

Vanguard University
School for Professional Studies
Degree Program

**“BUSINESS THROUGH THE
EYES OF FAITH”**
BUOM 481

Student Guide

9/04
v1.2
DS 01/10

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the nature of business from the perspective of the Christian faith

OVERVIEW

What has Wall Street to do with Jerusalem?

In the second century, the Christian theologian Tertullian asked a similar question about the relationship between Christianity and Greek philosophy: “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” His basic answer was “nothing.” Religion and philosophy were, in his estimation, radically antithetical.

How would you answer the opening question? Some would answer that question as Tertullian did: “nothing!” They would argue that, Jerusalem (*Christianity*) and Wall Street (business) have nothing in common. In fact, they are radically antithetical. Adam Smith, the father of capitalism and author of *The Wealth of Nations*, wrote: “It is not from the *benevolence* of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their *own interest*. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their *self-love*, and never talk to them of *our own necessities* but of *their advantages*” [emphasis added]. In other words, the businessperson (“the butcher, the brewer, the baker”) provides his customers with goods and services, not because he particularly cares about them as persons, but because by doing so he provides for himself and his family (and hopefully), makes a profit doing so. So is the answer to the question: “What has Wall Street to do with Jerusalem?...*Nothing?*”

Jesus, in contrast to Adam Smith, advocated sacrificial generosity. In the story of the Rich Young Ruler - repeated in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke - Jesus advised the man in this way: “If you want to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me” (Matt. 19:21). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commanded, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:19-21). Clearly, He declared: “You cannot serve both God and Money” (Matt. 6:24). And in a letter to His protege Timothy, the Apostle Paul wrote: “People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of many kinds of evil” (I Tim. 6:9-10).

No wonder, then, that it seems no common ground exists between Wall Street and Jerusalem. Profit rules the one and self-sacrifice the other. And yet, several factors mitigate this seeming antithesis:

- (1) Not even Adam Smith believed that self-interest and profit are the only reasons to engage in business. And modern day defenders of capitalism such as George Gilder, Richard John Neuhaus, and Michael Novak (all Christians) see business as a “morally serious calling” (Novak’s phrase) because it fosters entrepreneurial creativity, contributes to a

civil society, and lifts the poor from their poverty. Profit-seeking, in other words, is not necessarily the only characteristic of business.

- (2) Jesus' words must be interpreted in the light of their genre (for instance, hyperbole), their place in economic history (do they have the same application in a modern, complex economy as they did in a simple, agrarian one?), and their place in the actual life of the Christian community.

On this last point, it is helpful to remember that since its founding Christianity has been a lay movement whose expansion has been funded by persons - wealthy, slaves, merchants, farmers, etc.- who have given from their abundance. Moreover, the vast majority of Christians work in some form of commerce or business, and their livelihood cannot be denounced out of hand. Consequently, what is needed is a movement away from simple juxtapositions of Adam Smith vs. Jesus, as formulated earlier, toward a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between religion and business, a relationship of partnership (not adversaries), in which theology informs business practice just as business practice informs theology; a relationship in which Wall Street and Jerusalem are integrated.

That integration is the purpose of this class. Our intent is to explore "business through the eyes of faith" (in the words of one of its textbooks). Specifically, it will focus on how Christian commitments to justice, love, humility, stewardship, sacrificial leadership, accountability, honesty, and shalom can transform the marketplace into an arena in which God is honored, people are treated with dignity, and the bottom line has purpose.

The method of instruction for this class combines theory and practice by focusing on case studies. Students will be required to generate case studies from their business experiences, integrating what they are learning from the texts with what they have experienced in the contemporary business world.

The end result of this class will be, we hope, students who approach the tasks of buying and selling temporal goods and services with eternal values in mind and practice.

Donald E. Baldwin, Ph.D, Vanguard University

TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Required Texts:

Chewning, Richard C., John W. Eby and Shirley J. Roels, “*Business Through the Eyes of Faith.*” New York: Harper and Row, 1990 (Hereafter referred to as BEF).

Lewis, C.S., “*Mere Christianity.*” New York: Simon & Schuster, 1952 (hereafter MC).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will:

1. critically evaluate their current business experiences and practices in light of religious commitments, such as: justice, love, humility, stewardship, sacrificial leadership, accountability, honesty and *shalom*;
2. examine the elements of the Christian faith in order to be clear what Christianity is and what it means to be a Christian;
3. develop a Christian understanding of work in which the worker is seen as the subject of work, rather than the object; and thus formulate management practices which lead to personal development of the individual worker in the context of a profitable business;
4. examine leadership/management issues such as power, accountability, and motivation;
5. consider how business practice is related to larger goods (e.g., *shalom*) in a civil society;
6. write a “credo” statement consisting of *First Principles* for business. These principles will serve as a framework to evaluate one’s actions as a person, family member, worker, manager, and owner.

