

University of Waterloo
Global Business and Digital Arts
GBDA 306
Comparative Ethics in a Globalized World
Winter 2017
Thursday 9:00-12:00, DMS 2024

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Amy Butchart
Office: DMS 2018
Office Hours: Thursday 12:00-1:00 (or by appointment)
Email: TBA

Course Description

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to a wide range of ethical theories and approaches, including those associated with major religious traditions, philosophical systems, political ideologies, and economic values and beliefs. Working through both primary and secondary texts we will explore a diverse range of issues and perspectives in business ethics, ultimately bringing into focus the fact that business in a global context involves recognizing the deep connection between business and other spheres of human interaction. We will see that the connection between business and ethics is best characterized as an ongoing conversation between different systems of value rather than a rigid set of norms or moral principles to be applied in a mechanical way to concrete phenomena. This course will provide students with a toolkit to help them engage in this ongoing conversation, including tools to help recognize, think critically about, and navigate topics and issues associated with global development and business. It will also show them how business introduces considerations of value, but how these are far from the only systems of value important for business practice.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Identify a range of ethical issues that individuals, firms, organizations, and industries encounter in the course of doing business
- B. Contextualize business ethics, and various ethical theories, frameworks and moral principles, within the broader global business environment
- C. Unite theoretical work with current debates related to the social, political, cultural, and ethical contexts of business
- D. Stake out an argumentative position within existing debates related to the issues and topics encountered in the course

Required Text

Allhoff, Fritz, Alexander Sager, and Anand J. Vaidya, editors. *Business in Ethical Focus: An Anthology*, vol. 2. Broadview Press, 2017.

Any additional readings will be made available to students on LEARN.

Course Requirements and Assessment Details

The method of assessment for the course is as follows:

<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Date of Evaluation (if known)</i>	<i>Weighting</i>
Participation	Ongoing	20%
Online quizzes (4)	Jan. 11, Jan. 18, Jan. 25, Feb. 1	20%
Media analysis group presentation	TBD	10%
Media analysis paper	TBD	15%
Final paper or term project proposal	Mar. 2	5%
Final paper or Term project	Mar. 30	30%
Total		100%

Below you will find descriptions of the assessments in this course. More detailed information will be provided in class, and through handouts posted to LEARN closer to assignment due dates.

Participation

Your participation grade will be based on your participation in class discussion, and in-class activities. It goes without saying that you must attend regularly, but attendance is not sufficient for getting a good grade. Students looking to receive a grade in the A range must attend all (or nearly all) classes, and make regular and valuable contributions to class discussions. This doesn't mean that you have to say something (let alone many things) each class; quality is the goal, not quantity.

Classroom contributions involve asking both clarificatory and critical questions, sharing your insights and giving analysis to course material, drawing connections to material previously covered in the course, making connections to current issues in the media, giving feedback to your peers, and listening to your classmates carefully.

Online Quizzes

Each quiz will be out of 5 marks, though this does not necessarily mean 5 questions. Some questions might be worth more or less than 1 point. Questions can be multiple choice, true/false, or (on occasion) short answer. They are designed to make sure you are keeping up with the more theoretical material from the first 5 weeks of class. Ahead of each quiz I will let you know what content will be the focus of the upcoming quiz. This will mean that you can direct your reading so that it's as effective as possible, not only for preparation for the quiz, but for our upcoming discussions.

Quizzes will be on LEARN. You will have either 15 or 20 minutes to complete the quiz, depending on the kinds of questions involved, and you will be able to complete the quiz between 9:00am and 3:00pm on Wednesday. We will take up each quiz in class the following day. If you have commitments that mean you cannot do these quizzes during this window, then you must speak to the professor immediately.

Media Analysis Group Presentation

In this assignment, groups will work together to find a current piece of media (e.g. a news report, prominent political or business blog, newspaper article, etc.) related to the topic we are covering for the week. Groups will prepare a presentation for the class that draws on the ethical frameworks and other theoretical positions discussed in class to offer analysis of a recent ethical issue faced by a firm, organization, government, industry, or other stakeholders.

The presentation groups must present an overview of the issue and the piece of media, making clear the relationship between the two. This overview should also include consideration of the way the issue is framed in the chosen media piece (i.e. who produced the piece, who is it produced for, how is it mediated, and what biases might there be in the reporting?). Groups must then present an analysis that demonstrates that the issue has been thoroughly considered within the context of competing viewpoints and ethical theories and theories of justice we have encountered in the course. There are different ways groups may choose to structure their presentations. Groups may wish to structure their presentations more like a debate, where the group members each (or in pairs) take on a different ethical framework, or they may wish to work together to create a presentation that presents competing viewpoints.

Group presentations will take place in the last hour of class in weeks 6-13. Groups will be self-selected, consisting of 3 or 4 people per group. A schedule of presentations will be determined during the first class. We will have two presentations per week. Each group will have 15-20 minutes to present, and 10-15 minutes to for Q & A, and open discussion/debate. Groups may not present on the same media piece; it is up to the groups presenting for the week to make sure they are not presenting on the same material.

Media Analysis Paper

This assessment will use the piece of media from your group presentation as a starting point for a written assignment that analyzes and comments on a recent ethical issue faced by a firm, organization, government, industry, or other stakeholder group. It is not a group assignment; each student will prepare their own 3-4 page paper. In this assignment you will offer a clear, and concise overview of the topic, as well as a well-considered analysis of the ethical issue at hand. You will need to consider more than one ethical framework in your paper, and you will need to present an argument (i.e. offer a thesis, and premises in support of your thesis – likely stating which ethical framework you think best characterizes the problem you are addressing). Media analysis papers are due one week after your group presents. More details about this assessment will be provided in class, and posted to LEARN.

