

Vanguard University
School for Professional Studies
Degree Program

“Organizational Ethics”
BUOM 478

Student Guide

12/2011

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

A study of ethical situations in organizations, accountability in government, respect for human rights, and responsibility for ethical and contemporary life choices. Ethical theories and personal values are examined through readings and analysis of situations in organizations.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Organizational ethics is approached through utilizing cases to illustrate the value of reflecting on ethical issues in the marketplace. Several major ethical theories are reviewed with special attention given to understanding a Christian approach to business. Students are asked to examine and integrate personal values and faith commitments through readings, case studies, and the development of a workplace case. The goal is to begin to formulate a business ethic that takes into account management accountability, human rights, justice, and a responsible lifestyle.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Organizational ethics is an applied study in the larger field of ethics. Managers, entrepreneurs, shop owners and manufacturers regularly confront moral and ethical issues. What is right or wrong in this or that management decision? What standards, principles and organizational practices are appropriate for a given decision? In addition, how does one's personal commitments impact how one operates in the field of business? Is a Christian ethic possible in business or must one simply leave one's faith compartmentalized for private concerns? This course addresses these and other issues that confront persons who work in the marketplace.

Organizational ethics is concerned not only with rules, both legal and ethical, that guide organizational practice, but it also must address the character of the business person. For example, would you choose to hire a person who has been indicted on several occasions for embezzlement but never found guilty? Would you do business with a person whose word cannot be trusted? This course will deal with the fundamental categories of ethics as they apply to business using the case study approach. This means that a good part of the course will be approached inductively through actual cases that invite ethical reflection on organizational practices.

This course should help you better understand your own values and faith commitments and how such values and commitments relate to the "business world" in which they function. It is important to help you understand that the key word here is "better." It is not assumed that you have no values or have never thought about the relationship between such values and your "professional activity." What is being assumed, rather, is that all of us can benefit by taking time to discuss these issues in a systematic, logical manner with special attention being given to how our faith informs our business practices.

All colleges want to produce technically proficient students. However, Christian liberal arts colleges also desire their graduates to better understand their faith, themselves and the world. They are then better equipped to communicate to others about who they are and what they believe. Now, of course, all the course in the School for Professional Studies are concerned with both the "technical" and "personal." But while some courses emphasize the former, this course emphasizes the latter.

Donald E. Baldwin, Ph.D.

TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Velasquez, M. G. (2006). *Business Ethics: Concepts and Cases* 0131930079. (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Gill, David W. (2008). *It's About Excellence: Building Ethically Healthy Organizations*. Provo, Utah: Executive Excellence Publishing.

Recommended texts:

Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926.

Birch, Bruce and Larry L. Rassmussen. *Bible and Ethics in Christian life*. Rev. ed. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989.

Broad, Charlie E. *Five Types of Ethical Theory*. New York: Harcourt, 1930.

Davis, John Jefferson. *Evangelical Ethics*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1985.

Feinberg, John & Feinberg, Paul. *Ethics for a Brave New World*. Wheaton: Crossway, 1993.

Fletcher, Joseph. *Situation Ethics: The New Morality*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966.

Frankena, William K. *Ethics*. 2d ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

Geisler, Norman L. *Ethics: Alternatives and Issues*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1971.

Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Hauerwas, Stanley. *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Hays, Richard M. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1996.

Holmes, Arthur F. *Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions*. Edited by C. S. Evans. Contours of Christian Philosophy. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press. 1984.

Houlden, J.L. *Ethics and the New Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Kant, Immanuel. *The Moral Law; or Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. London: Hutchinson, 1948.

Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983.

Long, Edward LeRoy, Jr. *A Survey of Christian Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1967.

Long, Edward LeRoy, Jr. *A Survey of Recent Christian Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1982.

Longenecker, Richard N. *New Testament Social Ethics for Today*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue*. Wd ed., Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1935.

