available at the Spartan Bookstore. You can also rent the book or purchase an e-copy at www.CengageBrain.com or at Amazon. All assignments are from the textbook.

Course Outline and Assignments

Wednesday, August 23: Introduction

MORAL PERSPECTIVES

Monday, August 28: Chapter 1, pages 1 to 17

Wednesday, August 30: Chapter 1, pages 17 to 22 only; case 1.2 “(Just Drop Off the Key)” and case 1.3 (“The A7D Affair”); *homework #1*

Monday, September 4: Labor Day – no class

Wednesday, September 6: Chapter 2, pages 54–72

Monday, September 11: Chapter 2, pages 72–82; *homework #2*

Wednesday, September 13: cases 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3; *homework #3*

Monday, September 18: **First Exam**

JUSTICE, CAPITALISM, AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Wednesday, September 20: Chapter 3, pages 105–120; case 3.3 (“Poverty in America”)

Monday, September 25: Chapter 3, pages 120–128; *homework #4*

Wednesday, September 27: Haslett, “Is Inheritance Justified?” pages 143–149; *homework #5*

Monday, October 2: Chapter 4, pages 150–167

Wednesday, October 4: Chapter 4, pages 168–173; cases 4.1, 4.2, and 4.6; *homework #6*

Monday, October 9: Daly, “Globalization and Its Discontents,” pages 186–189
Schumacher, “Buddhist Economics,” pages 197–201; *homework #7*

Wednesday, October 11: Chapter 5, pages 202–226

Monday, October 16: Mackey, Friedman, and Rodgers, “A Debate ...,” pages 244–252
case 5.4 (“Corporations and Religious Faith”) and
case 5.6 (“Corporate Taxation”) *homework #8*

Wednesday, October 18: **Second Exam**

BUSINESS AND CONSUMERS

Monday, October 23: Chapter 6, pages 262–271 and 283–295 only

Wednesday, October 25: cases 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, and 6.5; *homework #9*

BUSINESS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Monday, October 30: Chapter 7, pages 331–337 and 347–354 only

Wednesday, November 1: Singer, “The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues,” pages 366–371; *homework #10*

EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Monday, November 6: Chapter 8, pages 379–385 only; cases 8.3 and 8.4
homework #11

Wednesday, November 8: Chapter 9, pages 434–445 only; cases 9.1, 9.2, and 9.5
DesJardins and Duska, “Drug Testing in Employment,” pages 468–472
homework #12

Monday, November 13: Chapter 10, pages 493–519

Wednesday, November 15: Elegido, “Does It Make Sense to Be a Loyal Employee?” pp. 528–533
cases 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4 and 10.5; *homework #13*

Monday, November 20: **Third Exam**

Wednesday November 22: Thanksgiving Holiday – no class

DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Monday, November 27: Chapter 11, pages 558–573

Wednesday, November 29: Chapter 11, pages 574–579; case 11.2 (“Hoop Dreams”)
Schultz, “Rethinking Sexual Harassment,” pages 594–600
homework #14

Monday, December 4: case 11.4 (“Consenting to Sexual Harassment”); Corvino, “Job Discrimination and Gay Rights,” pages 601–606; case 11.5 (“Facial Discrimination”)
homework #15

BACK TO BASICS

Wednesday, December 6: Solomon, “It’s Good Business,” pages 38–45

Hare, “One Philosopher’s Approach to Business Ethics,” pages 90–96
homework #16

Monday, December 11: discussion continued

FINAL EXAMINATION

Section 3 (MW 10:30: Friday, December 15, 9:45 a.m.

Section 7 (MW 16:30): Tuesday, December 19, 2:45 p.m.

Homework Assignments

INSTRUCTIONS:

All homework assignments should be one-to-two typed (double-spaced) pages. (Longer is o.k.) Please type your name and your email address at the top of the page.

