

# Business Ethics: Individual and Organizational Responsibilities and Issues (BSc)

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## Lecturer

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## Course objectives

The key objectives of this course are to a) drive students to think and understand the critical ethical issues facing contemporary business, as well as b) expose students to the many varying ways in which these issues can be approached. In doing so, students will end the course being able to:

- Understand the ethical context facing the contemporary manager
- Develop skills in analyzing ethical dilemmas using various philosophical and decision frameworks
- Apply their knowledge to critical ethical debates in current society, as well as everyday business and personal life
- Understand the concept of ethical relativism, and the influence of culture on ethical behaviors and beliefs.

## Course Content

The course will cover a large amount of key material in both a theoretical and applied manner. The course will begin by discussing the broad notion of ethics within business, and various frameworks which can be employed to analyse ethical dilemmas. Following from this, we will discuss the individual response to business ethics and the link between personal and professional ethics. Subsequently, organizational and corporate responses to ethical issues will be covered. Finally, key specific issues of globalization, and functional ethics will be covered (e.g. marketing and sales). More specifically, the topics in sequence will be:

- Broad perspectives on business ethics today and in the past
- Different theories of business ethics, and their use in decisions
- Personal values in the workplace, and individual decision-making
- Individual response and responsibility
- Corporate governance and social responsibility
- Organizational strategic response: Codes, culture, leadership
- Ethics in a global context
- Ethics of marketing and sales

### Prerequisites

N/A

### Instructional methods

The course will be taught using an interactive mix of formal lecture, less formal case discussion, and structured debate. Each of the 5 days will be broken into two sessions. The first part of each session will be a formal lecture on key concepts and theories. Following this, students will discuss short case studies in working groups, with a view to a guided discussion towards the end of the session. The final sessions will be taken up with formal debates amongst pairs of groups, on key ethical questions (e.g. the moral responsibility of business) and contemporary issues (e.g. who was ethically responsible for the 2008 global financial crisis). Students will be given time throughout the week to prepare in their groups for these debates, and will be given topics at the beginning of the week.

The course reading will also be innovative, being a combination of a formal text book, and a well known 'protest novel' – i.e. a fictionalisation of a major industrial disaster in the US. This approach is intended to humanize the abstract nature of ethical theory. **Students will be expected do the required textbook reading prior to each session.** While reading *Hawk's Nest* is not compulsory, and as such will not be specifically examined in the assessment, students will find that reading it will help them significantly advance their understanding of the issues.

### Reading list

#### *Required*

Fisher, C. and Lovell, A. (2008) *Business, Ethics and Values*. 3 Ed. Pearson Education Ltd

Skidmore, H (1941) *Hawk's Nest* Univ. Tennessee Press. [Note, the latest edition was published in 2004, I advise getting this one)

### Time schedule

There will be two sessions of three hours each per day.

Session 1 will run from 10:00 until 13:00

Session 2 will run from 14:00 until 17:00

Within each session, the time will be structured according to the day's content, but will include ample refreshment break time.



### Assessment

The course will be assessed with three components:

Exam:	60%
Debate:	30%
Class Discussion:	10%