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BGEN 220E.50: Business Ethics and Social Responsibility

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The University of Montana
School of Business Administration
Department of Management and Marketing

SYLLABUS: BGEN220E online ~ 2017

Course title: Business Ethics and Social Responsibility (3 credits)

Course designation: BGEN220E

Professor: Rob Walsh, Ph.D.

Semester: SPRING 2017

Section/CRN#: Section 50 / CRN = 33783

Office: GBB 337

Office Hours: MTWTh 12:30 – 1:30 (and by appt./online)

Phone: 243-6679 (office)

Email: rob.walsh@business.umt.edu (Best way to contact me – specify ‘online’ in subject heading for quick response.)

Class meeting times: N/A

<p>Disability Services: This course is accessible to and usable by students with disabilities. To request reasonable program modifications, please consult with the instructor. Disability Services for Students will assist the instructor and student in the modification process. For more information, contact Disability Services at 406-243-2243 in Lommasson Center 154. Please notify me as soon as possible if you need any special accommodations.... Rob</p>
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Course Overview

1. Philosophical and Psychological Theories Since moral theory naturally informs moral judgment, we will begin our course of Business Ethics with an overview of various classical theories from the history of Moral Philosophy, including Self-realization or Self-actualization theory (Virtue Ethics), Deontology or Duty Ethics, Utilitarianism, Social Contract theory, Distributive Justice theory, Existentialism, Cosmopolitanism, etc., along with some objections to the very possibility of there being any genuine rational foundation for moral reasoning at all, such as is found in Skepticism, Relativism, and Absolutism. We will also investigate various moral perspectives derived from empirical research being done in Developmental, Social, and Cognitive Psychology (e.g., the moral stage theory of Lawrence Kohlberg) as well as other sciences such as Paleontology and Neuroscience. In short, moral operations will be considered from cognitive, affective, rational and non-rational perspectives, and a Phenomenological method for improving moral consciousness will be presented. Finally, we will see how these traditional moral philosophical and psychological theories provide an understanding for how we actually go about making moral judgments every day in practice in specific situations, and how we can get better at this; and why we should.

You will be encouraged to distinguish, clarify, and develop your own personal ethical theoretical orientation—something that you *already* have in place right now and utilize every day, many times a day. You will learn to see your own personal moral ‘system’ more clearly, to refine it as you see fit and as you choose based on our studies, and to understand how your theoretical moral perspective influences the everyday moral judgments you make and actions you take, both consciously and unconsciously, within the framework of the contemporary business world—and what difference this makes to you ultimately insofar as you desire to be successful at living the best possible life.

2. Case Analyses/Judgments We will study and evaluate numerous critical moral issues and/or issue contexts arising in the business world today, such as the true purpose of capitalistic business, whistleblowing, social media in the workplace, discrimination against women and other groups, advertising to children, sex on the job, sweatshops, etc., *with a special emphasis this semester on moral issues arising in the global workplace.* Issues will be presented generally in a pro and con format, using two or more texts drawn from recent literature, each presenting a different moral perspective on the issue. You will read, analyze, reflect upon, carefully evaluate, and judge a number of these moral issues.

A conscious effort has been made to incorporate a multicultural and gender-sensitive ethical perspective into the structure of this course.

3. Personal Development There is a special emphasis in this course on the relationship between the study of moral philosophical principles and moral psychological theories, on the one hand, and the actual practice of living an ethical life on the other, as this is reflected in your everyday, individual personal and professional growth and development. As Aristotle and other moralists have remarked: What good is it to study Ethics if you do not put this *theoretical* knowledge into *practice* in your life? Our power of moral judgment is a kind of mental muscle, and, like all muscles, it develops through exercise. Hence, the title of the text for this course: *Business Ethics Practice.*

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will gain a working knowledge of various mainstream ethical theories including Virtue Ethics, Deontology, Utilitarianism, Existentialism, Cosmopolitanism, Pragmatism, Distributive Justice, etc., focusing on applying the principles of social responsibility to real-world business situations.
2. Students will learn to see the connection between best business practices and the implementation of social responsibility through the study of alternative business models such as Shared Value, Conscious Capitalism, the Triple Bottom Line, etc.
3. Students will learn to see and evaluate various aspects of the business world from an ethical and socially responsible perspective, including: the nature of capitalism, the use of human resources, consumer issues, global objectives regarding poverty, income and wealth inequality, corporate social responsibility, and sustainable environmental policy.
4. Students will learn how to effectively read, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate numerous specific issues involving Business Ethics questions, including such issues as international corporate social responsibility, sustainability, whistle-blowing, direct to consumer advertising, white-collar crime and the 2008 financial sector meltdown, corporate personhood, company loyalty, regulation and de-regulation, workplace privacy, sweatshops, and many others.
5. Students will learn to see the connection between best business practices and the roots of social responsibility through the exploration of various case studies of national and international firms from an ethical perspective, such as Walmart's response to the garment industry crisis in Bangladesh, the Keystone XL pipeline, Apple's international tax problems, the sustainability of fracking extraction techniques, the ethics of big data mining, etc.
6. Students will learn to make better moral judgments in their personal and professional lives by successfully advancing from pre-conventional and conventional sources of moral judgment to making moral judgments based on sound moral principles in the service of maximizing both personal welfare and social responsibility.
7. Students will become more emotionally intelligent and will be able to perceive, reason, understand, and manage emotions better and will clearly recognize the connection between emotional reactions and moral judgment.