- Nielson, Kai. "Ethics, Problems of." In *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 3, pp. 117-134.
- Ogletree, Thomas W. *The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1946.
- Pieper, Josef. *The Four Cardinal Virtues*. Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965.
- Plato. *Euthyphro*. In *Five Dialogues*. Translated by G.M.A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981.
- Pojman, Louis P., ed. *Ethical Theory: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co. 1989.
- Sampley, J. Paul. *Walking Between the Times: Paul's Moral Reasoning*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.
- Schnackenburg, Rudolf. *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1965.
- Sher, George, ed. *Moral Philosophy: Selected Readings*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1987.
- Sidgwick, Henry. *The Methods of Ethics*. Indianapolis: Hackett. 1981.
- Stout, Jeffrey. *Ethics After Babel*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1988.
- Stringfellow, William. *An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land*. Waco, TX: Word, 1973.
- Toulman, Stephen. *The Place of Reason in Ethics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1950.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will be able to:

1. Identify the nature of business ethics and how moral reasoning applies to organizational structures and relationships;
2. Understand the basic ethical principles in business;
3. Differentiate various value theories and the role of character in ethics;
4. Understand how Christian ethics relates to such issues as holiness, justice, love, honesty and deception, employee-employer relationships, discrimination, human sexuality, ethnic minorities, the status of women, living in a democracy, punishment for crime, work, property, and community;
5. Explore the ethics of consumer production, marketing, and advertising;
6. Write and resolve a case in business ethics drawn from professional experience; and
7. Begin the formulation of a systematic business ethic.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Class and group participation, short answer questions, essays, oral presentation, and a vocabulary exam will assess the student's comprehension, synthesis, and critical evaluation of course materials. Students will receive a grade for this course based on their performance in the following areas:

1. *Readings.* The readings offer background materials, inform class content, and supplement class discussion. Reading assignments for each week are indicated on the Course Outline below. You are expected to complete reading prior to coming to class. You should plan to spend about 60 minutes for each class session completing the readings.
2. *Classroom participation/discussion.* The primary format for the course will be lectures and guided and group discussions. Attendance is expected. You cannot get a participation grade for a class in which you were not present. The professor will grade you on how actively you participate in small group activity and in class discussions. (100 points; 20 points per week)
3. *Short Answer Assignments:* The short answer assignments are based upon the textbooks and media presented in class. These assignments will be distributed each week. (200 points; 50 points per week for weeks 1-4)

***Note: The short answer assignment to be completed prior to the first class is attached.

4. *Essays.* Three essays related to a specific ethical dilemma (each not to exceed 1,000 words) and the final written essay corresponding to the Oral Presentation (not to exceed 2,000 words) will be the focus of the written assignments for this course. The essays must be analytical and should incorporate the ethical concepts, principles, and approaches covered in the lectures and readings. The three shorter essays are worth 100 points each and are due on Weeks, 2, 3, and 4. (300 points; 100 points per essay)

Essays should be double spaced, written in Times New Roman font, 12 pt. In addition to the quality of content, the organization, mechanics and style will be taken into consideration so be sure to edit and proofread the essay before you turn it in. In a header, place your last name and the page number in the upper right corner of the second and subsequent pages. Please do not provide report covers; a simple staple in the upper left-hand corner will do nicely. Footnote and bibliographical form should conform precisely to your preferred style manual or to Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed.

5. *Examination.* The exam will be an objective exam based on the vocabulary of ethics (exam given Week 3 during the first hour). A "Glossary of Terms" will be distributed at the first class. (100 points)

6. *Final Project:* The final case study will provide an opportunity for the student to apply the principles and strategies learned in class to a contemporary business moral issue. This assignment includes both oral and written presentations. Instructions will be given in class. (300 points; 2@150 points each)

Summary of grading distribution:

1.	Class participation	5@20	100 points
2.	Short answer assignments	4@50	200 points
3.	Essays	3@100	300 points
4.	Objective Exam (Vocabulary)		100 points
5.	Final Project	150@2	300 points

When the points you earned have been added together, you will receive a letter grade according to the following scale:

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

LOGISTICS CHART

Hour	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
1	Introduction of Course Ethical Reasoning	Forms of Ethical Reasoning	Objective Exam: The Vocabulary of Ethics	Discrimination in the work place	Ground Rules Oral Presentations
2	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
3	Ethical Reasoning (continued)	Forms of Ethical Reasoning (continued)	Consumer Ethics	Employer-Employee relationships	Oral Presentations (continued)
4	Case discussion and application Ethics in America	Case discussion and application Ethics in America	Case discussion and application Ethics in America	Case discussion and Application Ethics in America	Oral Presentations (continued) Course Evaluation

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK ONE

Introduction to Business Ethics and Ethical Reasoning:

1. Read Chapter 1 in *Business Ethics* by Velasquez.
2. Read Chapters 1 in *It's About Excellence* by Gill.
3. Be prepared to discuss all of the cases from Velasquez in class.
4. *Short Answer Assignment*
Respond to the following questions from *Business Ethics* and *It's About Excellence* prior to the first class. Your answers, one or two paragraphs per question, should be typed.

