

Business Ethics
MSB 287 A & B (3 credits)
King's College, Winter/Spring 2017

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Office: McGowan 203
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Class meeting time and location:
MWF 9:00-9:50 a.m. and 10:00-10:50 a.m., McGowan 109

Course description

Examination of the vocation and moral context of business; critical reflection, through engagement with the philosophical and Catholic traditions, on how to make a living *and* live well; and extended consideration of issues and problems that arise in contemporary business settings. Prerequisite: Core 280.

Course objectives

By the end of this course, students should have:

developed familiarity with several theories of morality and the basic principles of the Catholic social tradition;

become more proficient at recognizing, formulating, and addressing moral problems in the business context;

developed the capacity to implement ethical decisions; and

begun to develop an answer, for themselves, of what moral and spiritual values they want to live out in making a living.

McGowan School of Business Mission Statement

This course directly serves the mission of the McGowan School of Business. To quote (emphasis added):

*The William G. McGowan School of Business seeks to develop in its students the professional knowledge and skills needed to function successfully in the dynamic environments of business **with a commitment to exercising their professional responsibilities in an ethical and socially responsible manner** in a global marketplace.*

Learning Goals

The delivery of our business education program is guided by the following learning outcomes:

A student graduating from the William G. McGowan School of Business should be an effective communicator.

To this end, **in this course**, students will submit written work (including memos) and make oral presentations.

A student graduating from the William G. McGowan School of Business should possess information literacy.

To this end, **in this course**, students will identify, locate, and evaluate resources needed for required written work.

A student graduating from the William G. McGowan School of Business should be ethically and socially responsible.

To this end, **in this course**, students will develop familiarity with several theories of morality; become more proficient at recognizing, formulating, and addressing moral problems in the business context; develop a well-considered position on the purpose of business within society; and begin to develop an answer, for themselves, of what moral and spiritual values they want to live out in making a living.

A student graduating from the William G. McGowan School of Business should be professionally knowledgeable.

To this end, **in this course**, students will examine case studies and learn best practices in today's business world.

The more nuts-and-bolts goals of this course are to help you develop *skills* that will serve you both in college and in your subsequent careers.

Goal		Method of assessment
Read and think critically:	Analyze and bring critical understanding to difficult moral theories, grapple with cases exemplifying moral problems	Participation in class discussion, exams, papers
Write well:	Write clearly and persuasively, supporting your positions with argumentation and evidence	Papers, co-curricular event report, supplementary reading reports
Communicate effectively orally:	Articulate your own views based on your reading and in response to the contributions of other students	Participation in class discussion

Master co-operative learning skills:	Work with and learn from other members of the class in a climate of mutual respect and support	Participation in class discussion, group projects
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Assessment, etc.

Attendance/participation

Attendance/participation will be worth 15 percent of the final grade. Please note that attendance is expected at all meetings, with due allowance for reasonable excuses. Each class that you miss will result in your losing 1/3rd point. Also please note that, per College policy, excessive absences must be reported to the Office of Student Success and Retention.

The attendance/participation grade will be determined using the following rubrics. Class participation deserving of an A grade (90-100) will be strong in most categories; participation that is strong in some categories but needs development in others will receive a B (80-90); a grade of C (70-80) reflects a need for development in most categories; D work (65-69) is unsatisfactory in several categories; and F work, unsatisfactory in nearly all.

	Strong work	Needs development	Unsatisfactory
Listening	Actively and respectfully listens to peers and instructor	Sometimes displays lack of interest in comments of others	Projects lack of interest or disrespect for others
Preparation	Arrives fully prepared with all assignments completed, and notes on reading, observations, questions	Sometimes arrives unprepared or with only superficial preparation	Exhibits little evidence of having read or thought about assigned material
Quality of contributions	Comments are relevant and reflect understanding of: assigned text(s); previous remarks of other students; and insights about assigned material	Comments sometimes irrelevant, betray lack of preparation, or indicate lack of attention to previous remarks of other students	Comments reflect little understanding of either the assignment or previous remarks in seminar
Impact on seminar	Comments frequently help move seminar conversation forward	Comments sometimes advance the conversation, but sometimes do little to move it forward	Comments do not advance the conversation or are actively harmful to it
Frequency of participation	Actively participates at appropriate times	Sometimes participates but other times is “tuned out”	Seldom participates and is generally not engaged

Writing assignments

You will be required to write two papers, each worth 20 percent of the final grade. The papers will be graded using the following rubrics. An A-level paper will be strong in most categories; B papers will be strong in some but need development in others; C papers need significant development; D papers are unsatisfactory in most categories.