I believe that what you learn in this course will be of real, practical value to you for the rest of your life and well-worth the investment of your time and effort now.

My Expectations: I have high goals and expectations for myself as a professor. I also have high expectations for you as a student in this course. I expect that you will attend all classes and do all the reading, writing, and research assignments by the due dates. I expect that you will spend a minimum of two hours of philosophical focus time outside of class—reading, writing, talking, thinking—for every hour of focused classroom time. I expect that you will participate in class by taking notes, asking questions, contributing to discussions, and participating in class interactive assignments. I expect that you will actively work with the Moodle online interactive feature of this course. Finally, I expect that your efforts will pay off and that you will successfully achieve a real boost to your intellectual and moral musculature.

My Commitment to You: I consider it an honor and privilege to be able to engage in philosophical inquiry with you this semester. I promise you that I will do my very best to make it worthwhile for you to come to every class. Regarding the necessity to grade your work, I promise you that I will evaluate your work fairly, impartially, and to the best of my professional ability without prejudice. I hope that you enjoy this course, that you do well, and *that you benefit from it personally*. I hope the same for myself. Ultimately, as I am sure you already realize, the benefit you get out of your philosophical study of Ethics—as with any endeavor—will be proportionate to the amount of effort you put into it. The same goes for me. I always have more to learn. I look forward to working with you in this collaborative educational effort.

Moodle: There is a **Moodle web site** for this course. Everyone is expected to have taken the Moodle tutorial and be able to log onto the class web site on a daily basis. This is an important course component.

Email: Since this course is online, it is important that we have an active email connection. Announcements will be sent to your UM email address. You are responsible for being aware of such announcements. Not reading email is not an excuse.

Grading:

3 Exams—100 pts. ea. = 300 pts; (See Make-up policy and Volunteer Option for EXAM 3 below)

➤ **Please note:** If you do not take an EXAM during the allotted time period, you *must* take a make-up exam within a week of the exam. Make-up exams will be different than regular exams. *A penalty of 5 points will apply without bona fide written reason.*

10 Assignment Forum Posts – 10 pts ea. = 100 pts (Note: Assignments posted after the due date will be charged three (-3) points off the top prior to evaluation.)

1 Final Project Report= 100 pts (2 comments max for points in any calendar week of the course. 100 word minimum. You keep track.)

Total number of possible course points = 500 points

Your final numerical grade, based on the 100 point scale, will be determined by adding together all of the points you earn and *dividing by 5*. Use the 100 point **Grading Scale** below to convert your numerical grade to a letter grade (Note: fractions .5 or less will be rounded down and .6 and over will be rounded up to next whole number; no exceptions. See Table 1 below. Table 2 is the 500 pt scale.)

Grading Scale: (General 100 point scale)

A = 100-93	B = 86-83	C = 76-73	D = 66-63
A- = 92-90	B- = 82-80	C- = 72--70	D--=62--60
B+ = 89-87)	C+ = 79-77	D+ = 69--67	F = 59 >

Table 1: Rounding

A = 100 - 92.6
A- = 92.5 - 89.6
B+ = 89.5 - 86.6
B = 86.5 - 82.6
B- = 82.5 - 79.6
C+ = 79.5 - 76.6
C = 76.5 - 72.6
C- = 72.5 - 69.6
D+ = 69.5 - 66.6
D = 66.5 - 62.6
D- = 62.5 - 59.6
F = 59.4 >

Table 2: 500 pt

A = 500 - 463
A- = 462 - 448
B+ = 447 - 433
B = 432 - 413
B- = 412 - 398
C+ = 397 - 383
C = 382 - 363
C- = 362 - 348
D+ = 347 - 333
D = 332 - 313
D- = 312 - 298
F = 297 >

Determining Where You Stand: You can determine approximately where you stand at any given point in the course by dividing the total number of course points that you have earned in the course so far by the total number of course points that have been offered up to that point, then multiply by 100 and check the 100 point scale above.

Late assignments: Late assignments may sometimes be accepted with a point penalty.

Academic Misconduct: *Please see the Honor Code for this course.* All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code.

