

Workplace, Marketplace, and Professional Ethics

calendar listed as
GPRC PH3850 Ethical Theory and Business
Athabasca University PHIL 333 Professional Ethics
University Transfer 3 credits
June 2009

Instructor: Tom Enders, PhD
Telephone: 780-539-2996
e-mail: tenders@gprc.ab.ca
Office: C303
Office hours: after class or by appointment

Course Description:

People acting in a number of different capacities in the economy need to make a variety of ethical decisions. They face challenges such as: whether to overlook or participate in fraudulent misrepresentation of profitability to investors, blow the whistle, take advantage of inside information, favour friends and relatives or select members of disadvantaged groups in hiring, copy intellectual property without permission, mislead and manipulate when advertising a product, monitor employee communications and drug use, and many more. This course will examine arguments concerning morally or ethically right, wrong and acceptable courses of action which people may consider taking when dealing with issues such as these.

Course Objectives:

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

Course Requirements:

First exam.....	25%
First short paper.....	15%
Second paper	25%
Final exam.....	35%

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

Conversion table:

A+ 90-100	B+ 76-79	C+ 67-69	D+ 55-59
A 85- 89	B 73-75	C 64-66	D 50-54
A- 80- 84	B- 70-72	C- 60-63	F 0-49

Required Texts:

- Tom Beauchamp, Norman Bowie & Denis Arnold, editors.
Ethical Theory and Business, 8th edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall 2009.
- Selected readings from the internet and databases, as well as handouts.

Course Topics:

I. Introduction.

A. Philosophy and reading philosophy.

B. Business, the workplace and the marketplace and ethics.

C. Law and ethics. Relativism. Psychological and Ethical Egoism. Ethical Theories or Perspectives. Consequentialism and utilitarianism. Nonconsequentialism and natural law, natural rights and Kant. Social contract theory. Feminist ethics. Virtue ethics.

II. Capitalism and Free Markets: justifications and critiques. Contract, rights and utility.

III. Social responsibility of business. Is the main responsibility of business to make a profit? Shareholders and stakeholders.

IV. Executive Compensation. Do corporate executives earn too much? On what basis should they be paid?

V. Professionals and Ethics. Responsibilities of Professionals. Offers of gifts.

VI. Whistleblowing. When is it permissible? When is it an obligation?

VII. Privacy. Why is privacy important? Employee, consumer and public privacy.

VIII. Discrimination in the workplace and related topics. Affirmative Action or Employment Equity. Sexual Harassment. Hiring criteria.

IX. Advertising and Marketing. Honesty and disclosure. Lifestyle advertising.

X. Intellectual Property. Patents, copyright and trade secrets. Pharmaceuticals, music and film recordings, and computer software.

XI. The Natural Environment and Business. Automobiles, cruise ships, climate change, sustainability and more.

XII. Global Issues. Sweatshop and Child Labour. Relativism and Human Rights. Globalization and Justice.