

Ethical Issues in Business

Christopher Newport University, Spring 2018

MEETING INFO	Dr. Chris Tweedt 202 McMurrin Hall chris.tweedt@cnu.edu 704.941.9079	Philosophy 207, sec. 2 MWF, 2–2:50 pm 210 McMurrin Hall
TEXTBOOK	<i>Moral Issues in Business</i> , 13th ed. by Shaw & Barry.	
PURPOSE	The purpose of this class is to help you 1. identify, develop, analyze, and evaluate arguments relevant to business actions, 2. understand moral frameworks and the reasons for and against those frameworks, and 3. apply ethical thinking in concrete business contexts.	
OVERVIEW	This class is divided into two sections . 1. First, we'll address how to make ethical decisions. We'll discuss what ethics is and why it is important, whether ethical truths are determined by one's culture, whether the rightness of one's actions are determined by their results, and how to make difficult ethical decisions. 2. Second, we'll apply the results of the first section to specific cases. We'll offer arguments for and against the moral permissibility of selling harmful products, price gouging, deceiving in advertising and sales, exploiting employees, offering bribes or insider trade secrets, discriminating in hiring and promotions, influencing legislation for business gain, and harming the environment.	
SCHEDULE	Jan 8-12 Intro to Business Ethics, Facts v. Opinions Jan 15-19 What are moral truths, and how do we discover them? Shaw, 1-22, 38-45 Jan 22-26 How should we reason about morality? Shaw, 23-28, NPR's "How Small Fibs Lead to Big Lies" Jan 29-Feb 2 Acting for company goals, getting results Shaw, 54-60, 60-65, 85-87, 110-114 Podcast: Planet Money's "The Wells Fargo Hustle" AP's "Influence Game: GM bill is self-driving and self-interested" Feb 5-9 Respecting others' rights Shaw, 66-77 TechCrunch's "Uber reportedly tracked Lyft drivers" Feb 12-16 Honoring the social contract Shaw, 105-110, 114-128, 133-134 Bloomberg's "Pearson grants CEO 20% pay Increase in wake of January meltdown" USA Today's "Ford CEO Mark Fields picks up a nice pay increase" Inc's "Here's what happened at that company that set a \$70,000 minimum wage" Feb 19-23 Acting for the right reason Feb 26-Mar 2 Putting it all together, Test #1 Feb 26 (Summary), Feb 28 (Test), Mar 2 (Review) Mar 5-9 Spring Break	

Mar 12-16 **The goals and responsibilities of corporations**

Thesis 1: When directing business actions, your only responsibility is to increase profits.
Shaw, 202-220
Milton Friedman's "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits"

Mar 19-23 **Bribery and insider trading**

Thesis 2: It is morally wrong to offer or accept a bribe.
Bribery: Shaw, 503-511, 541-550
NPR's "Drug company payments mirror doctors' brand-name prescribing"
Thesis 3: One doesn't do anything wrong by investing based on secret information.
Insider Trading: Shaw, 498-503, 533-540

Mar 26-30 **Selling products with harmful effects, price gouging**

Thesis 4: It is morally permissible for a business to sell any product it is legal to sell.
Selling products with harmful effects: Shaw, 264-275
Information on the effects of cigarettes
The Washington Post on plastic surgery in South Korea
The Drive's article on Kobe Steel
NYT's article on the famous Tylenol recall
Thesis 5: Businesses should be allowed to set prices however high they want.
Price gouging: Shaw, 275-281
Forbes' Price Gouging is bad politics but good economics
LinkedIn's story on HEB during hurricane Harvey

Apr 2-6 **Deceptive advertising/sales, giving to others**

Thesis 6: It is morally wrong for a salespeople to mislead consumers about their products.
Deceptive advertising: Shaw, 281-295
Recode's "What happened to the Lily camera drone?"
Thesis 7: We are obligated to give money that we don't need to people who need it.
Giving to others: Peter Singer's "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
Current Affairs' "It's Basically Just Immoral to be Rich"

Apr 9-13 **Exploitation, discrimination, environmental damage**

Thesis 8: It is always wrong to take advantage of someone else for your personal benefit.
Exploitation: Shaw, 400-408
Business Insider's article about working in an iPhone factory
NYT's "Inside Amazon"
Thesis 9: Companies should practice affirmative action.
Discrimination: Shaw, 380-400
NYT's "Jerks and the Start-Ups They Ruin"
The Guardian's "AI programs exhibit racial and gender biases"
Thesis 10: Companies are obligated to create an environment for future people to flourish.
Environmental damage: Shaw, 30-32
BBC's "Chevron fined for Amazon pollution by Ecuador court"
Ecowatch's "Fast fashion is the second dirtiest industry in the world"
Zoey Deschanel's video about plastic in the oceans

Apr 16-20 **Putting it all together, Test #2**

Apr 18 (Summary), Apr 20 (Test)
HBR's "Liberal Arts in the Data Age"

Apr 23 **Final** Audio file and text due by 5 pm

EVALUATION 200 points 2 tests

Purpose: to test your understanding of what we have learned in class

Tests are comprehensive, focusing on content from the most recent half of class.

These will be hard, forcing you to read carefully and apply knowledge from class.

Tests will be taken on a computer or tablet during class times specified above.

