PHIL 320 : Business Ethics

A. Course Description

Credits: 4

Lab Hours/ Weeks: Corequisites: None

Lecture Hours/ Week:

MnTC Goals: Goal LS - Upper Division Liberal Studies, Goal 06 - Humanities/Fine Arts, Goal 09 - Ethical/Civic Resp

Do business firms have obligations besides making as much money as possible for their stockholders? What are their responsibilities, if any, to their employees, their customers, and the wider community? Is it enough to obey the law, or does the law sometimes allow people to do things that are wrong? Do employees have any right to privacy on the job? To 'living wages'? To 'decent' working conditions? Does a seller have any obligation to look out for the interests of the buyer? Isn't it necessary to put the best possible 'spin' on your product and let the buyer look out for him or herself? This course will examine questions like these in light of various theories of ethics and current theories of justice. In addition to considering how we might ideally like people to act, it will also consider the challenges to personal integrity and 'doing the right thing' posed by the real world of business and by the kind of large bureaucratic organizations that dominate it.


C. Outline of Major Content Areas:

See Course Description for major content areas.

D. Learning Outcomes (General)

1. Apply the resulting understandings to an analysis of the moral dilemmas inevitable in central social issues facing all members of the business community, from CEO to customer.
2. Assess the role of race, class and gender in the ways in which these issues present themselves in the business community.
3. Compare and contrast major moral theories.
4. Focus most acutely on the centrality of justification for claims.
5. Use the work of the course to reflect on personal beliefs and attitudes about central social issues and on ways, as a citizen involved with the business community, to act on these beliefs.

E. Learning Outcomes (MN Transfer Curriculum)

Goal LS - Upper Division Liberal Studies
None

Goal 06 - Humanities/Fine Arts
1. Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities.
2. Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context.
3. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.
4. Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.

Goal 09 - Ethical/Civic Resp
1. Understand and apply core concepts (e.g. politics, rights and obligations, justice, liberty) to specific issues.
2. Analyze and reflect on the ethical dimensions of legal, social, and scientific issues.
3. Examine, articulate, and apply their own ethical views.
4. Recognize the diversity of political motivations and interests of others.
5. Identify ways to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
G. Special Information

None