

Ethical Issues in Business (Phil 207)

Christopher Newport University, Fall 2024

Meeting Info	Dr. Chris Tweedt chris.tweedt@cnu.edu	Philosophy 207 Sec. 2M McMurrans 216, TR 9:30-10:45
Office Hours	McMurrans 202 Tues., Thurs. 12:30 - 2 pm	By appointment: (704) 941-9079
Textbook	Moral Issues in Business, 13th ed. by Shaw & Barry (optional, helpful for many students) Readings hyperlinked below. If a link is broken, check 'Readings' on Scholar or email me.	
Purpose	To introduce students to Business Ethics by helping them: 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 and ethical reasoning in concrete business contexts.	

Schedule

Part 1: Theory and Ethical Reasoning

Aug	Topics	Cases, Readings (Parenthetical readings are optional)
27	Introduction to Business Ethics	
29	Facts & Opinions	
Sep		
3	Law, Conscience, & Morality	North Korea , Venture Capitalism and Sears
5	Moral Relativism: Arguments for	(Textbook 12-13, 23-28)
10	Moral Relativism: Arguments against	
12	Moral Reasoning, Egoism: Self-interest	Elizabeth Holmes , Fyre Festival , Sam Bankman-Fried (Textbook 57-60)
17	Goal-Oriented Reasoning	Wells Fargo , Martin Shkreli
19	Utilitarianism: Results	Father for Hire , Coma Victim , Social Ranking (Txbk 60-66)
24	Deontology pt. 1: Kantianism	Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Textbook 66-77)
26	Deontology pt. 2, Moral Dilemmas	
Oct		
1	Contractualism, Libertarianism: Fairness	Musk Firings at Twitter , Cosmo (Txbk 105-128)
3	Virtue Ethics: Character	Eulogy v. Resume Virtues , Stoicism
8	Moral Checklist, Summary	
10	Test 1	
15	No Class: Fall Break	
17	Test Review	

Part 2: Application

22	CSR: Stockholder/Stakeholder Analysis	Textbook 202-207, Friedman's Argument , Cocoa Slaves <i>Thesis 1:</i> When directing business actions, your only responsibility is to increase profits. To get points, your answer must explicitly name and apply one of the theories we've discussed in class. Also, your answer cannot use the word 'stakeholder' or 'harm'.
24	Invisible Hand, Government Argument	Volkswagen , Ford (p. 22 grey section & 29-31), Lobbying <i>Thesis 2:</i> Businesses can rely on the government to make sure they're behaving ethically. To get points, your answer must explicitly name and apply one of the concepts we've discussed in class.
29	Bribery, Corruption, Fiduciary Duties	Physicians as consultants , Textbook 503-509, 541-550, FIFA <i>Thesis 3:</i> It is morally wrong to offer or accept a bribe. To get points, your answer must explicitly name and apply one of the theories we've discussed in class. Also, your answer cannot use the word 'unfair' or 'uneven'.
31	Privacy, Property, Harms	Rachels on Privacy , Uber , Apple FBI Case , HS Prank , Snap <i>Thesis 4:</i> Privacy violations are wrong only because of the harms that can result. To get points, your answer must explicitly name and apply one of the concepts we've discussed in class.
Nov		
5	Exploitation, Deceptive Advertising	Casey's Seafood , Textbook 281-290, Food ads , Bang <i>Thesis 5:</i> It is morally wrong for companies to mislead consumers about their products. To get points, your answer must explicitly name and apply one of the theories we've discussed in class.
7	Sweat Shop Labor, Price Gouging	Foxconn 1 , 2 , Cobalt Mining , Lending , Irma Flights , HEB , Amazon and Covid 1 , 2 , 3 <i>Thesis 6:</i> it is morally permissible for businesses to set prices however high they want for whatever products they want. To get points, your answer must explicitly name and apply one of the theories we've discussed in class. Also, your answer cannot use the word 'harm' or 'inequality'.
12	Product Safety, Harmful Products	Kobe Steel , ASR Implant , Purdue <i>Thesis 7:</i> It is morally permissible for a business to sell any product that it is legal to sell. To get points, your answer must explicitly name a product that is sold, and it must not use the word 'harm'.
14	Environmental Damage	Carnival , Deforestation , Microplastics , Fast Fashion <i>Thesis 8:</i> Companies have a moral duty not to emit waste that damages the environment. To get points, your answer must explicitly name and apply one of the theories we've discussed in class.