Final Paper or Term Project Proposal

The proposal covers what you plan on doing for your final paper or term project, including A) a general description of the issue(s) you want to address; B) how you plan on proceeding (i.e. whether you plan writing a more traditional argumentative paper, analyzing a code of ethics, or applying course concepts in a different, more creative way); C) whether you'll be working on a project individually, or in a group; and D) which theoretical perspectives you plan to draw on. You will also be required to submit a working bibliography that includes all of the relevant course readings you plan on using, as well as external sources you've found. The proposals will be approximately 2 pages long (a template will be provided). The purpose of the proposal is to make sure you're thinking about your final assignments early on in the course. More details about this assessment will be provided in class, and posted to LEARN.

Final Paper or Major Term Project

For your final assessment in this course you'll have some choice:

Option A: Write a more traditional academic paper that takes up an issue we've addressed in the class, and applies the ethical frameworks we've encountered to argue your position. A list of possible essay topics and questions will be provided to students wishing to pursue this option.

Option B: Write a paper that analyzes and critiques an existing code of ethics for an existing company (most codes of ethics are available online). If you choose this option you will find the code of ethics (you could even choose to focus on a company you're interested in working for one day), and then you will offer a critical analysis based on the moral principles and ethical frameworks we've encountered in the course, identifying which (if any!) have guided its production.

If you choose either option A or option B you can work alone, or in groups of up to 3 people. If you work alone, your paper will be 6-8 pages (not including bibliography). If you choose to work in groups your paper will be 8-10 pages (not including bibliography). Group members will be required to submit a peer evaluation (a template will be provided on LEARN).

Option C: You may also choose to apply course concepts, and course ideas in a different, more creative way. Some possible examples might include: creating an educational campaign directed at business, consumers, or some other stakeholder, creating a viral video (or series of viral videos), engaging in an activist pursuit directed exposing a social injustice in the global business environment, creating a podcast or video, etc. If you choose this option you will still be required to submit a short (academic) write-up that draws on scholarly sources and course texts. In your write-up you will make explicit the ethical frameworks, theoretical perspectives, and course concepts you were employing in your project. The length of your write-up will depend on the nature of the project. Normally these are somewhere between 3-5 pages. The exact length can be determined in consultation with the professor at the proposal stage.

You may work alone or in groups of up to 5 people if you choose this option. The scale of the project will vary depending on how many people are working on it. It is recommended that individuals and groups wishing to pursue this option consult with the professor before the proposal stage with their ideas. Group members will be required to submit a peer evaluation (a template will be provided on LEARN).

Course Outline

This is a tentative schedule of readings. While we will address topics in this order, some of the readings may become “optional” rather than “required”. As the course takes on an organic focus we will select the most important texts to read each week. Doing any of the readings is beneficial; but we will not always have a chance to treat them all equally.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	Jan. 5	Introduction: Debunking Myths	Vaidya and Allhoff (1) Vaidya (4) Sen (10)-optional
2	Jan. 12	Utilitarianism and Deontology	Sager (29) Meeler (35) Salazar (43)
3	Jan. 19	Virtue Ethics and Care Ethics	Glatz (49) Manning (56)
4	Jan. 26	Classical Liberalism and Marxism	Hobbes (619) Locke (627) Smith (635) Marx (643)
5	Feb. 2	Distributive Justice in the Last Half Century	Rawls (666) Nozick (680) Johannsen (706) Nussbaum Video
6	Feb. 9	The Social Role of the Corporation	Garriga and Melé (65) Friedman (74) Stout (79) Freeman (93) Heath (105) - optional
7	Feb. 16	Globalization	Zsolnai (157) Velasquez (187) Donaldson (198) Maitland (207)
8	Feb. 23	READING WEEK	No Readings
9	Mar. 2	Social Entrepreneurship, Not-for-Profits, and Charities	Dees (162) Rhode and Packel (168) Singer Video
10	Mar. 9	Advertising, Public Relations, and the Ethics of Persuasion	Crisp (571) Paine (592) Kilbourne (601) Pink Ribbon Inc., Video

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
11	Mar. 16	Employee Rights	George (332) Brenkert (352) Charters (399) Superson (411) - optional
12	Mar. 23	Affirmative Action and Sexual Harassment	Pojman (453) Wessinger (466) Superson (476) Griffith (488)
13	Mar. 30	Intellectual Property	Hettinger (711) Paine (725)

Late Work

All writing assignments are to be submitted to the relevant dropbox folder by the due date. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day, including weekends. If you are unable to submit your work on time for medical or compassionate reasons, please contact the professor. Documentation will normally be required.

Electronic Device Policy

In an effort to create the best possible learning environment for everyone, laptops during lecture will be restricted to note taking. Cell phones must be turned off; texting will not be permitted during lecture. Anyone failing to meet these demands will be asked to leave the classroom.

Classroom Environment

Open discussion, dialogue and debate are important aspects of this course. Students are encouraged to be critical and ask questions of the material, and to respectfully engage with their peers. Misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, racist, or ableist language will not be tolerated. The classroom must remain a safe space for everyone. If you feel that you are being silenced, please let me know.

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [file:///localhost/UWaterloo Academic Integrity Webpage](file:///localhost/UWaterloo%20Academic%20Integrity%20Webpage) (<https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>) and the [Arts Academic Integrity Office Webpage](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/current-undergraduates/academic-responsibility) (<http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/current-undergraduates/academic-responsibility>) for more information.

Grievance

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70) (<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>). When in doubt please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing academic offenses and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm) (<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm) (<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm>).

Appeals

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm) (<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>).

Note for Students with Disabilities

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.