

Business Ethics

2nd Module Autumn 2013

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Office Hours by Appointment, TA Hours To Be Announced

Ethics is the branch of philosophy that examines standards of conduct from the perspective of morality, i.e. what is considered to be right or wrong. Everyone has such standards personally, and we are all affiliated with or affected by organizations that promote or discourage behavior they believe to be morally acceptable or unacceptable. Ethical issues are present in every aspect of the existence of the legal person known as the business corporation. They affect its relations with owners and employees, clients, customers, consumers, government regulators and the general public, even with generations yet unborn. Therefore you already feel the impact of ethical decisions made by corporations, and as you become more involved in the corporate and business worlds you will be called upon to weigh ethical considerations in professional decisions you make that will affect others just as you are affected now. The goal of this course is to prepare PHBS students to make more thoughtful and well-grounded ethical choices in the great diversity of workplaces in which they will find themselves after graduation.

Our texts will consist of passages from the works of several scholars whose individual areas of expertise include business ethics, Chinese ethical traditions, corporate responsibility and political philosophy. From this enumeration you can see that this course is grounded firmly in the social sciences and humanities—words and ideas—and unapologetically so.

Your grade will be based principally on quizzes given each day in class and on a final exam or written assignment. Though I am always happy to discuss student concerns outside of class, I encourage in-class discussion. I consider questions asked or observations made by students to be an integral and welcome part of the lecture, and those who participate in this way will be rewarded when grades are decided. Attendance is required. Students may miss one class without penalty. Students who miss more than one class will receive extra credit, while students who miss more than one will have points deducted from their final grade for each additional absence. No excuse for penalized absences will be accepted.