- Also, your answer cannot use the word 'harm' or 'inequality'.
- 19 Discrimination, Affirmative Action [Real Estate](#), [Fake Seed](#), [Gender Pay Gap and Childbearing](#), [Petersen Interview](#)
Thesis 9: Companies have a moral responsibility to practice affirmative action.
 To get points, your answer must explicitly name and apply one of the concepts we've discussed in class.
 Also, your answer cannot make reference to any feelings, and it cannot use the word 'equity'.
- 21 Giving [Singer](#), [Motel 6](#), [Sbux 1, 2](#), [Equifax](#), [Nestle](#), [Apple](#),
 Textbook 512-519
Thesis 10: Corporations do not have a moral duty to give to people in need.
 To get points, your answer must explicitly name and apply one of the concepts we've discussed in class.
 Also, your answer cannot use the word 'social'.
- 26 No Class: Thanksgiving Break
- 28 Reporting, Remediation [Motel 6](#), [United](#)
Thesis 11: Individuals are morally obligated to report wrongdoing.

Dec

- 3 Summary of the Course Audio portion of final project due at 11:59 pm
- 5 Test 2 Paper portion of final project due during final exam time

Assessments: 450 points total

<p>10 Quizzes 50 points</p>	<p><i>Purpose:</i> to measure understanding of and engagement with class content The quizzes begin at week 2 and last until Test 1. Two multiple-choice-question quiz after each class, taken on Scholar. Password will be given at the beginning of class. You only have 24 hours from after each class to take that day's quiz. You can't make these up or submit after the due date unless you let me know by the end of the day of class that you have an excused absence. If you let me know about your excused absence, you may make up the assignment at the end of the next week. These cannot be made up 2 weeks after their due date. Each quiz is worth 5 points. 10 quizzes x 5 points each = 50 points.</p>
<p>Thesis Papers 100 points</p>	<p><i>Purpose:</i> to measure thoughtful engagement and preparation for class The thesis papers begin after Test 1 and last until Test 2. One thesis paper is due each class on the thesis under the readings for that class. Each paper must argue for or against the thesis for the day. They must contain only a thesis and the reasons for that thesis. You must apply what you've learned in class to get a passing grade. Papers must have a maximum of 100 words. Papers must be handed in, in class, in person, before the beginning of class. Papers submitted after class begins will not be graded. If you have an excused absence, let me know before class, and in that case only will I allow you to submit for points via Scholar.</p>