From *Business Ethics*.

1. What are the five characteristics that distinguish moral standards? Why is each of them necessary to define moral standards in general?
2. What are the three basic types of ethical issues? Come up with an example of an ethical issue for each type.
3. How do moral obligations apply to business organizations? Can companies be held accountable for what they do, or are the individuals who make up the company the ones we must hold accountable? Discuss the major arguments concerning corporate responsibility.
4. What special ethical issues face multinational corporations? How should they, and society, respond to these issues?
5. What is ethical relativism? What are the difficulties with the theory? What does it have to offer us, even if it seems largely mistaken?
6. What are the three criteria used to evaluate the adequacy of moral reasoning?
7. What considerations are relevant when we assign blame for an injurious act? What is the distinction between excusing conditions and mitigating circumstances?

From *It's About Excellence*.

8. How would you rank the helpfulness and importance of each of the six test questions for ethics given in Chapter 1, pp. 17-30? Why did you rank them in the order you selected?

WEEK TWO

The Forms of Ethical Reasoning

1. Read Chapter 2 in *Business Ethics* by Velasquez.

Read Chapter 2 in *It's About Excellence* by Gill.

2. Discussion. Be prepared to discuss all of the cases from Velasquez in class as well as "Twelve Reasons for Business Ethics" from *It's About Excellence*.
3. Short Answer Assignment: In the episode, Do Unto Others, there are five scenes: stolen tests, cheating husband, child in love, battered child, and alms for the poor.

Select any ONE of these stories, and

1. Define the dilemma, describe the facts, and sort out the stakeholders (the first three steps to take before we can ever begin the moral reasoning process).
2. Describe how in this case, the following approaches to moral reasoning could be applied when making a moral decision (as best as you can).
 - Appeal to utility: to consequences, insofar as they will produce desirable outcomes (not harm others, more good than bad).
 - Appeal to moral law or duty (rules, rights, justice): to specific principles or moral duties to do or not do something (don't hurt people, don't tell lies, don't take more than your fair share).
 - Appeal to virtue: to the kind of person you become if you act in certain ways (wisdom, courage, self-control, just)
3. In the ethical dilemma you have just described, which of the ethical approaches did you find most helpful? Why?
4. Essay. Write an ethical analysis of the "Publius" case. Instructions will be given in class.

Papers must be typed and proofed before they are submitted. Mistyping and grammatical errors will be factors in the determination of your grade. Additionally ask yourself these questions about your weekly work:

- **Coherence:** Is the paper balanced? Carefully developed? Thoughtful? Does it unfold in a logically coherent fashion?
- **Accuracy:** Is the evidence it presents accurate?
- **Completeness:** Is there additional evidence which is important, but overlooked?

- **Methodology:** Does the paper reflect a sound understanding of appropriate methodology for this moral issue?
- **Writing style:** Is the paper grammatically correct? Is the prose interesting, clear, rhetorically appropriate?
- **Sensitivity:** Is the moral issue dealt with in a sensitive manner? Is Biblical or ethical material meaningfully applied to this issue? Is there an understanding of the complexity of this issue?

WEEK THREE

The Ethics of Consumer Relations:

1. Read chapter 6 in *Business Ethics*.
Read chapters 3-5, *It's About Excellence* by Gill.
2. Discussion. Be prepared to discuss all of the cases from Velasquez in class.
3. Short Answer Assignment: TBA
4. Essay. Write an ethical analysis of "Becton Dickinson and Needle Sticks" case. Instructions will be given in class.

Papers must be typed and proofed before they are submitted. Mistyping and grammatical errors will be factors in the determination of your grade. Additionally ask yourself these questions about your weekly work:

- **Coherence:** Is the paper balanced? Carefully developed? Thoughtful? Does it unfold in a logically coherent fashion?
- **Accuracy:** Is the evidence it presents accurate?
- **Completeness:** Is there additional evidence which is important, but overlooked?
- **Methodology:** Does the paper reflect a sound understanding of appropriate methodology for this moral issue?
- **Writing style:** Is the paper grammatically correct? Is the prose interesting, clear, rhetorically appropriate?
- **Sensitivity:** Is the moral issue dealt with in a sensitive manner? Is Biblical or ethical material meaningfully applied to this issue? Is there an understanding of the complexity of this issue?