COURSE POLICIES

- **ATTENDANCE AND TARDY POLICY**

You must attend class on time and remain present until dismissed. Class attendance is necessary in order to complete the course. Unlike traditional courses, the School for Professional Studies relies on the dynamics of class interaction and group processing in order to integrate and apply the learning of academic content. This model also emphasizes the development and practice of interpersonal communication skills and teamwork (e.g., group problem solving and negotiation). The format therefore necessitates class attendance. In practical terms, one course session is equivalent to three weeks of traditional semester course work.

Due to the concentrated scheduling and the emphasis upon participatory learning, students need to be in attendance every week. Students who miss more than one class meeting (or more than five class hours) in any given course will automatically receive a failing grade and need to retake the course to obtain a passing grade. If an instructor deems that a student's second absence was under extremely unavoidable and unusual circumstances (i.e., an auto accident), the professor may file an academic petition on behalf of the student to the Dean of SPS. If the academic petition is approved, the instructor may give the student a "W" (Withdrawal) grade in place of a failing grade. The student will still be required to retake the course.

Students who arrive late disturb the class. At the professor's discretion, students who arrive late may not receive participation points for the unit covered. Students who are habitually late may be asked to drop the course.

- **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

You must be prepared and participate in all discussions. Criterion: Is the student engaged in classroom discussions? Does the student demonstrate an ability to handle assigned material with a degree of proficiency? (E.g., demonstrate the type of questions and issues consistent, and reflecting a familiarity with the assigned material). Participation evaluated according to quality, not quantity, of participation. Attendance will be scored, and no participation points will be awarded if the student is absent.

- **SUBMISSION OF PAPERS/FINAL EXAMS**

The School for Professional Studies office does not assume responsibility for any final papers. No homework or final papers will be accepted for professors in the SPS office, nor will final papers be returned to students through the SPS office.

The method for the submission of homework and the final exam or final paper will be determined by the professor. The professor will discuss the method which will be employed during the first night of class. All exchanges of papers will be between the student and the professor.

- **LATE PAPER POLICY**

You are responsible for submitting assignments on time (by 6:00 pm). Unless authorized by the Professor in advance, no credit will be given for assignments not turned in when due.

- **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Work submitted for assessment purposes must be the independent work of the student concerned. Plagiarism, or copying and use of another's work without proper acknowledgment, is not permitted. Nor is it permissible for any former or present student to allow another student to refer to, use as a sample, or in any way copy or review their work. If a student needs guidance, he or she must seek the Professor's assistance.

- **DISABILITY SERVICES**

For students with documented medical or psychological disabilities, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. The Coordinator of Disability Services is located in the Counseling Center on the second floor of the Scott Academic Center and can be reached at extension 4489 or by email at disabilityservices@vanguard.edu

For students with a documented learning disability who would like to request appropriate accommodations, please contact the Director of Learning Skills, located upstairs in Scott Academic Center at extension 2540 or by email at disabilityservices@vanguard.edu

- **DIVERISTY STATEMENT**

The School for Professional Studies intends to foster a Christ-centered community that promotes appreciation and respect for individuals, enhances the potential of all members, and values differences in gender, race, abilities, and generation. As such, we endeavor to communicate with honesty, to speak with encouraging and edifying words, and to create a safe environment in our classes and interactions.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Students in this course will be evaluated by the College's 4.0 grading system. You should refer to the Student Handbook or the College Catalog for further details on the grading system. The criteria for determining that grade will be as follows:

1. *Credo of First Principles* –300 points—Refer to the material on page 9 on how the Credo is to be prepared. It must be turned in at the beginning of class on the first night of the next course. Turning in the Credo of first principles late will result in a penalty on the grade for the Credo. Deductions on the grade will be as follows:
 - a. After 6:00 p.m. same day, 1/3 of a grade (e.g., A- to B+)
 - b. Within 72 hours late, 2/3 grade point (e.g., A- to B)
 - c. Up to one week late, 1 grade point (e.g., A- to B-)
 - d. Up to two full weeks, two full grade points
 - e. Up to one month late, three full grade points
 - f. After one month, Take Home Final not accepted
2. *Class Attendance* (200 points). You will receive 40 points for each class session you attend. Attendance is expected of all class members. Since this is a highly participatory class, absences are *strongly* discouraged. In accordance with the Student Handbook, if you are absent from two or more classes you will fail the class.
3. *Completion of Weekly Readings and Writing Assignments* (400 plus points). You will receive 100 or more points each week for completing the readings and assignments for weeks one through four.
4. *Participation in class discussion and group activities* (100 points). The professor will assign a separate grade for this part of the course, which will be averaged, with other portions of the grade. The criteria will be the quality of the contribution to the class or small group discussions. Be prepared to be called on and asked about the assigned reading or previous sessions.