	<p>You cannot make up a thesis paper if you do not email be before the class it's due.</p> <p>In no case can you complete a thesis paper a week after it is due.</p> <p>Papers are worth 10 points each. I only grade the top 9 papers.</p> <p>9 papers x 10 points each = 90 points.</p> <p>If you complete 9 papers with a score of 7 or above, I will give you 10 extra points, for a total of 100 possible points.</p> <p>If you use sources from online, including AI, you get a 0 for the course.</p>
<p>2 Tests 200 points</p>	<p><i>Purpose:</i> to test your understanding of what you've learned</p> <p>Taken through Scholar in Respondus in class. You'll need to bring a laptop or tablet to class to take the tests.</p> <p>Tests are non-comprehensive but incorporate material from throughout class.</p> <p>Multiple Choice, 40 questions (some worth 2 points, some worth 3 points)</p> <p>If you take Test 1 and score higher on Test 2 than Test 1, I will increase your Test 1 score to match your Test 2 score. This only applies if get a point on Test 1.</p>
<p>Final Project: Case Study 100 points</p>	<p><i>Purpose:</i> to measure your ability to apply classroom instruction to a real-world case</p> <p>Upload a 3-minute audio recording of yourself to Scholar (preferred) or email it to proftweedt@gmail.com (if the file size is too large or the upload doesn't work).</p> <p>See the "Final Project" document under the Study Guides tab on Scholar for details about this project.</p> <p>No redos are allowed. You can meet with me about your project to discuss it, but I do not assess outlines or projects emailed to me prior to the due date.</p> <p>In addition to the audio file, upload the paper document you use to Scholar.</p> <p>There is no formatting required for the paper document. This paper document must include at least one source, however. You must upload the document to receive a grade for the final project. Submission of this paper document completes your final project. If you have successfully completed and uploaded this document on Scholar, you will receive a 0/0 for it. Do not email me shocked that you received a 0. That is a good thing for this document.</p>
<p>Asking for more points or a higher grade -5 points</p>	<p>You are encouraged to ask me about your grade if you have any questions, and I am happy to help you improve in the course. However, do not ask for free grade boosts.</p> <p>If you ask me to round your grade up, whether you can do extra credit when I haven't given the entire class the opportunity, whether you can have extra points without arguing that I misgraded something, or whether you can redo something after its due date, you will lose 5 pts.</p>

A	415-450	B+	396-404	C+	351-359	D+	306-314
A-	405-414	B	370-395	C	325-350	D	280-305
F	0-269	B-	360-369	C-	315-324	D-	270-279

Frequently Asked Questions

I'll miss class for some other reason. What do I do?

Email me to let me know before class if you have an excused absence. Come back to class as soon as you can. Get notes from classmates. If you'd like a picture of the board, email me to ask for that. You're responsible for getting caught back up, and I'm happy to fill in gaps in your classmates' notes either after class or during office hours. If your absence is excused, I'll be able to allow you to make up missed assignments.

What did we cover last class? Will you please send me notes?

Check out the course outline on Scholar to see what you missed. I don't send notes. (You wouldn't be able to understand my lecture notes—messy handwriting.) If you send me an email, I'll send you pictures I took of the whiteboard from the last class. You might want to ask your classmates for their notes.

Can I make up a missed quiz that I just forgot about? I don't have a good excuse.

No, but don't worry—no one has ever, in the history of my class, missed out on the next letter grade just because of one missed quiz.

Can I go back and do the homework I missed?

You can, but I won't give you a new grade for it, because I need to grade everyone in the same way, and I do not have the resources to re-grade everyone's past homework.

Can you make an exception just this one time?

No, making this kind of exception can cost me my job, and I don't think this exception is worth that.

Will my grade round up?

The syllabus indicates what point values receive certain grades, so it doesn't make sense to ask this question, unless you're asking for more points. But don't do that. I'll grade generously throughout the semester.

Is there anything else I can do to raise my grade?

Well, think of it like this: you begin the semester with 0 points, and for each assignment, quiz, and test, you are raising your grade. The purpose of the syllabus is to tell you *exactly* how to get this 0 all the way up to the top. If you're asking whether there are any other assignments that are not on the syllabus, the answer is: no, I have a policy against having assignments that aren't on the syllabus. If there's any way that anyone can get more points, I'll let everyone know.

I worked really hard. Please raise my grade.

Perhaps unfortunately, this class rewards results, not effort. I don't grade you on working hard but on how well you completed the papers, tests, etc. If I rewarded effort, I'd have that on the syllabus, but that's really hard to measure, so I don't give points for effort. Personally, though, I commend it. Great job working hard!

I need a higher grade in this class. A lower grade would really "hurt my GPA".