WEEK FOUR

The Ethics of Employer-Employee Relations:

1. Read Chapter 7 and 8 in *Business Ethics*.
Read Chapters 6 and 7, *It's About Excellence* by Gill.
2. Discussion. Be prepared to discuss all of the cases from Velasquez in class
3. Short Answer Assignment: TBA
4. Essay: Write an ethical analysis of "Who Should Pay?" case.

Papers must be typed and proofed before they are submitted. Mistyping and grammatical errors will be factors in the determination of your grade. Additionally ask yourself these questions about your weekly work:

- **Coherence:** Is the paper balanced? Carefully developed? Thoughtful? Does it unfold in a logically coherent fashion?
- **Accuracy:** Is the evidence it presents accurate?
- **Completeness:** Is there additional evidence which is important, but overlooked?
- **Methodology:** Does the paper reflect a sound understanding of appropriate methodology for this moral issue?
- **Writing style:** Is the paper grammatically correct? Is the prose interesting, clear, rhetorically appropriate?
- **Sensitivity:** Is the moral issue dealt with in a sensitive manner? Is Biblical or ethical material meaningfully applied to this issue? Is there an understanding of the complexity of this issue?

WEEK FIVE

Final Case Study

The final in this course is the presentation and submission of a case taken from your business, workplace or professional experience.

Oral and written case presentations. Groups will present an 8-10 page case in business ethics drawn from their own business experience. The oral presentation of this case will be given to the class in the fifth week. The final written form of this case will be due one week later. The final written form of the case should incorporate the comments and critiques made in class by the professor and fellow students.

For your Oral Presentation, each group will present a case study representing an ethical dilemma drawn from their own experience.

Please form your own group of three or four people. You know best whom you can communicate with the easiest. If you do not find a group, let me know and I will assign you to one. Please let me know the members of your group as soon as you can.

Select one ethical dilemma. Your presentation can be as creative as you wish. The presentation should be approximately 15 minutes in length and we will allow for another 15 minutes of feedback and discussion. Please clear the description of the ethical dilemma with me prior to your presentation.

The oral presentation of this case should follow the format of case analysis developed through this course. After defining the ethical dilemma, you should identify the stakeholders and outline facts and assumptions that are pertinent to the case. List the “First Important Principles” pertinent to your case. Succeeding sections should work through these ethical principles by way of the three approaches we have utilized in the ethical reasoning process. You should also identify any tensions that exist between competing ethical considerations. Be sure you work through the law of unintended consequences and explore any other viable alternatives for moral action. The final part of your presentation should state what ought to be done and why.

Your presentation will be graded on the following basis: (1) the strength of the case you select and the adequacy of the description of the facts of the case; (2) the identification of the moral issues at stake in the case and the outcomes; rules/rights/justice; and virtues, which this case reveals. Here the mastery of the course readings, glossary, and related materials will be important in isolating issues and developing strategies for case clarity and resolution; (3) the ability to reason to an ethical conclusion and demonstrate an ability to bring ethical reasoning to bear on an individual or organizational/ministry practice or problem; (4) the presentation must be properly documented if outside sources are utilized.

The final essay is due in the Degree Completion office seven days following the final session of this module.

Some further considerations for presenting and writing your paper:

Papers must be typed and proofed before they are submitted. Mistyping and grammatical errors will be factors in the determination of your grade. Additionally ask yourself these questions about your weekly work:

- **Coherence:** Is the paper balanced? Carefully developed? Thoughtful? Does it unfold in a logically coherent fashion?
- **Accuracy:** Is the evidence it presents accurate?
- **Completeness:** Is there additional evidence which is important, but overlooked?
- **Methodology:** Does the paper reflect a sound understanding of appropriate methodology for this moral issue?
- **Writing style:** Is the paper grammatically correct? Is the prose interesting, clear, rhetorically appropriate?
- **Sensitivity:** Is the moral issue dealt with in a sensitive manner? Is Biblical or ethical material meaningfully applied to this issue? Is there an understanding of the complexity of this issue?