

Business Ethics

Summer Session 2024: Monday/Wednesday 3:00 - 4:50 PM

Instructor

Dr. Callie McGrath
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Office Hours

Monday, 2:00 - 3:00 PM
Tuesday, 12:00 - 1:00 PM

Course Description

An introduction to philosophical ethics with a focus on ethical issues and problems in the context of business.

Course Format

We will meet via Zoom at the scheduled time. If you miss a class session, I strongly recommend meeting with me to catch up.

Evaluation

The major assignments for this course are two writing assignments, a presentation, and an oral final exam. In addition, you will be expected to regularly attend meetings, submit weekly journal entries, and do assigned reading.

Attendance

Attendance at class sessions is a prerequisite for succeeding in this course. Please let me know in advance if you expect to miss a class session.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Foundations

Week 1: Philosophical Methodology

- What is philosophy?
- What is ethical theory?
- Logic and Arguments
- Deductive validity and soundness
- Inductive Arguments
- Logical fallacies

Week 2: Meta-Ethical Preliminaries

- Is morality just a matter of opinion, or cultural norms?
- Are right and wrong just a matter of self-interest?
- Does morality require religion?

Week 3: Normative Ethical Theories

- A crash course in three classic ethical theories: utilitarianism, deontological ethics, and virtue ethics.

Unit 2: Case Studies

Week 4: Affirmative Action and Discrimination

- How is affirmative action morally different from other forms of discrimination?
- What moral obligations do businesses have not to discriminate?

Week 5: Business and the Environment

- Is it unethical for businesses to pollute the environment?
- Who bears moral responsibility for climate change?

Week 6: Labor Rights and Class Politics

- Do workers have a moral right to unionize? To require employees to join a union?
- Is it unethical to go on strike? To cross a picket line?

Week 7: Globalization

- What ethical issues does globalization present? How, if at all, has it involved moral failings?
- Is globalization a good thing, all things considered?

Unit 3: Capitalism, For and Against

Week 8: What is Capitalism?

- Where did capitalism come from?
- Why are some people workers and others capitalists?

Week 9: For Capitalism

- Where does the right to private property come from?
- Is there a moral justification for capitalism?

Week 10: Against Capitalism

- Is capitalism an immoral economic system? Why or why not?
- What social problems has capitalism been implicated in? Are the implications correct?