Daily Class Topics & Exam Schedule

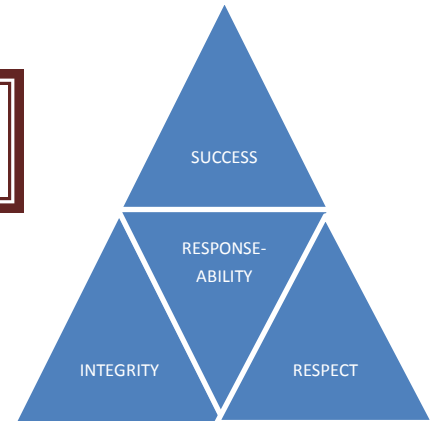
The daily topic and exam schedule—as well as all texts to be read—are available in the most up-to-date mode on the Moodle website for this course. Please check the Syllabus on Moodle as final arbiter of discrepancies. Assigned readings should be read prior to the class in which they will be discussed. *All texts can be accessed and downloaded through the Moodle web site for this course.*

See the Moodle web page for this course for the specific daily reading and exam schedule posted there in detail.

Honor Code: The Honor Code is a centrally important feature of this course. Please read it, and, if you agree with the terms and conditions, do nothing further. If you do not agree, please see me before continuing with the course. Thank you for your cooperation and collaboration in creating a successful learning environment for all.

Integrity, Respect, Response-ability

HONOR CODE



- ◆ I accept this Honor Code and all of the terms, requirements, and conditions for achieving success in this course as stated in the syllabus.
- ◆ I agree to work to the best of my ability in this class and realize that the benefit I get from this class will be proportionate to the effort I put into it.
- ◆ I agree to honestly do the work that is assigned; to complete assignments by the date due; to cooperate with other students in group activities; to actively participate in and contribute to the class; and to act honorably at all times.
- ◆ I agree to abide by the terms and conditions of this Honor Code and understand that it is an integral part of this Business Ethics & Social Responsibility course.

Signature*

Date

* Unless otherwise stated, your continued participation in the course from this point forward (9/29/2016) is accepted as your tacit 'signature' accepting the terms and conditions of the Honor Code in full. If you are unwilling to abide by any or all of the terms and conditions of the Honor Code, please contact the Instructor. 😊

Want to skip EXAM 3? Here's how...

Service Learning Option

Many would agree that donating some portion of your income, wealth, or time to help those in need (equal to about 1-10% of your annual gross income), is a moral duty for every capable member of society. Therefore, in conjunction with our study of philanthropy and other forms of charitable giving as an integral part of living the best possible life, you may choose to engage in a voluntary service learning project in lieu of taking EXAM 3. Here is how it works:



1. Locate a *bona fide* Missoula organization that is in need of volunteers. There are many in the Missoula community. Missoula has a greater number of non-profit organizations per capita than any other city in the U.S., so there are plenty of volunteer possibilities. Some local organizations looking for volunteers are listed below.
2. Engage in a minimum of 20 hours of volunteer service with the local civic organization you have chosen. Your volunteer position may extend beyond the semester, but a minimum of 20 hours must be completed starting now and before the last day of class. Your 20 hour donation of time must be exclusively for the fulfillment of the requirements for this project.
3. Create a brief (2-3 minute) video report (preferable) or write a 3-5 page essay about your volunteer experience (will be posted on Moodle). At a minimum, your report (whether video or written) should include brief descriptions or depictions of the following points:
 - the nature of the volunteer activity, name of organization, contact person;
 - people that you met and worked with including those who benefitted from your volunteer work;
 - why you think your volunteer work was worthwhile (or not);
 - what your feelings were about the experience, before, during, and afterward;
 - whether you would recommend this to others;
 - how this was a moral benefit (or burden) for you;
 - anything else you think would be pertinent and interesting
4. Students may volunteer individually, with a partner, or in small groups (4 max). Partners and groups may submit a single report. Let me know specifically if you choose this alternative.
5. Grading: If you complete all aspects of this assignment as described above, you will be *guaranteed* a grade of A (with a *guaranteed* point value between 100-93) as your EXAM 3 score.
6. **Deadline to apply: March 1, 2016!** You *must* apply for the Volunteer alternative. Inform me by email (include that you are in the ONLINE section) that you wish to do this assignment, whether individually, with a partner, or as a small group, and with which organization you have made plans to volunteer (set up your volunteer situation first). Thanks!

Here is a partial list of organizations using volunteers in Missoula. You may know of others....

[University of Montana Office of Civic Engagement](#)

[VolunteerMatch.org](#)

[VolunteerMissoula.org](#)

[Missoulaunitedway.org](#)

[YCAMissoula.org](#)

[volunteerLinkedin.com](#)

[MissoulaFoodBank.org](#)

[Habitat for humanity](#)

[BuddhaGarden.org](#)

[Humane Society](#)

[Missoula County Public schools](#)