

Grande Prairie Regional College  
Department of Arts, Commerce and Education  
Fall 2003  
Philosophy 3850

**Workplace, Marketplace, Investment and Professional Ethics**  
(the course formally known as Ethical Theory and Business)

Room: A212  
Time: Mon., Wed. 4 - 5:20 p.m.  
Instructor: Tom Enders, PhD  
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Office hours: Mon. 1-2 p.m.; Thurs. 10-11 a.m.;  
or by appointment

Course description:

People acting in a number of different capacities in the economy need to make a variety of ethical decisions that have a significant impact upon other persons and upon society more generally. They face issues such as: copying of intellectual property without permission, lifestyle advertising, whistle-blowing, monitoring of employee e-mail and drug use, and affirmative action. This course will examine arguments concerning right, wrong and morally acceptable courses of action which people may consider taking when dealing with such issues.

Course objectives:

- You will become familiar with philosophical concepts, theories and approaches that writers use when addressing issues in business ethics
- You will consider the nature and extent of moral obligations of people in a variety of economic capacities including: professional, employer, employee, consumer, investor, and citizen
- You will develop your ability to analyze and evaluate issues, and will work towards your own carefully reasoned resolution of some of them.

Course requirements:

Attendance and Participation.....	10%
First exam (after Part I of course)...	25%
First essay .....	15%
Second essay .....	20%
Final exam .....	30%

Marks will be given in percentage figures before conversion to a letter grade.

Required texts:

Robert A. Larmer, Ethics in the Workplace, 2nd edition.  
Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 2002.

Course package assembled by the instructor.

## Topics

### **PART ONE. CONCEPTS, THEORIES, AND APPROACHES.**

- I. Introduction. Setting the stage.
- A. Examples of ethical dilemmas in business.
- B. The relevance of ethics to business.
- C. Ethical relativism and morality.
- D. Law and morality.

#### II: Ethical Theories.

- 1. Consequentialism
- 2. Nonconsequentialism: natural law, natural rights, Kant
- 3. Feminist theory; Virtue ethics
- 4. Psychological and ethical egoism

III: Free Markets - contract, utility and rights.

### **PART TWO: ISSUES**

IV. Intellectual Property. Is the copying of the work of authors and musicians, and the "pirating" of films and cable television signals really theft? Other questions.

V. Advertising and Marketing. Information or Manipulation? Other Questions.

VI. The Environment. Too much or too little government regulation? Are costs of pollution to human beings the main or only costs that matter? Other questions.

VII. Professionals. Do they have extra obligations? Are they entitled to special privileges? Other questions.

VIII. Whistleblowing. Obligation or disloyalty? When is anonymity justified? Other questions.

IX. Employee Privacy. Is an owner's surveillance of employee e-mail and drug use a right or invasion of privacy? Other questions.

X. Affirmative Action or Employment Equity and Discrimination. Is affirmative action necessary for equal opportunity? Is it reverse discrimination? Is it time for affirmative action for white men? Other questions.

**Selection and coverage of the following topics will depend on time remaining and student interest.**

XI. Sexual Harassment.

- XII. Business and the Family.
- XIII. Investing & the Stock Market.
- XIV. Retailing and Ethics.

### **Reading Schedule:**

Note: Readings not from the text are included in the course package and identified by the letters "CP"

Background reading:

- (CP) John Arthur, "How to Read Philosophy," pp. 13-16 from Studying Philosophy: A Guide for the Perplexed
- Larmer, "Introduction: Philosophy, Ethics and Business," pp. xiii-xvi

## **PART ONE. CONCEPTS, THEORIES and APPROACHES.**

- I. **Introduction.** Setting the stage.
  - A. Examples of ethical dilemmas in business.
  - B. The relevance of ethics to business.
  - C. Ethical relativism and morality.
  - D. Law and morality.

Readings:

- Larmer, "The Relevance of Morality to Business," pp. 1-3
- Albert Z. Carr, "Is Business Bluffing Ethical?" pp. 4-10
- Daryl Koehn, "Business and Game-Playing: The False Analogy," pp. 10-15
  
- (CP) DesJardins & McCall, "Ethical Relativism: Who's to Say What's Right or Wrong?" pp. 6-7
- Mary Midgley, "Trying Out One's New Sword," 21-24
  
- (CP) DesJardins & McCall, "Is Obedience to the Law Enough?" p. 16
- (CP) Jan Narveson, "Obeying the Law," pp. 259-67
- Case 1.1: "John's Dilemma," pp. 15-16

### **II: Ethical Theories.**

- 1. Consequentialism
- 2. Nonconsequentialism: natural law, natural rights, Kant
- 3. Feminist theory; Virtue ethics
- 4. Psychological and ethical egoism

Readings:

- Handout
- Larmer, "A Brief Introduction to Ethical Theory," pp. 17-20
- (CP) DesJardins & McCall, "Moral and Legal Rights," pp. 54-5
- George Williamson, "Egoism" [the doughnut shop and the crawling bug], pp. 24-29
- Case 2.1: "The Lifeboat," p. 49

Recommended:

- Aristotle, from the Nicomachean Ethics, pp. 29-31
- Immanuel Kant, from Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 32-35
- John Stuart Mill, from "Utilitarianism," pp. 35-8
- Alison Jaggar, "Feminist Ethics: Some Issues for the 90s," pp. 38-48

III: **Free Markets** - contract, utility and rights.

Readings:

- (CP) DesJardins & McCall, "Rights Arguments for the Free Market," pp. 58-65, 68-70
- handout: John Boatright, "Adam Smith's 'Invisible Hand,'" and "Problems with the 'Invisible Hand,'" pp. 87, 88, 89.