	Strong work	Needs development	Unsatisfactory
Audience	Assumes audience is student who has familiarity with the text in question but could use still reminding; paper uses evidence to make points rather than to summarize	Spends inappropriate amount of time merely summarizing text or repeating material covered in class, <i>or</i> does not provide sufficient background/assumes too much knowledge of the text	Shows little evidence of having read the text; ideas mostly taken from class notes or class discussion and not developed further
Thesis	Single clear thesis (= answer to the question, What is this paper about?) that would be interesting to someone who had already studied the text	Thesis is either somewhat unclear or all too obvious to most thoughtful readers	No clear thesis, or multiple theses
Introductory paragraph(s)	Avoids inflated generalizations and gratuitous praise; “hooks” the reader; introduces clear thesis; briefly explains how the paper will proceed	Extraneous generalization; connection to thesis not entirely clear; thesis statement not clear; lacks compelling “hook,” or statement of how the paper will proceed	No clear thesis statement or sense of where the paper is going
Paragraphs in body of paper	Each paragraph does one and only one bit of work toward the paper’s goal and is supported by evidence and argumentation	Some paragraphs are “baggy monsters,” trying to do all too much; or some do not support thesis, or are not supported by evidence	Little relationship between paragraphs and thesis, little to no evidence mustered, paragraphs do not work toward the paper’s goal
Argument	All necessary points in proving or developing thesis are made; paper does not assume reader agrees with author but <i>shows</i> the reader why he or she should agree	Some missteps are made in proving or developing thesis; argument only compelling to someone who already agrees; only <i>tells</i> the reader that such-and-such is the case instead of <i>showing</i> the reader	Essay does not break any ground or develop a case
Organization	Argument intelligently ordered and easy to follow, reflected in order of points and paragraphs	Logical flow of argument needs improvement by reordering some points and/or paragraphs	Material is disorganized with no clear logical connection between points and/or paragraphs
Use of Evidence	Draws relevant evidence from close reading of a variety of passages; all quotations correctly cited using MLA or Chicago format	Evidence drawn from only one or two passages in text; some evidence does not support points made; citations present but not in correct format	Little evidence used; does not support points made; material quoted without citation
Conclusion	Brings the paper full circle, ties all loose ends together; makes a new point that builds on all preceding points, so reaches a summit rather than providing a mere summary	Merely summarizes everything that has been said so far, and/or feels abrupt or forced	Simply recycles the introductory paragraph

Mechanics	Nearly flawless grammar, spelling, and word choice; sentences read smoothly and are clear without being wordy	Grammar, spelling, word choice, sentence structure and word economy need attention	Serious problems with grammar, spelling, word choice, sentence structure and/or word economy
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A punitive grade of F will be given to work found to have been plagiarized. Please discuss with me any questions that you might have about the use of secondary material.

As a word to the wise, read your paper out loud to yourself, asking yourself whether you would say what you have written. *Don't write just as you speak, but be sure that you would say what you write.* As you write, imagine that you are going to present your paper as a speech. *Picture your audience: first and foremost, other students!* Make sure that every sentence is clear and precise so that you can go on.

Note that late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day that they are late. (So a paper that would have been an A will be a B if it is late by a day, a C if it is late by two days, etc.) Again, due allowance will be made for reasonable excuses. You may also request extensions if need be. I urge you to take advantage of my office hours, listed above, in order to discuss the course generally and the paper in particular.

Exams

There will be two exams, a midterm and a final, each worth 15 percent of the final grade. The exams will consist of short-answer questions on our readings and discussions. Should you have a documented need for extra time, please tell me in advance.

Co-curricular events and supplementary readings

There are two final requirements: first, that you attend and write reports on three (3) co-curricular events over the semester; second, that you read and write reports on two (2) supplementary readings, one before spring break, the second after it.

The three co-curricular events occur Tuesday, 1/17, 7:00 p.m.; Monday, 3/27, 7:00 p.m.; and Monday, 4/10, 7:00 p.m. There are five supplementary readings to choose from before spring break; there are eight after it.