30 multiple-choice questions—some 3 pts, some 4 pts

Test dates are on the schedule above.

50 points 5 quizzes

Purpose: to measure attendance and attention during class times

These quizzes are entirely multiple choice, made available on Scholar.

Quizzes contain 5 questions about the last meeting and the reading for the day.

You need a secret passcode to take the quiz.

The secret passcode will be given in the first 10 minutes of 5 unspecified classes.

You can have the passcode without attending class only if you have a good excuse.

You are responsible for determining whether there was a quiz on a day you missed.

You only have 2 calendar days to make up missed quizzes.

There are no retakes.

There is a super secret, super harsh penalty for students who give out the passcode.

90 points 8 argument papers

Purpose: to reward thoughtful engagement and consistent effort

Each paper must argue for or against a thesis of the day, given on the schedule.

You may write one and only one argument paper for each thesis.

Papers must contain no more than 100 words.

Papers must contain only a thesis and reasons for that thesis.

I will describe how to write your papers in class.

Papers will be graded only on insight or thoughtfulness of the reasons for the thesis.

Papers are due within 10 minutes of the start of each class that contains that thesis.

10 pts per paper, extra 10 pts for having completed 8 above 7 points each.

You get an automatic 0/100 on all papers if you plagiarize on one paper.

If you miss a class, you have at most 2 days to make up missed papers.

100 points 1 case study

Purpose: to measure ability to apply class material to a real-world business case

Must be in an audio format, maximum 3 minutes.

Must have an accompanying paper with all your sources cited.

Must be emailed to profitweedt@gmail.com or uploaded to Scholar by dates on schedule.

The first part must contain a description of a real-world business case <15 years ago.

The case must not be in the textbook or discussed in class. You need to find your own.

The second part must contain an analysis.

What is the action you are evaluating?

What stakeholders are affected?

Is the action wrong? Why or why not?

What excuse could someone give for their action?

Why is that excuse insufficient?

What should the person or business do now as a result of their action?

Students are graded only on demonstrated insight from class and correct application.

Only content, not smoothness of presentation, matters. Coughing and pausing is fine.

Due date is on the schedule above. No redos allowed.

0 points Extra Credit

I will tell you if I offer extra credit. Focus on doing well on regular class work.

At your job, you work hard to get a raise. Please don't ask for a raise without performance.

GRADING SCALE	440 > A > 405	395 > B+ > 387	351 > C+ > 343	307 > D+ > 299
	404 > A- > 396	386 > B > 361	342 > C > 316	298 > D > 273
	263 > F > 0	360 > B- > 352	315 > C- > 308	272 > D- > 264

OFFICE HOURS	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
	11-12 am	11-12 am	11-12 am
	1-2 pm	1-2 pm	1-2 pm

HONOR CODE By being enrolled in this class, each student is expected to read, understand, and abide by the [CHU's honor code](#). CNU reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. This conduct includes plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes.

Class Policy: You'll receive an automatic F in the course if you share test or quiz questions with other students. The purpose of these tests is to, well, test your knowledge. If you allow other students to prepare, it undermines the testing process. If you discover someone sharing questions and report it to me, you will get free ice cream. Also, I'll report all seeming-plagiarism to CHECS and give you a 0 for the assignment. I won't argue with you whether you did it intentionally. We all know how that will go. You'll argue that you didn't mean to do it, just like people who do it intentionally argue. So I'm not even going to ask. Please be intentional about not doing it.

DISABILITY, ACCOMMODATION In order for a student to receive an accommodation for a disability, that disability must be on record in the Office of Student Affairs, 3rd Floor, David Student Union (DSU). If you believe that you have a disability, please contact Dr. Kevin Hughes, Vice President of Student Affairs (594-7160) to discuss your needs. Dr. Hughes will provide you with the necessary documentation to give to your professors. Students with documented disabilities are required to notify the instructor no later than the first day on which they require an accommodation (the first day of class is recommended), in private, if accommodation is needed. The instructor will provide students with disabilities with all reasonable accommodations, but students are not exempted from fulfilling the normal requirements of the course. Work completed before the student notifies the instructor of his/her disability may be counted toward the final grade at the sole discretion of the instructor.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT The Center for Academic Success (located in Christopher Newport Hall, first floor, room 123) offers free tutoring assistance for Christopher Newport students in several academic areas. Staff in the center offer individual assistance and/or workshops on various study strategies to help you perform your best in your courses. The center also houses the Alice F. Randall Writing Center. Writing consultants can help you at any stage of the writing process, from invention, to development of ideas, to polishing a final draft. The Center is not a proofreading service, but consultants can help you to recognize and find grammar and punctuation errors in your work as well as provide assistance with global tasks. You may visit the Center for Academic Success to request a tutor, meet with a writing consultant, pick up a schedule of workshops, or make an appointment to talk one-on-one with a University Fellow for Student Success. If I become concerned about your course performance, attendance, engagement, or well-being, I will speak with you first. I also may submit a referral through our Captains Care Program. The referral will be received by the Center for Academic Success as well as other departments when appropriate (Counseling Services, Office of Student Engagement). If you are an athlete, the Athletic Academic Support Coordinator will be notified. Someone will contact you to help determine what will help you succeed. Please remember that this is a means for me to support you and help foster your success at Christopher Newport.