

**WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE**  
**LIBERAL ARTS DIVISION**  
**GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE**

PHI Course Prefix	150 Course Number	Business Ethics Course Title	3-0 (Lec-Lab)	3 Semester Hours
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Introduces philosophical ethical theory and its application to business decisions. Consider theories of economic justice, social responsibility, hiring practices and rights of employees and employers.

**TOPICAL OUTLINE**

- I. Ethical Theory and its Application of Business
  - A. Ethical Relativism
    1. Advocacy
    2. Criticisms
  - B. Utilitarian Theories
    1. Types and essential features
    2. Applications to business
    3. Criticisms
  - C. Deontological Theories
    1. Types and essential features
    2. Applications to business
    3. Limitations
- II. Economics, Values, and Justice
  - A. The Profit Motive
    1. Classical free market justification
    2. Marxist critique
  - B. Private Ownership and Public Interest
    1. Private Property
      - a. Justification
      - b. Challenge
    2. Corporations as public institutions
  - C. Individual Liberties and Social Justice
    1. Egalitarian Theories
    2. Libertarian theories
    3. Utilitarian Theories
- III. Rights, Liability, and the State
  - A. Business and the Employee: Rights and Obligations
    1. Affirmative Action
    2. Preferential Hiring
    3. Reverse Discrimination
    4. Conflicts of Interest
  - B. Business and the Consumer: Responsibility and Liability
    1. Ethics of Advertising
    2. Product Quality and Safety
    3. Moral Response to Consumerism Pressures
  - C. Business and the Government
    1. Self-regulation
      - a. Codes of Ethics
      - b. Corporate Social Audit

- 2. Government Regulation
- IV. Business in Modern Society
  - A. Corporate Social Responsibility
    - 1. Classical Theories
    - 2. Emerging Theories
  - B. Environmental/Ecological Issues
    - 1. Pollution
    - 2. Scarcity of Resources

#### METHODS OF PRESENTATION

1. Lectures
2. Guest lectures by members of the business community
3. Class discussion of case material
4. Simulation exercises
5. Debates

#### STUDENT OUTCOMES: (*The student should . . .*)

##### Attitudes:

1. demonstrate respect for differing views.
2. accept/commit to the notion that business ethics is not a contradiction in terms.
3. take personal responsibility for learning.
4. develop a sense of moral concern.

##### Skills:

1. read, write and speak critically and effectively about ethical issues in business.
2. identify and explain moral business issues in the news.
3. identify premises and conclusions in moral arguments as well as evaluate the quality of evidence.
4. identify and evaluate values assumed in moral arguments.

##### Knowledge/Content:

1. distinguish between moral and non-moral situations based on criteria.
2. explore the relation of morals to religion, law, courtesy, custom, opinion and feelings.
3. explore and discuss the difficulties in justifying moral theories and judgments (e.g., cultural relativism vs. absolutism, natural law, subjectivism, justice vs. consequences)
4. apply the concepts of relativism and absolutism to business ethics (especially the issue of whether business is really a separate culture with its own system of ethics)
5. be able to explain and apply some consequentialist and non-consequentialist approaches to solving ethical issues in business.

#### SOME METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. Quizzes
2. Exams (may be oral)
3. Written reading responses
4. Debates
5. Homework
6. Class activities
7. Participation

#### SOME TEXTBOOKS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Shaw & Barry, *Moral Issues in Business*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed., Cengage, 2015  
Shaw, *Business Ethics: A Textbook with Cases*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., Cengage, 2013

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