The final grade will be available to the student approximately fourteen days after the Credo of first principles in business is submitted (normally at the third class meeting of the next course or a week after the credo is submitted).

STUDENT EVALUATION

Percentages	Points	Grade	Significance	GPA
93-100%	930-1000	A	Exceptional	4.00
90-92.9%	900-929	A-		3.67
87-89.9%	870-899	B+		3.33
83-86.9%	830-869	B	Above Average	3.00
80-82.9%	800-829	B-		2.67
77-79.9%	770-799	C+		2.33
73-76.9%	730-769	C	Average	2.00
70-72.9%	700-729	C-		1.67
67-69.9%	670-699	D+		1.33
63-66.9%	630-669	D	Below Average	1.00
60-62.9%	600-629	D-		0.67
00-59.9%	000-599	F	Failure	0.00

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK ONE

The Moral Framework of Business: Justice, Love, and Humility

The purpose this week is to introduce the student to the moral framework in which the Christian businessperson works. Micah 6:8 speaks of what the Lord requires of humanity in general, the rubric under which this moral framework is organized. Just as all areas of life, businesspersons are called “to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.” We will explore how these injunctions become the framework in which humans are called to practice business. The notion that humans are called to walk humbly with God introduces the larger theme of stewardship, an important theme of any Christian understanding of business. Additionally, the moral framework of justice, love, and humility, together with the theme of stewardship will be visited. It shapes the personal motivations and goals individuals set for their business practices.

1. Read BEF Part 1, chapters 1-5. Write a two part summary of and response (typed and double-spaced) to Part 1 to be turned into the instructor at the end of the class. The first part should summarize the argument or basic viewpoint of Part 1 in an accurate and concise manner. The second part should record your response (agreement or disagreement with the author and any questions you wish to raise) to Part 1. You will be graded for the accuracy of your summary, the thoughtfulness of your response, and the professional quality (i.e., accuracy of spelling and grammar) of your paper.
2. Read MC preface and Book I. Write a two part summary of and response (typed and double-spaced) to Part I to be turned in to the instructor at the end of the class. The summary should summarize the argument or basic viewpoint of Part I in an accurate and concise manner, including your response (agreement or disagreement with the author and any questions you wish to raise). You will be graded for the accuracy of your summary, the thoughtfulness of your response, and the professional quality (i.e., accuracy of spelling and grammar) of your paper.

WEEK TWO**The Purpose of Work**

The goal of this week's session is to formulate a Christian understanding of work. The basic attitude toward work which Christians have articulated is to view work as a divine vocation given at creation but corrupted by the fall, and yet suitable for redemption.

1. Read BEF part 2, chapters 6-10. Write a two part summary of and response to Part 1 (typed and double-spaced) to be turned into the instructor at the end of the class. Your summary/response would be. The first part should summarize the argument or basic viewpoint of Part 1 in an accurate and concise manner. The second part should record your response (agreement or disagreement with the author and any questions you wish to raise) to Part 1. You will be graded for the accuracy of your summary, the thoughtfulness of your response, and the professional quality (i.e., accuracy of spelling and grammar) of your paper.
2. Read MC Book II. Write a two part summary of and response (typed and double-spaced) to Part 1 to be turned into the instructor at the end of the class. The first part should summarize the argument or basic viewpoint of Part 1 in an accurate and concise manner. The second part should record your response (agreement or disagreement with the author and any questions you wish to raise) to Part 1. You will be graded for the accuracy of your summary, the thoughtfulness of your response, and the professional quality (i.e., accuracy of spelling and grammar) of your paper.
3. Read from the Bible the following passages: Matthew 25:14-30; James 2:1-7; Matthew 20:1-16; Proverbs 31:10-31; Luke 14:12-14; Ephesians 2:11-22; II Thessalonians 3:6-13; I Corinthians 13:1-13; Deuteronomy 24:14-16; Romans 7:14-25; I Corinthians 6:1-8; James 4:13-16; Matthew 6:25-34; Exodus 18: 13-26; Romans 12:4-8. Be prepared to discuss in class the question: What are the purposes, obligations and nature of work in light of these Scriptures?
4. Write a case study (two to four pages) to be shared with the class and submitted to the instructor. Focus on how management should treat workers. The case study should describe the facts of a particular business incident. Analyze the ways in which management failed to or succeeded in ennobling the worker, and suggest practical ways in which management practice could be reformed, improved and/or expanded using the materials from the textbooks and the Bible.