## PART TWO: ISSUES

IV. **Intellectual Property.** Is the copying of the work of authors and musicians, and the "pirating" of films and cable television signals really theft? Other questions.

Readings:

- Larmer, Introduction to Ch. 9, "Intellectual Property," pp. 254-7
- Edwin Hettinger, "Justifying Intellectual Property," pp. 260-71
- Lynn Sharp Paine, "Trade Secrets & the Justification of Intellectual Property: A Comment on Hettinger," pp. 271-81
- Mark Alfino, "Intellectual Property & Copyright Ethics," pp. 281-93
- John Weckert, "Intellectual Property Rights & Computer Software," pp. 293-300

V. **Advertising and Marketing.** Information or Manipulation? Other Questions.

Readings:

- Case 1.1: "Selling Sugared Cereals," p. 365
- Larmer, Introduction to ch. 11, "Advertising & Marketing," pp. 333-5
- Tibor Machan, "Advertising: The Whole or Only Some of the Truth?" pp. 336-42
- John Waide, "The Making of Self and World in Advertising," pp. 343-8
- (CP) Robert Arrington, "Advertising and Behaviour Control," pp. 469-78
- (CP) Barbara Phillips, "In Defense of Advertising," pp. 451-61
- (CP) Harriet Rosenberg, "The Kitchen & the Multinational," pp. 348-53

VI. **The Environment.** Too much or too little government regulation? Are costs of pollution to human beings the main or

only costs that matter/to calculate? Other questions.

Readings:

- Case 18.1: "Ski Pants & the Environment," pp. 614-15
- (CP) William Baxter, "People or Penguins," pp. 283-8
- (CP) Peter Singer, "The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues," pp. 445-51
- (CP) Palmer, Tan & Peacock, "If a Tree Falls," pp. 432-6
- Larmer, Introduction to ch. 18, "Business and the Environment," pp. 576-8
- Mark Sagoff, "Zuckerman's Dilemma," pp. 588-97
- Walter Block, "Environmentalism and Economic Freedom," pp. 597-608
- Jang B. Singh & V.C. Lakhan, "Business Ethics & the International Trade in Hazardous Wastes," pp. 547-55

VII. **Professionals.** Do they have extra obligations? Are they entitled to special privileges? Other questions.

Readings:

- Larmer, Introduction to ch. 13, "Responsibilities of Professionals," pp. 399-401
- Bruce Jennings, "The Regulation of Virtue," pp. 401-8
- Don Welch, "Just Another Day," pp. 414-20
- (CP) Conrad Brunk, "Professionalism and Responsibility in the Technological Society," pp. 122-37
- (CP) Deborah Johnson, "Professional Ethics," pp. 559-72

Recommended:

- Beth Savan, "Beyond Professional Ethics," pp. 408-14

VIII. **Whistleblowing.** Obligation or disloyalty? When is anonymity justified? Other questions.

Readings:

- Larmer, Introduction to ch. 7, "Whistleblowing and Employee Loyalty," pp. 206-8
- Case 7.1: "The Challenger Disaster," p. 230
- Michael Davis, "Avoiding the Tragedy of Whistleblowing," pp. 208-16
- Robert Larmer, "Whistleblowing and Employee Loyalty," pp. 216-20
- (CP) Frederick Elliston, "Anonymity & Whistleblowing," pp. 244-54
- (CP) Mike Martin, "Whistleblowing: Professionalism, Personal Life and Shared Responsibility..." pp. 218-28

IX. **Employee Privacy.** Is an owner's surveillance of employee e-mail and drug use a right or invasion of privacy? Other questions.

Readings:

- Larmer, Introduction to ch. 4, "Privacy in the Workplace," pp. 97-100

- Case 4.1: "Drug Testing and the [Winnipeg] Refuse Collector," pp. 135-6
- Case 4.2: "Public Safety and the Right to Privacy," pp. 136-7
- (CP) James Rachels, "Why Privacy is Important," pp. 351-7
- Michael Cranford, "Drug Testing and the Right to Privacy," pp. 111-20
- Joseph DesJardins & Ronald Dushka, "Drug Testing in Employment," pp. 101-11
- (CP) "Should Concern for Drug Abuse Overrule Concerns for Employee Privacy," pp. 174-91, especially 174-80, 183-7
- (CP) DesJardins and McCall, Decision Scenarios: A (E-Mail Privacy), F (Surveillance at Work) & G (Consumer Privacy) pp. 260, 4-5

**X. Affirmative Action** or Employment Equity and Discrimination. Is affirmative action necessary for equal opportunity? Is it reverse discrimination? Is it time for affirmative action for white men? Other questions.

Readings:

- Larmer, Introduction to ch. 14, "Affirmative Action and Comparable Worth," pp. 430-2
- (CP) Wilfrid Waluchow, "The Ethics of Hiring: Should Looks Count?" pp. 199-204
- Edwin Hettinger, "What is Wrong with Reverse Discrimination?" pp. 432-41
- Louis Pojman, "The Moral Status of Affirmative Action," pp. 441-56, especially pp. 441-2, 446-56

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**Selection and coverage of the following topics will depend on time remaining and student interest.**

XI. **Sexual Harassment.** Larmer, ch. 5

XII. **Business and the Family.** Larmer, ch. 15

XIII. **Investing & the Stock Market.** Larmer, ch. 8, "Insider Trading" Also, (CP) Anders Hayden, "Capitalist Crunch," pp. 488-93. TBA.

XIV. **Retailing and Ethics.**

- Robert Aalberts & Marianne Jennings, "The Ethics of Slotting," pp. 323-30, especially pp. 323-4, 327-30
- Thomas Carson, "Ethical Issues in Sales: Two Case Studies [Shoe Sales and Health Insurance]," pp. 361-4

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