PHI 325 2017 Spring Syllabus

## PHI 325 - Business Ethics

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| Location | Chapel 003 |
| Instructor | Dan Sheffler |
| Email | daniel\_sheffler@georgetowncollege.edu |
| Web | <http://sage.georgetowncollege.edu/course/view.php?id=3008> |
| Schedule | <http://dansheffler.com/phi325schedule/> |
| Presentations | <http://dansheffler.com/phi325presentations/> |
| Semester | Spring 2017 |
| Credit Hours | 3 |

## Course Description

*From the Catalog*: Introduction to both the moral issues involved in business management and the ethical concepts and analytical skills relevant to resolving those issues

*From Me*: Is it right for a CEO to give his granddaughter a major bonus when there are other, more deserving employees? Is it acceptable for a company to deceive consumers about the nature of their product although they don’t lie outright? Should the government regulate the pollution companies produce on their own private property?

All these questions concern the morality of actions taken by companies and their employees. In this course we will learn to evaluate such questions by using general ethical principles and theories. You will first learn the relevant theoretical principles, then you will be able to apply them to real life case studies. Finally you will be able to articulate your own position by written argument and in-class discussion.

This course will have a focus on writing since this is the primary medium through which people communicate and grapple with ethical issues in the professional world. The three argumentative papers in this course are designed to help you develop your skills as a writer, which holds value both as a professional skill, enabling you to communicate effectively with others, and as a personal skill, enabling you to think through the issues for yourself with clarity. In completing these papers, we will have occasion to refer to the Skills Handbook in order to learn the fundamentals of writing a clear argument.

## Learning Outcomes

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| Learning Outcome | Assessment |
| To gain an understanding of the primary questions, terminology, and theories in contemporary business ethics | Reading Quizzes and Exams |
| To learn to carefully read written argument | Reading Quizzes |
| To gain the capacity to communicate difficult ethical thinking in clear, concise prose. | Papers |

## Grading

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reading Quizzes | 35% |
| Midterm and Final | 20% |
| Three Papers | 45% |

The first portion of your grade will come from regular (short) reading quizzes. These will be completed on Moodle and will typically consist of five multiple-choice questions on the reading for the day. These quizzes are due before class on the day when the corresponding reading assignment is due. There is a time limit on these quizzes and they can only be taken once, so it is advisable that you complete them just as soon as you complete your reading. You will not have enough time to search the reading for the answers if you have not read it, but you may keep the reading assignment open to aid in the completion of the quiz. You will quickly find that you really must do the reading and do it quite carefully to do well on these quizzes.

The second portion of your grade will come from two exams, a midterm and a final. Both will consist of (i) multiple choice factual questions taken from the reading and the lectures (pay particular attention to technical terms and concepts), and (ii) short answer questions that test your capacity to articulate your own position.

The third portion of your grade will come from three argument papers (3 pages or 1,000 words each). In writing these papers we will follow a three step drafting process. First you will bring a prepared outline of your argument (1 page) to class and work with small groups of your peers to polish and expand this outline. Second, you will deliver a polished draft of your essay (3 pages) to me and receive feedback on both style and substance. Third you will revise your draft and turn in a final product (3 pages). The grade on each paper will come from these three components with the following weights:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 20% | Completion of outline |
| 40% | Draft |
| 40% | Final version. |

Students must complete their Essential Proficiency Writing requirements before they can receive credit for a Flagged Writing class. Students may receive writing credit for no more than one Writing Flag in any one semester. This course will aim to hone your writing skills by helping you to construct logically robust arguments in support of your ethical views and by helping you to present these arguments in a style that is polished and professional. You will need to have the GC Skills Manual as a reference throughout this writing process.

**Grading Scale:**

(I round all values to the nearest whole percent.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A | 100–90% |
| B | 89–80% |
| C | 79–70% |
| D | 69–60% |
| E | 59–0% |

## Attendance

Although attendance does not constitute its own segment of the grade, it is mandatory and failure to attend class will adversely impact your grade. Roll will be taken at the beginning of every class period. Perfect attendance will result in an extra credit of +2 percentage points. The first 2 unexcused absences will not count against you, but beginning with the 3rd absence, each absence will subtract 2 percentage points from your final grade. This goes to a **limit of 7 unexcused absences** at which point you can no longer pass the class. For your reference:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of Absences | Percentage Change to Final Grade |
| 0 |  |
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |
| 6 |  |
| 7 |  |

I keep track of absences by calling roll at the beginning of each class. If you do not respond when I call your name (perhaps because you are not there) you will be marked as absent. This means that if you walk in late it is your responsibility to check in with me each and every time. Lateness, especially if egregious or repeated, may be counted as an absence for the day. You are always welcome to look at your record and I encourage you to do so because it is your responsibility to keep track of how many absences I have recorded. This is especially important for students who are in danger of failing the class because of absences. I probably will not notice when you have six absences, so I am unlikely to notify you when you are in danger of failing.