WEEK THREE**The Nature of Leadership**

The purpose of this week is to present a Christian understanding of leadership. Topics such as power, accountability, motivation, and communication will be addressed. Once again, the emphasis on personalism is important. Leadership styles must be adopted which arise from the dignity of the person both the leader and those led.

1. Read BEF Part 3, chapters 11-15. Write a two part summary of and response (typed and double-spaced) to Part 1 to be turned into the instructor at the end of the class. The first part should summarize the argument or basic viewpoint of Part 1 in an accurate and concise manner. The second part should record your response (agreement or disagreement with the author and any questions you wish to raise) to Part 1. You will be graded for the accuracy of your summary, the thoughtfulness of your response, and the professional quality (i.e., accuracy of spelling and grammar) of your paper.
2. Read MC Book III. Write a two part summary of and response (typed and double-spaced) to Part 1 to be turned in to the instructor at the end of the class. The first part should summarize the argument or basic viewpoint of Part 1 in an accurate and concise manner. The second part should record your response (agreement or disagreement with the author and any questions you wish to raise) to Part 1. You will be graded for the accuracy of your summary, the thoughtfulness of your response, and the professional quality (i.e., accuracy of spelling and grammar) of your paper.
3. Read the following passages from the Bible: I Kings 21:1-28; James 4:1-2, 7-10; Matthew 24:45-51; I Peter 5:1-4; II Chronicles 34:1-2, 14-22; Romans 14:7-13; Psalm 40:1-8; Luke 12:15-31; Romans 7:14-25; Proverbs 10:19-21; James 3:3-12; and Matthew 18:15-17. Be prepared to discuss in class this question taken from these Scriptures: What are the Christian concepts of leadership, power, accountability, motivation and communication which would directly impact business practice?
4. Write a case study (two to four pages) to be shared with the class and submitted to the instructor. Focus on a particular issue in leadership, such as: power, accountability, motivation, and communication using the material from the texts. The case study should (1) describe the facts of a particular business incident, preferable from your own business experience, (2) analyze the ways in which management failed (or succeeded) in leadership ability, and (3) suggest practical ways in which management practice could be reformed, improved and/or expanded using the materials from the textbooks and the Bible.

WEEK FOUR**The Purpose of Business: Shalom**

The purpose of this week's session is to demonstrate the purpose or ultimate ends (*telos*) of business. Free market economies are competitive, so "peace" hardly seems like an appropriate end of business, but *shalom* is a comprehensive category, the result of justice, love, and humility. The readings speak about business's responsibilities, stewardship, and justice.

1. Read BEF part 4, chapters 16-19. Write a two part summary of and response (typed and double-spaced) to Part 1 to be turned into the instructor at the end of the class. Your summary/response would be. The first part should summarize the argument or basic viewpoint of Part 1 in an accurate and concise manner. The second part should record your response (agreement or disagreement with the author and any questions you wish to raise) to Part 1. You will be graded for the accuracy of your summary, the thoughtfulness of your response, and the professional quality (i.e., accuracy of spelling and grammar) of your paper.
2. Read MC Book IV. Write a two part summary of and response (typed and double-spaced) to Part 1 to be turned into the instructor at the end of the class. The first part should summarize the argument or basic viewpoint of Part 1 in an accurate and concise manner. The second part should record your response (agreement or disagreement with the author and any questions you wish to raise) to Part 1. You will be graded for the accuracy of your summary, the thoughtfulness of your response, and the professional quality (i.e., accuracy of spelling and grammar) of your paper.
3. Read the following passages in the Bible: Genesis 1:1-31 and 2:15; Luke 1:46-53; Luke 12:22; II Corinthians 9:8-11; Luke 12:33-34; I Timothy 6:9-10; Luke 12:16-21; Leviticus 25; Matthew 6:33. Prepare to discuss in class the following issues related to these Scriptures: What do the following mean for business: social contract, stewardship, justice and wealth, Biblical absolutes?
4. Write a case study, which describes, analyzes, and suggests improvement for a business in terms of teleology (ultimate ends). This case study will be hard insofar as it focuses on the "ultimate ends" of business rather than what is immediately obvious. However, several topics suggest themselves: a case study showing how business has or has not practiced its responsibility toward its consumers, competitors, community, and environment.

