

# School of Taxation and Business Law

## TABL2712 BUSINESS ETHICS AND THE LAW

### Course Outline Semester 2, 2017

### Course-Specific Information

The Business School expects that you are familiar with the contents of this course outline. You must also be familiar with the Course Outlines Policies webpage which contains key information on:

- Program Learning Goals and Outcomes
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Student Responsibilities and Conduct
- Special Consideration
- Student Support and Resources

This webpage can be found on the Business School website:

<https://www.business.unsw.edu.au/degrees-courses/course-outlines/policies>

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## **COURSE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

### **1 STAFF CONTACT DETAILS**

Lecturer-in-charge: Dr Rob Nicholls

Room Quad 2062

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Email: [r.nicholls@unsw.edu.au](mailto:r.nicholls@unsw.edu.au)

Consultation Times – by appointment on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

When you contact Rob by email please:

- Use your university email address
- Specify the course TABL2712 as Rob teaches more than one course.
- Sign off by using your name and include your z number

### **2 COURSE DETAILS**

#### **2.1 Teaching Times and Locations**

Seminars start in Week 1 and run to Week 12.

The time and location are 13:00 – 15:00 on Wednesdays in Mathews 103.

There are no separate tutorial sessions.

#### **2.2 Units of Credit**

The course is worth 6 units of credit.

#### **2.3 Summary of Course**

Society increasingly demands ethical and social responsibility. This course provides an ethical dimension to the conduct of contemporary commerce in Australia. Although ethics exist independently of the law, legislative and common law developments are increasingly imposing higher standards of commercial morality. This course examines the conceptual basis of ethical behaviour and the increasing attempts by the law to prescribe ethical behaviour. The course uses a case studies approach.

#### **2.4 Course Aims and Relationship to Other Courses**

TABL2712 Business Ethics and the Law course is an elective offered by the School of Taxation and Business Law. The course aims to equip students with an understanding of business ethics. The course can be completed on its own or as part of a major offered by the School of Taxation and Business Law.

#### **2.5 Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. apply critical thinking skills in the analysis of ethical problems and in determining appropriate courses of action;
2. trace the development of the law in relation to issues involving fairness, unconscionability and deception;
3. comprehend the role and function of regulatory authorities and codes of conduct and apply this comprehension to commercial life;
4. analyse case studies that raise moral issues in business;
5. analyse the ethics of certain business practices and of corporate responsibilities; and
6. examine appropriate codes of ethics for professional advisers.

The Course Learning Outcomes are what you should be able to DO by the end of this course if you participate fully in learning activities and successfully complete the assessment items.

The Learning Outcomes in this course also help you to achieve some of the overall Program Learning Goals and Outcomes for all undergraduate students in the Business School. Program Learning Goals are what we want you to BE or HAVE by the time you successfully complete your degree (e.g. 'be an effective team player'). You demonstrate this by achieving specific Program Learning Outcomes - what you are able to DO by the end of your degree (e.g. 'participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams').

For more information on the Undergraduate Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, see: <https://www.business.unsw.edu.au/degrees-courses/course-outlines/policies>

The following table shows how your Course Learning Outcomes relate to the overall Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, and indicates where these are assessed (they may also be developed in other activities):

Program Learning Goals and Outcomes		Course Learning Outcomes	Course Assessment Item
<i>This course helps you to achieve the following learning goals for all Business undergraduate students:</i>		<i>On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:</i>	<i>This learning outcome will be assessed in the following items:</i>
1	Knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. understand the role and function of regulatory authorities and codes of conduct in commercial life;</li> <li>2. be able to analyse case studies that raise moral issues in business;</li> <li>3. understand of the ethics of certain business practices and of corporate responsibilities; and</li> <li>4. understand the rationale behind codes of ethics for professional advisers.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class participation</li> <li>• Seminar presentation</li> <li>• Forum</li> <li>• Research essay</li> </ul>
2	Critical thinking and problem solving	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. apply critical thinking skills in the analysis of ethical problems and in determining appropriate courses of action; and</li> <li>2. analysis of case studies that raise moral issues in business.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminar presentation</li> <li>• Forum</li> <li>• Research essay</li> </ul>
3a	Written communication	Construct written work which is logically and professionally presented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research essay</li> </ul>
3b	Oral communication	Communicate ideas in a succinct and clear manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class participation</li> <li>• Seminar presentation</li> </ul>
5a.	Ethical, social and environmental responsibility	Identify and assess environmental and sustainability considerations in a business environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research essay</li> </ul>
5b.	Social and cultural awareness	Identify and assess ethical issues in a business environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Essay</li> </ul>