The assignments give you a chance to develop some of your own ideas and to prove to me that you are thinking about the chapter, essay, or case study in question. So do not give me short, perfunctory answers but, rather, try to explain your point of view and develop and defend your own ideas. When you have a choice of questions to answer, pick questions that you want to write about—not questions that you think require only a two-sentence answer. [You don't need to waste space re-typing the questions. Just put down the number of the question you are answering.]

You must submit your homework in class and in person on the day it is due. *Late homework will not be accepted.* However, if for some reason you cannot attend class that day, you can email me your homework before class for half-credit.

Assignment #1, due Wednesday, August 30

Answer the three “For Further Reflection” questions on page 29. (Just give the number of the question you're discussing. You don't need to waste space copying the question.)

Assignment #2, due Monday, September 11

Answer the “For Further Reflection” questions on page 82. (Again, you don't need to re-type the questions.)

Assignment #3, due Wednesday, September 13

Pick case 2.1 (“Hacking into Harvard”), case 2.2 (“The Ford Pinto”), **or** case 2.3 (“Blood for Sale”) and answer four questions of your own choosing from the “Discussion Questions” at the end of the case. [Note: the class will be discussing all three cases, so please read and think about them all.]

Assignment #4, due Monday, September 25

Answer the three “For Further Reflection” questions on page 128. (Note that question #2 refers to the three major theories discussed in the text – utilitarianism, libertarianism, and Rawls's theory.)

Assignment #5, due Wednesday, September 27

Choose four of the “Review and Discussion Questions” on page 149 (following Haslett, “Is Inheritance Justified?”) and answer them.

Assignment #6, due Wednesday, October 4

Pick case 4.1 (“Catastrophe in Bangladesh”), case 4.2 (“Licensing and Laissez Faire”), **or** case 4.6 (“Paying College Athletes”) and answer four questions of your own choosing from the “Discussion Questions” at the end of the case.

Assignment #7, due Monday, October 9

Pick *either* the essay “Globalization and Its Discontents” *or* the essay “Buddhist Economics” and answer four of the “Review and Discussion Questions” at the end of it.

Assignment #8, due Monday, October 16

Answer four of the “Review and Discussion Questions” on pages 251–2 (concerning the reading assignment, “A Debate on the Social Responsibility of Business”).

Assignment #9, due Wednesday, October 25

Pick case 6.1 (“Breast Implants”) **or** case 6.5 (“The Rise and Fall of Four Loko”) and answer four questions of your own choosing from the “Discussion Questions” at the end of the case.

Assignment #10, due Wednesday, November 1

Choose four of the “Review and Discussion Questions” on page 371 (following Singer, “The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues”) and answer them.

Assignment #11, due Monday, November 6

Pick case 8.3 (“Speaking Out about Malt”) **or** case 8.4 (“Have Gun, Will Travel ... to Work”) and answer four questions of your own choosing from the “Discussion Questions” at the end of the case.

Assignment #12, due Wednesday, November 8

Choose four of the “Review and Discussion Questions” on pages 472–3 (following “Drug Testing in Employment” by DesJardins and Duska) and answer them.

Assignment #13, due Wednesday, November 15

Pick case 10.1, case 10.2, case 10.3, case 10.4, **or** case 10.5 and answer four questions of your own choosing from the “Discussion Questions” at the end of the case.

Assignment #14, due Wednesday, November 29

Choose four of the “Review and Discussion Questions” on page 600 (following Vicki Schultz, “Re-thinking Sexual Harassment”) and answer them.

Assignment #15, due Monday, December 4

Choose four of the “Review and Discussion Questions” on pages 606–7 (following John Corvino, “Job Discrimination and Gay Rights”) and answer them.

Assignment #16, due Wednesday, December 6

Pick *either* the essay “It’s Good Business” by Robert Solomon *or* the essay “One Philosopher’s Approach to Buddhist Economics” by R.M. Hare and answer four of the “Review and Discussion Questions” at the end of it.