I understand the thought, but first, "hurt my GPA" doesn't make sense. I think you mean that you really want a higher grade. But I don't think you need a higher grade. To show this, think about why you got a lower grade than you wanted. Is it because you didn't put in the effort? If so, that shows me you either don't really think you need a higher grade, or you didn't care enough. And if you didn't care, then what you need is something (like a low grade) to motivate you to care about these things in the future. Perhaps your low grade is because you didn't understand the class content. If that's the case, then what you really need is not to go into programs or careers that assume you do understand it—that's precisely one of the purposes of grades!

Am I able to ask you why I missed points without having 5 points deducted?

Yes! You can ask why you didn't get points without asking to get extra points. I encourage that!

University Syllabus Statements:

Honor Code	<p>By being enrolled in this class, each student is expected to read, understand, and abide by the CNU'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, the use of AI or LLMs for assignments, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes.</p> <p>Class Policy: You'll receive an automatic F in the course if you display any of the conduct in the above paragraph. The purpose of these assessments is to test your knowledge. If you provide other students with the questions or answers, it undermines the testing process. If you have someone or something else do your work, it does not show me what you know. If you discover someone sharing questions and report it to me, I will buy you ice cream or a dairy-free equivalent. Also, I'll report all seeming-plagiarism to CHECS and give the seeming-plagiarizer a 0 for the course. 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.</p>
Copyright, Permissions	<p>All content created and assembled by the faculty member and used in this course is to be considered intellectual property owned by the faculty member and Christopher Newport University. It is provided solely for the private use of the students currently enrolled in this course. To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not make available any of the original course content, including but not limited to lectures, discussions, videos, handouts, and/or activities, to anyone not currently enrolled in the course without the advance written permission of the instructor. This means that students may not record, download, screenshot, or in any way copy original course material for the purpose of distribution beyond this course. A violation may be considered theft. It is the student's responsibility to protect course material when accessing it outside of the physical classroom space.</p>
Disability, Accommodation	<p>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 Jacquelyn Barnes, Student Disability Support Specialist in Student Affairs (594-7160) to discuss your needs.</p> <p>Students with documented disabilities are to notify the instructor at least seven days prior to the point at 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 the reasonable accommodations approved and directed by the Office of Student Affairs. 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.</p>
Academic Support	<p>I want you to succeed in this course and at Christopher Newport. I encourage you to contact me during office hours or to schedule an appointment to discuss course content or to answer questions you have. During the Coronavirus pandemic, our conversations may need to be via electronic means. If I become concerned about your course performance, attendance, engagement, or well-being, I will contact 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.</p> <p>The Center for Student Success (CSS) provides numerous free resources to help students succeed in their courses. These resources include individual peer tutoring and group/test review sessions. 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.</p> <p>You may contact the Center for Student Success to request a tutor, meet with a writing consultant, or make an appointment to talk with a staff member about study skills and strategies. The Center is located in Christopher Newport Hall, first floor, room 124. You may email studentsuccess@cnu.edu, call (757) 594-7684, or visit https://my.cnu.edu/academicsuccess/.</p>
Diversity, Inclusion	<p>The Christopher Newport University community engages and respects different viewpoints, understands the cultural and structural context in which those viewpoints emerge, and questions the development of our own perspectives and values, as these are among the fundamental tenets of a liberal arts education.</p>

Accordingly, we affirm our commitment to a campus culture that embraces the full spectrum of human attributes, perspectives, and disciplines, and offers every member of the University the opportunity to become their best self.

Understanding and respecting differences can best develop in a community where members learn, live, work, and serve among individuals with diverse worldviews, identities, and values. We are dedicated to upholding the dignity and worth of all members of this academic community such that all may engage effectively and compassionately in a pluralistic society.

If you have specific questions, suggestions or concerns regarding diversity on campus please contact Diversity.Inclusion@CNU.edu

Public Health

The university will provide guidance on public health issues, and students will be expected to comply with university protocols.