## **3 LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

### **3.1 Approach to Learning and Teaching in the Course**

This course is delivered in blended mode. There is very little lecture style teaching in our meetings as students will be expected to have watched a series of videos and read material before the meeting commences. The meetings will mainly be examination of case studies and student led seminars. These student-led seminars are an essential part of learning in this course. The purpose of the seminars is to discuss in detail case studies relating to business ethics and the law. Active student involvement is encouraged as a way of promoting a deeper awareness and understanding of legal principles. In Week 1, students will be allocated a seminar presentation to be done during class in a week scheduled on Moodle and the seminar presentation topics will also be scheduled on Moodle. Seminar presentations commence in Week 2. Students must do their seminar presentation in their allocated week. The purpose of student seminar presentations is for the group to lead discussion on specific issues that impact on business ethics.

### **3.2 Learning Activities and Teaching Strategies**

This course is conducted with the aim of promoting student-centred learning. This aim will be achieved by encouraging students to engage with the topics presented in the course through independent research on the internet and electronic databases as part of the weekly seminar presentations and contributions to Moodle Forums on a case study for each week. The assessment in this course is designed to promote students' understanding of contemporary ethical challenges and the various paradigms for resolving such challenges.

## **4 ASSESSMENT**

### **4.1 Formal Requirements**

In order to pass this course, you must:

- achieve a composite mark of at least 50;
- attend at least 10 meetings; and
- make a satisfactory attempt at all assessment tasks (see below).

## 4.2 Assessment Details

Assessment Task		Weight	Length	Due Date
Seminar Presentations		20%	15 minutes plus 10 minutes of questions	Scheduled on Moodle
Forum Contribution	Part A	20%	About 100 words per week for 10 weeks	12 pm on Wednesday in each of Weeks 3 to 12
	Part B		Summary	Scheduled on Moodle
	Part C		Reflective piece of 300 words	6 pm on Friday 20 October on Turnitin
Class Participation		10%	200-word advocacy piece	6 pm on Friday 20 October on Turnitin
Research Essay	Part A	50%	Annotated bibliography of 5 sources	6 pm on Friday 18 August on Wiki
	Part B		1 peer review	6 pm on Friday 25 August on Wiki
	Part C – Final essay		3,000 words	6 pm on Friday 27 October on Turnitin
Total		100%		

## 4.3 Assessment Format

### Seminar Presentation

Students are expected to present on the case and the case study provided on Moodle in a group with all members making an equal contribution to the oral part of the seminar. A marking rubric for the seminar presentation will be posted on Moodle. The presentation (or a link to it) must be emailed to the Course Coordinator by close of business of the day of the presentation and a two-page summary of the key points must be attached to that email.

### Forum Contribution

For each of ten weeks there will be a question for online discussion by the whole class. Each student is expected to contribute to that discussion. The discussion for each week will be on a forum on Moodle. A rubric for contributions will be provided on Moodle. Each week some students will summarise the discussion as an assessed task worth a quarter of the forum marks. Students will be asked to reflect on their forum contributions by selecting their best three contributions and supporting those with a 300-word reflective piece to be submitted in

Week 12 (6 pm on Friday 20 October on Turnitin). The maximum mark available will be 20% times the number of forum posts divided by ten.

### **Class Participation**

Students will work in groups to address business case studies that raise legal and ethical issues. At times these will be small groups (one sixth of the total class size) and at other times this will be as the whole class. Students will be asked to recommend a mark and to support that recommendation with a 200-word advocacy piece to be submitted in Week 12 (6 pm on Friday 20 October on Turnitin). There will be no marks for missed sessions. That is, the mark awarded will be scaled by the proportion of sessions attended.

### **Research Essay**

As part of the preparation for the research essay, students will prepare an annotated bibliography of 5 sources that they anticipate using in the research essay. The annotated bibliography must be posted to the Wiki on Moodle by 6 pm on Friday 18 August. Each student must then select another annotated bibliography to mark using the rubric provided on Moodle. Each annotated bibliography will be marked by one other student and the results posted to the Wiki by 6pm on Friday 25 August. The annotated bibliography will be assessed for 10% of the total marks for the research essay.