For the co-curricular events, write me, *within one week of the event*, a two-paragraph email 1) describing the event (just the facts) and then 2) reflecting substantively on it. For each supplementary reading, write me another two-paragraph email 1) summarizing the reading (just the facts) and then 2) reflecting substantively on it, in part by connecting it to our assigned readings or class discussion.

	Super: full credit	Satisfactory: ½ to ¾ credit	Unsatisfactory: no credit
Summary of the event/reading	Account of the facts is accurate and clear	Account of the facts needs development or clarification	Account of the facts is inaccurate and unclear

Reflection on the event/reading	Reflection is substantive and thoughtful	Reflection needs development	Reflection does not engage substantively with the event/reading
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The three co-curricular event reports count for 9 percent of the final grade (3 percent each); the two supplementary reading reports count for 6 percent of the final grade (again 3 percent each).

In sum:	Attendance/participation	= 15 percent
	Two papers	= 40 percent (20 each)
	Two exams	= 30 percent (15 each)
	Three co-curricular events	= 9 percent (3 each)
	Two supplementary readings	= 6 percent (3 each)
		= 100

Academic integrity

To quote (with a few edits) from the Student Handbook (76-77):

In order for faculty members to perform their duty of fostering and accurately evaluating the individual academic progress of each student, they need to assume that laboratory reports, examinations, essays, themes, term papers, and similar requirements submitted for credit as a part of a course or in fulfillment of a College requirement are the original works of the student. Put simply, a violation of academic integrity is an action where a student tries to violate this assumption of the faculty member. Therefore, students shall not knowingly

1. receive or attempt to receive non-authorized assistance in the preparation of any work (when direct quotations are used, they are to be properly cited, and when the ideas of another are incorporated into a paper or paraphrased, they are to be appropriately acknowledged by citation);
2. sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish, or attempt to sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish unauthorized assistance to another in such preparation of any work;
3. take or attempt to take, steal, or otherwise procure in an unauthorized manner any material pertaining to the conduct of a class, including tests, examinations, grade change forms, grade reports, roll books, or reports, etc.;
4. sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish to any unauthorized person any illicitly obtained material that is known to contain questions or answers to any examination scheduled to be given at some subsequent date or time offered by the College;
5. submit the same work for more than one course unless the faculty member to whom the work is being submitted has given their prior consent;
6. possess or use, without authorization of the instructor, copies of tests, answer sheets, books, notes, calculators, computers, cheat sheets, or similar means that could interfere with the fair, accurate testing or

- evaluation of a student;
7. obtain, without authorization of the instructor, answers from another student's exam, quiz, computer, or paper; and
 8. provide false information to an instructor or College official for the purpose of misrepresenting an activity outside of class (reports on field experiences, internships, etc.), or improperly seeking special consideration or privilege (excused absences, postponement of an exam or due date of papers or project, etc.).

Accommodations for students with disabilities

All students who have a documented learning or physical disability are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the instructor during the first week of class to discuss any needed accommodations.

Required texts

Material on Moodle

Schedule (which likely will be revised as we proceed)

Week 1: The nature of morality

- 1/16 Introduction, pt. 1 (compressed schedule)
- 1/18 Introduction, pt. 2
- 1/20 Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," 1-6

CO-CURRICULAR EVENT #1: Kate Rossiter, Associate Professor of Health Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Centre for Imaginative Ethnography, 2017 Bessette Lecture, "Microhumiliations and Practices of Pain: The Moral Perils of Institutional Organization," Tuesday, January 17, 7:00 p.m., McGowan School of Business, Burke Auditorium

Week 2: Morality and the vocation of business

- 1/23 Nicholas Kristof, "A Battle with the Brewers," *New York Times*, May 6, 2012
- 1/25 Kristof, continued
- 1/27 Milton Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits," *New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1970

Co-curricular report #1 due Tuesday 1/24

Week 3: Morality, the vocation of business, and the moral limits of markets

- 1/30 Friedman, continued

2/1 Andrew Pollack and Sabrina Tavernise, "Valeant's Drug Price Strategy Enriches It, but Infuriates Patients and Lawmakers," *New York Times*, October 4, 2015

2/3 Michael J. Sandel, "How Markets Crowd Out Morals," *Boston Review*, May/June 2012, 1-9

