

PHI334 Sep 29

Virtue Ethics for Business Ethics

Essentially, given the critiques we have outlined in relation to utilitarianism and deontology, it would seem that the only alternative left for us, in our task, is virtue ethics. What is our task? Our task is to look at the various ethical issues in business and figure out how, given those issues, can we live a good life. The course presupposes (with defensive argument in favor of the presuppositions) the following:

1. Business is what one occupies oneself with in the daily goings-on of life.
2. Everyone, today, is a business, given the way in which neoliberalism transforms the economy and society.
3. Therefore, we are all, always, already involved in business in relation to others.

As such, given 1-3, we have to examine how to live a good life while engaging in business, since whether you are an employee or a business owner, you are *engaged in business* hence these issues affect you in significant ways. We will begin to look at the various business domains starting next week.

What, then, in regard to virtue ethics? We will learn to adopt the framework as we encounter the issues piecemeal. The crucial part is that virtue ethics can, in a sense, incorporate both utilitarian and deontological thinking. It is a fact that we sometimes evaluate our decisions based on outcome. It is also a fact that we sometimes feel driven to do something because of some internal feeling. Balancing these tendencies with virtues, all with the aim of trying to live a good life, is something we can do via virtue ethics. The point of the last two weeks was to get you familiar with morality, a kind of crash course in popular moral theories, so that you have a vocabulary by means of which to discourse about the ethical nuances of what we are going to now turn our attention to.

Exam 2 Guide

We can now, briefly, talk about your second exam. Your second exam is going to test you for comprehension of the ethical theories we covered. You essentially have to feel comfortable answering the following:

1. What is utilitarianism? What are the various types? How does it evaluate actions? What is it a species of? Is utility singular or diverse? What does it assume?
2. What is deontology / Kantianism? How does it work? What matters in evaluating the morality of an action? What is the categorical imperative? What are the three formulations?
3. What is virtue ethics? How many virtues did Aristotle outline? What is the virtuous mean between two vices? What is the goal of virtue ethics? Is virtue something you are born with or is it something you learn?
4. What is Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's respective critiques of utilitarianism and deontology? What is Nietzsche's meta-critique? Why is virtue ethics immune to critique?

These questions all have answers in the lesson plans I have uploaded. The exam questions might be similar or they might be different. But, being able to answer the above will prepare you will to answer what will be on the exam. You should study them and come well prepared. As always, you can work in tables. You will look at the lesson plans during the exam. As such, for each of the responses, you must cite my lesson plans (date, pg number). You will be permitted to use large language models, but keep in mind that citations to my lesson plans are still necessary.