Whenever a student knows in advance that he or she will miss class (as for a scheduled college-sponsored activity), the student should discuss the absence with me prior to the event, and the student’s participation in the event should be confirmed by a communication from the event sponsor. When a student’s participation in college-sponsored activities or other scheduled events will require multiple absences, the student should discuss the potential for those absences with me prior to the end of the first week of classes.

Students missing class or an exam due to an excused absence (e.g. for sickness) bear the responsibility of informing me about their absence within one week following the period of the absence and of providing appropriate documentation for the absence. Excused absences are not taken into account in the above adjustment to the final grade. It is entirely the student’s responsibility to make up missed work. Make up work (including exams) must be submitted within one week of return to class. In general, I do not excuse on-line assignments.

## E-mail and Internet

You are expected to have an active e-mail account that you check regularly. Section related announcements will be made via e-mail (e.g. if I am sick, pointers for home work, change in due dates). Also, e-mail is the best way for contacting me outside of class.

You are expected to have access to a stable internet connection as reading quizzes are carried out through Moodle. I will not reset quizzes because of internet trouble (doing so is simply too easy to abuse and has been in the past). Instead, I will be dropping the lowest reading quiz score for everyone.

## Respectful Behavior

Mature, respectful behavior is expected in class. The primary concern is that all students are able to enjoy a focused, helpful classroom. This means that I expect you will among other things: arrive to class on time, stay awake, refrain from taking cell phone calls, playing games, or doing work for other classes. I will warn you once during a semester if a particular behavior is disruptive. If this behavior happens again, I may ask you to leave resulting in an absence for the day.

Class time is primarily focused on discussion of the material for which I expect you to be fully engaged. For this reason, I prohibit the use of electronic devices in class.

## Academic Integrity

Cheating robs other students of a fair grade. If it is determined that a student has cheated, all students involved will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. If the case is egregious, I will direct the case to the appropriate university dean for official sanction. Please see the Academic Honesty Policy in your Student Handbook.

## Disability Accommodations

If you are registered to receive accommodations for a disability, please discuss them with me during the first week of class. You will need official documentation from Lloyd Clark in the Wellness Center (x7074).

## PHI 325 Spring Schedule

The following schedule is an estimation of the dates on which we will cover particular topics in this course. As such, it is subject to change. Readings marked (M) are available as PDFs on Moodle. For the full syllabus, see [here](http://dansheffler.com/phi325syllabus/).

For each reading a reading quiz must be completed on Moodle *by the day listed*.

Course meets TR 12:45–2:00 PM in Chapel 003

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| Day | Topic | Reading |
| 2017-01-17 | Intro |  |
| 2017-01-19 | Fundamentals | Ethics: Metaethics |
| 2017-01-24 |  | Ethics: Virtue Theories |
| 2017-01-26 |  | Ethics: Duty Theories |
| 2017-01-31 |  | Ethics: Consequentialist Theories |
| 2017-02-02 | Employees | Conway, “The New Nepotism” |
| 2017-02-07 |  | Cuilla, “In Praise of Nepotism?” |
| 2017-02-09 |  | Bammert v. Don’s SuperValu, Inc |
| 2017-02-14 |  | Ricci v. DeStefano |
| 2017-02-16 |  | How to Write Your Paper |
| 2017-02-21 | Marketing | “Pizza Puzzle” Carson, “Deception and Withholding Information in Sales” |
| 2017-02-23 |  | **Paper Outline Due** |
| 2017-02-28 |  | “Thompson Security Systems” Cunningham, “Plain Packaging” |
| 2017-03-02 |  | “The Perils of Ignoring History” **Paper Draft Due** |
| 2017-03-07 |  | Smith and Cooper-Martin, “Ethics and Target Marketing” |
| 2017-03-09 |  | **Midterm** **First Paper** |
| 2017-03-14 |  | **Spring Break** |
| 2017-03-16 |  | **Spring Break** |
| 2017-03-21 |  | Second Paper Discussion |
| 2017-03-23 | Responsibility | Friedman, “Social Responsibility” |
| 2017-03-28 |  | Freeman, “Managing for Stakeholders” |
| 2017-03-30 |  | **Paper Outline Due** |
| 2017-04-04 |  | “Rethinking the Social Responsibility of Business” |
| 2017-04-06 |  | Casey, “Gambling with Lives” **Paper Draft Due** |
| 2017-04-11 |  | Arnold and Bustos, “Global Climate Change” |
| 2017-04-13 |  | Gunther, “Bumble-Bee Tuna” **Second Paper Due** |
| 2017-04-18 | Limits | Sandel, “What Money Can’t Buy” |
| 2017-04-20 |  | **Paper Outline Due** |
| 2017-04-25 |  | Berry, “Two Economies” |
| 2017-04-27 |  | Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” **Paper Draft Due** |
| 2017-05-02 |  | Hardin, “Living on a Lifeboat” |
| 2017-05-04 |  | **Third Paper** |