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS: #1 Eduardo Porter, "Motivating Corporations to Do Good," *New York Times*, July 15, 2014; #2 "Room-for-Debate: Etsy's IPO and Public Corporations' Obligations to Shareholders," *New York Times*, April 16, 2015

Paper #1 assigned

Week 4: The moral limits of markets

2/6 Sandel, continued

2/8 Sandel, continued

2/10 Elizabeth Anderson, "For-Profit Corruption," *Boston Review*, May/June 2012, 1-2

Week 5: The moral limits of markets

2/13 Anderson, continued

2/15 Emily Bazelon, "Should Prostitution Be a Crime?" *New York Times Magazine*, May 5, 2016

2/17 Bazelon, continued

Paper #1 due Saturday 2/18

SUPPLEMENTARY READING: #3 Ian Johnson and Cao Li, "China Experiences a Booming Underground Market in Surrogate Motherhood," *New York Times*, August 6, 2014

Week 6: Product safety and corporate social responsibility

2/20 Andrew Martin, "For Buckyball Toys, Child Safety is a Growing Issue," *New York Times*, August 17, 2012

2/22 Martin, continued

2/24 Bill Vlasic and Neal E. Boudette, "Self-Driving Tesla Was Involved in Fatal Crash, U.S. Says," *New York Times*, June 30, 2016; Guilbert Gates et al., "How Self-Driving Cars Work," *New York Times*, December 14, 2016

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS: #4 Jamie Lincoln Kitman, "Google Wants Driverless Cars, but Do We?" *New York Times*, December 19, 2016; #5 Matt Richtel, "Phone Makers Could Cut Off Drivers. So Why Don't They?" *New York Times*, September 24, 2016, and Jonah Engel Bromwich, "Can a Law Stop Distracted Driving? California Hopes To Find Out," *New York Times*, January 5, 2016

Week 7: Review and exam

- 2/27 Vlastic and Boudette, continued
- 3/1 Review
- 3/3 Midterm exam

Supplementary reading report #1 due

SPRING BREAK

Week 8: Contemporary global capitalism, corporate social responsibility, and U.S. politics

- 3/13 Binyamin Appelbaum, “The Vanishing Male Worker: How America Fell Behind,” *New York Times*, December 12, 2014
- 3/15 Noam Scheiber, “Growth in the ‘Gig Economy’ Fuels Work Force Anxieties,” *New York Times*, July 12, 2015; Claire Cain Miller, “The Long-Term Jobs Killer Is Not China. It’s Automation,” *New York Times*, December 21, 2016
- 3/17 Patricia Cohen, “A Bigger Economic Pie, but a Smaller Slice for Half of the U.S.,” *New York Times*, December 6, 2013; Noam Scheiber, “Eyeing the Trump Vote, ‘Fight for \$15’ Widens Its Focus,” *New York Times*, November 29, 2016

SUPPLEMENTARY READING: #6 Christopher Farrell, “Migrant Workers in Recreational Vehicles,” *New York Times*, October 21, 2016

Week 9: Contemporary global capitalism and corporate social responsibility

- 3/20 Kenneth F. Scheve and Matthew J. Slaughter, “A New Deal for Globalization,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2007); Robert J. Shiller, “What’s behind a Rise in Ethnic Nationalism? Maybe the Economy,” *New York Times*, October 16, 2016
- 3/22 David Barboza, “How China Built ‘iPhone City’ with Billions in Perks for Apple’s Partner,” *New York Times*, December 29, 2016
- 3/24 NO CLASS

SUPPLEMENTARY READING: #7 Eduardo Porter, “Where Were Trump’s Votes? Where the Jobs Weren’t,” *New York Times*, December 13, 2016

Week 10: Contemporary global capitalism and Catholic social teaching

- 3/27 Julfikar Ali Manik and Jim Yardley, “Building Collapse in Bangladesh Leaves Scores Dead,” *New York Times*, April 24, 2013
- 3/29 Steven Greenhouse, “Some Retailers Rethink Role in Bangladesh,” *New York Times*, May 1, 2013; “Room-for-Debate: When Does Corporate Social

Responsibility Mean Abandoning Ship?" *New York Times*, May 2, 2013
3/31 William Byron, "Ten Building Blocks of Catholic Social Teaching,"
America, October 31, 1998