WEEK FIVE**A Perspective from Faith**

This course explores, as the course description states, “[a] study of the nature of business from the perspective of the Christian faith.” Over the past four weeks, you have been introduced to a Christian perspective on business practice, work, leadership, and the purpose of business activity by means of reading *Business Through the Eyes of Faith* and *Mere Christianity*. The former lays out a rudimentary outline of Christian values and commitments that impact Christian understanding and practice of business. The latter presented an outline of the basic elements of Christianity.

Now it is your turn to summarize what you have learned and apply it to your own business or organizational situation by means of a personal “credo.”

Write a final essay, double-spaced and eight to ten pages in length that describes your personal credo of “first principles in business practice.” Keep the following guidelines in mind as you write:

- (1) This is a personal statement. While you are expected to incorporate what you have learned from this class’s readings, textbooks, and class discussions, you should not merely parrot what others have written or said. State your own fundamental beliefs and values regarding business. Since you cannot compartmentalize this one area of your life (business) without making reference to your underlying values, provide the larger context of your life values. These will include the place of God, family, character attributes and so on.
- (2) Although this is a “theory” paper insofar as you are stating your fundamental value commitments, illustrate your commitments by means of concrete cases and situations from your own personal and business experience.
- (3) Limit your topic. For instance, you might want to talk about work, servant leadership, workplace diversity, customer satisfaction, or another specific topic you read about in the class’s readings, but do not try to cover all the topics in one essay. By limiting your topic, you will be able to outline your personal credo about the topic in greater detail as well as illustrate your credo with more numerous concrete examples.
- (4) Finally, although this class has been taught from a Christian perspective, it is recognized that not every student is a Christian. If this is your case, please write your personal credo from the foundation of your religious faith or fundamental ethical commitments. You will be expected to use a systematic structure similar to that used by Lewis.

Your essay will be graded for the soundness of its argument, the critical use of class readings and biblical passages, and for formal matters such as spelling, grammar, and formatting.

You are also responsible for making a brief (10 minute) oral presentation of this essay during the final class session. Be prepared to summarize your credo and to answer questions about your credo from your classmates.

TAKE HOME FINAL

The take home final consists of the “Credo” of first principles in business described under week five above. The final credo is due the first day of your next course.

Write a final paper of about 8-10 pages which describe your personal credo of “first principles” based on the textbooks, class discussions, Bible readings, your own religious/moral commitments and your personal experience. Carefully develop, argue and craft your “credo” into a tightly reasoned and well-written paper. A short oral presentation (approximately 10 minutes) will be made in class this week with the final draft of your paper due one week later.

Criteria for Evaluation of the “Credo” paper:

1. Proofing. Papers must be typed and proofed before they are submitted. Miss-typing and grammatical errors will be factors in the determination of your grade.
2. General hints for your paper:
 - a. Coherence: Is the paper balanced, carefully developed, and thoughtful. Does it unfold in a logically coherent fashion?
 - b. Accuracy: Is the evidence it presents accurate?
 - c. Completeness: Is there additional evidence, which is important, but overlooked?
 - d. Methodology: Does the paper reflect a sound understanding of appropriate methodology for a business credo?
 - e. Writing style: Is the paper grammatically correct? Is the prose interesting, clear, rhetorically appropriate?
 - f. Sensitivity: Is the credo dealt with in a sensitive manner? Is Biblical material meaningfully applied to this issue? Is there an understanding of the complexity of this issue?

LOGISTICS CHART

Hour	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
1	Introduction to Course Christian Perspective on Business	The Nature and Purpose of Work	Can a Leader Also Be a Servant?	What is the <i>purpose</i> of Business?	Credo Presentations
2	Continued Right and Wrong as clues to the Universe	Justice and the Workplace Break	The Leader's Use of Power, Motivation, Accountability and Truthfulness	What is the Civic Responsibility of Business? Break	Credo Presentations (continued)
3	Break Doing Justice, Walking Humbly	What Christians believe	Break Christian Behavior	What is God like?	Break Credo Presentations (continued)
4	A Biblical View of Human Beings Journal Entry	Case Presentations Responses Journal Entry	Break Case Presentations and Responses Journal Entry	Case Presentations and Responses Journal Entry	Credo Presentations (continued) Wrap Up Course Evaluation