Students will undertake a research essay as part of their assessment and the subject of the essay will be posted on Moodle in Week 1. Students will be required to undertake research in areas related to the course and to analyse a problem designed to assess students understanding of key issues raised in the course. A marking rubric for the research essays will be posted on Moodle. The research essays must be submitted using the Turnitin box on Moodle by 6 pm on Friday 27 October on Turnitin.

## **4.4 Late Submission and Penalties**

Late submission is not expected except where Special Consideration has been applied for and granted. If you anticipate being late in submitting the research essay, please email the Course Coordinator as soon as is practicable. Assessment tasks that are submitted after the due date and time without prior written approval will have 20% deducted per day late. Please note: penalty marks will be imposed immediately after the due date. Any paper submitted 5 or more days late (that is, 5 or more days after the due date) will not be marked and you will be awarded a score of zero.

If circumstances beyond your control mean that you cannot complete an assignment by the due date you should make an application for special consideration (see <https://www.business.unsw.edu.au/degrees-courses/course-outlines/policies>). These applications are reserved for illness or misadventure, not work commitments. Work commitments and clashes with other courses are not a valid reason for special consideration applications.

#### **Quality Assurance**

The Business School is actively monitoring student learning and quality of the student experience in all its programs. A random selection of completed assessment tasks may be used for quality assurance, such as to determine the extent to which program learning goals are being achieved. The information is required for accreditation purposes, and aggregated findings will be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of Business School programs. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential.

## 5 COURSE RESOURCES

The website for this course is on Moodle at: <https://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au/login/index.php>

The textbook for this course is: *Moral Issues in Business, 3<sup>rd</sup> Asia Pacific Edition* by William H Shaw, Vincent Barry, Theodora Issa, Bevan Catley and Donata Muntean, 2016. This book is available from the UNSW Bookstore. The required readings are drawn from this book as well as the cases that you will be presenting.

### Electronic Databases:

The UNSW library subscribes to several electronic databases. The UNSW library database can be accessed at: <https://www.library.unsw.edu.au/study/information-resources/databases>

## 6 COURSE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the School and continual improvements are made based on this feedback. UNSW's myExperience survey is one of the ways in which student evaluative feedback is gathered. In this course, we will seek your feedback through end of semester myExperience responses and feedback during class. Feedback from previous students indicated that there should be forum summaries and a means to ask questions during the videos. As a result of this feedback, the forum summary will be completed by students each week and there is a forum in which to ask questions in each of the Moodle video pages.



## 7 COURSE SCHEDULE

COURSE SCHEDULE			
Date	Topic	Required reading from set text	Other activities / assessment
Week 1 26 July	Introduction	None – materials on Moodle	
Week 2 2 August	Business morals	Chapter 1: Seeing the moral dimension of business	Student seminar topic 1 Forum 1
Week 3 9 August	Ethical theories	Chapter 2: Normative theories of ethics	Student seminar topic 2 Forum 2
Week 4 16 August	Capitalism	Chapter 3: The nature of capitalism	Student seminar topic 3 Forum 3 Annotated bibliography due by 6 pm on Friday 20 August on Wiki
Week 5 23 August	CSR and corporate governance	Chapter 4: Corporate social responsibility and corporate governance	Student seminar topic 4 Forum 4 Peer review due by 6 pm on Friday 27 August on Wiki
Week 6 30 August	Consumption	Chapter 5: The morality and ethics of consumption	Student seminar topic 5 Forum 5
Week 7 6 September	International business	Chapter 6: International business: Moral and ethical issues	Student seminar topic 6 Forum 6
Week 8 13 September	The environment	Chapter 7: Environmental ethics in business	Student seminar topic 7 Forum 7
Week 9 20 September	Organisational ethics	Chapter 8: The organisation: Ethical and moral issues	Student seminar topic 8 Forum 8
<b>Mid-semester break: Monday 23 September – Monday 2 October inclusive</b>			
Week 10 4 October	Workplace issues	Chapter 9: Ethics at work	Student seminar topic 9 Forum 9
Week 11 11 October	Leadership and culture	Chapter 10: Ethics, leadership and culture	Student seminar topic 10 Forum 10
Week 12 18 October	Capstone	Chapter 11: Putting it all together: Towards moral and ethical decision-making	Student seminar topic 11 Class participation advocacy piece due by 6 pm on Friday 20 October on Turnitin Forum reflective piece due by 6 pm on Friday 20 October on Turnitin
Week 13	<i>NO LECTURE</i>		Research essay due by 6 pm on Friday 27 October on Turnitin