CO-CURRICULAR EVENT #2: Gabriel Said Reynolds, Professor of Islamic Studies and Theology, University of Notre Dame, 2017 Grimes Lecture co-sponsored by the Honors Program, "The Bible and the Qur'an," Monday, March 27, 2017, 7:00 p.m., McGowan School of Business, Burke Auditorium

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS: #8 Vincent Miller, "Slavery and Commodity Chains: Fighting the Globalization of Indifference," *America*, January 2, 2014; #9 Ian Urbina, "'Sea Slaves': The Human Misery That Feeds Pets and Livestock," *New York Times*, July 27, 2015

Week 11: Catholic social teaching and unions

- 4/3 Byron, continued
- 4/5 Ben Strauss and Steve Eder, "College Players Granted Right To Form Union," *New York Times*, March 26, 2014
- 4/7 "Room-for-Debate: Scholars, Players, and Union Members," *New York Times*, March 27, 2014

Co-curricular report #2 due Monday 4/3

Paper #2 due assigned

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS: #10 National Labor Relations Board Region 13, Decision and Direction of Election, Northwestern University and College Athletes Players Association"; #11 Marc Tracy and Tim Rohan, "What Made College Football More like the Pros? \$7.3 Billion, for a Start," *New York Times*, December 30, 2014; #12 "Unions in the Ivory Tower," *New York Times*, August 24, 2016

Week 12: Loyalty, privacy, and corporate social responsibility

- 4/10 Katie Benner and Paul Mozer, "Apple Sees Value in Its Stand to Protect Privacy," *New York Times*, February 20, 2016; Andrew Ross Sorkin, "For Apple, A Search for a Moral High Ground in a Heated Debate," *New York Times*, February 22, 2016; *New York Times*, "Breaking Down Apple's iPhone Fight with the U.S. Government," March 21, 2016
- 4/12 Benner et al., continued
- 4/14 EASTER BREAK; NO CLASS

CO-CURRICULAR EVENT #3: Susan Muaddi Darraj, Keynote Address of the 2017 King's and Wilkes Women's and Gender Studies Conference, "Changing the Narrative: How Race and Politics Affect the Way We View Women," Monday, April 10, 7:00 p.m., McGowan School of Business, Burke Auditorium

Week 13: Loyalty, privacy, and corporate social responsibility

4/17 EASTER BREAK; NO CLASS

4/19 Kaveh Waddel, "Why Google Quit China—and Why It's Heading Back," *Atlantic Monthly*, January 19, 2016; Mike Isaac, "Facebook Said To Create Censorship Tool To Get Back into China," *New York Times*, November 22, 2016

4/21 Waddel and Isaac, continued

Co-curricular report #3 due Tuesday 4/18

Paper #2 due Friday 4/21

Week 14: Moral ambush and the normalization of deviance

4/24 Business Advisory Council

4/26 Jerry Useem, "What Was Volkswagen Thinking?" *Atlantic Monthly*, January/February 2016; Guilbert Gates et al., "How Volkswagen Is Grappling with Its Diesel Scandal," *New York Times*, December 20, 2016

4/28 Schalk Engelbrecht, "When and Why We Cheat," in *Promoting Ethics in Organizations* (KPMG, 2016), 22-26

SUPPLEMENTARY READING: #13 Jonah M. Kessel and Paul Mozur, "How China Is Changing Your Internet," *New York Times*, August 9, 2016

Week 15: Moral ambush and the normalization of deviance

5/1 Englebrecht, continued

5/3 Review

Supplementary reading report #2 due

Final exam

Method for discussion of case studies

1) What are the relevant facts of the case? Also, are there facts that need still to be gathered? Just the facts; no analysis, no argumentation, etc.

2) What are the ethical problems, challenges, questions to consider?—questions of responsibilities and obligations, questions of what would be morally permissible and what morally impermissible, questions of what would be right, what wrong, what good, what bad, what virtuous, what vicious....

3) What are different, apparently defensible courses of action that might be taken?—only courses that appear permissible (that is, nothing stands in the way) or justified (that is, there is, moreover, positive moral reason to go ahead).

4) What is the most ethical choice among the different possibilities? What reasons recommend this choice over the others? Discuss/argue, pushing toward basic claims or principles.