



Bentley Doctoral Program

Thematic Seminar Ethics and Corporate Responsibility in a Changing Environment

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Course meeting: Thursday, 2:00. – 4:50 p.m.
Office Hours: As needed/by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The seminar focuses on three primary domains of inquiry: 1) an exploration of questions of ethics and responsibility in the context of commerce and profit, 2) the role of the corporation in the larger society, and 3) the role of the individual in the corporation. Within each of these areas, the course examines a range of ethical and social performance issues and challenges that managers must confront. Our goal is to broaden student understanding of the different theoretical arguments and tensions in this area, with a concomitant focus on application to the world of practice in general and one's dissertation research in particular.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This thematic seminar is designed to provide students with a broad understanding of the role of business in society, with a focus on questions of legitimacy, government regulation, ethics, corporate responsibility, stakeholder management, corporate culture, and the role of management in a changing environment.

READINGS AND LEARNING MATERIALS

Pre-course Readings:

- William Frederick, *Corporation Be Good!* Dog Ear Publishing (Indianapolis, IN), 2005.
- Mark Timmons, *Moral Theory*, Roman & Littlefield, 2002.

Pre-course Assignment:

During the summer please read *Moral Theory* by Mark Timmons and *Corporation Be Good!* by Bill Frederick. Your assignment is to draw out 2 or 3 themes in each book that you find compelling, focusing on the ideas, issues and questions that are of most interest to you personally. In a 5-7 page paper on each book, explain your reasoning and thoughts about these themes, why you find them compelling, exploring their implications for the study, research and practice of management. The paper on *Moral Theory* is due our first class meeting; the paper on *Corporation Be Good!* is due during our second session. These papers

will serve as the basis for our initial class discussion of ethics, ethical theory and corporate responsibility, and will be used over the course of the semester to ground our analysis of other topics in these areas. Although this is an ungraded assignment, the papers will be collected and be factored as part of your class participation grade.

Course Readings:

- Russ Shafer-Landau & Terence Cuneo (Eds.), *Foundations of Ethics: An Anthology*. Blackwell, 2007. **(FE)**
- James Dreier (Ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Moral Theory*, Blackwell, 2006. **(CDMT)**
- Articles on Blackboard **(BD)**, the web **(W)** and Reserve **(R)**. Note: Over the course of the semester, some articles may be changed or added based on class discussion and interest.

COURSE PEDAGOGY

The course will include lecture/discussions, case/reading discussion, and student presentations. Students will be asked to take an active part in one or more of the three domains in the course, by presenting material to the seminar members, shaping discussion questions for the week, and incorporating course materials into their research agenda as appropriate.

GRADING/PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Class participation will be based on an informed discussion of the readings for the week, with members of the seminar taking responsibility for presenting the articles. Students will be expected to write critical comparative reviews/applications of readings in ethics and CSR, drawing and reflecting on the latest research in the field in which they explore the conceptual and applied aspects of ethical and corporate social responsibility issues. The final presentation is based on an application of course material to your field of study and dissertation research.

The paper (and due dates) and presentation assignments will be discussed in class.

Paper 1	Reflections on Ethical Theory	25%
Paper 2	Reflections on CSR Theory	25%
Paper 3	Ethics/CSR Application Presentation	25%
Class Participation		25%

Please note that the course strictly adheres to the Bentley Academic Honesty Policy.

LIST OF TOPICS (Note: Assigned readings may be revised over the course of the semester)

I Course Introduction and Overview: Reactions to and Implications of Ethical Theory and Corporate Social Responsibility

Meeting 1 Course Introduction and Overview I: Ethics

Student presentations and discussion of pre-course assignment on Mark Timmons' *Moral Theory*

Meeting 2 Course Introduction and Overview II: CSR

Student presentations and discussion of pre-course assignment on William Frederick's *Corporation Be Good!*

As part of our discussion, we will also consider a recent point-counterpoint argument against and for CSR between University of Michigan strategy professor Aneel Karnani and the Global Executive Director of the Caux Roundtable Stephen Young. The exchange is posted on our course Blackboard site.

II Ethical Theory

This part of the course focuses on ethical theory and its ramifications for the business world. Class discussion will explore such issues as the nature of property, the extent to which ownership yields ethical obligations, who deserves what (notion of desert), what it means to have a moral obligation, the notion of viable principles of justice, and the extent to which such principles are universal.

Suggested Background Readings:

- Feinberg, J., "Justice and Personal Desert," In J. Feinberg, *Doing and Deserving* (Princeton University Press, 1970).
- Nagel, T. & Murphy, L., *The Myth of Ownership* (Oxford University Press, 2002).
- Nozick, R., *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (Basic Books, 1974)
- Minogue, K., "The Concept of Property and Its Contemporary Significance," in Kenneth & Chapman (Eds.), *Property* (New York University Press, 1980).
- Rawls, J., *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard University Press, 1971)

Meeting 3: Moral Skepticism

Read:

- J. Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values" (FE: #1)
- R. Joyce, "The Myth of Morality" (FE: #2)
- A.J. Ayer, "Critique of Ethics and Theology" (FE: #3)
- Horgan and Timmons, "Morality without Moral Facts" (CDMT: #13)

Meeting 4: Moral Realism

Read:

- P. Railton, "Moral Realism" (FE: #14)
- J. Hampton, "The Authority of Reason" (FE: #15)
- R. Shafer-Landau, "Ethics as Philosophy: A Defense of Ethical Nonnaturalism" (FE: #16)
- G. Sayre-McCord, "Moral Realism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
[URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-realism/>]

Meeting 5: Moral Motivation

Read:

- M. Smith, “The Externalist Challenge” ((FE: #17)
- N. Zangwill, “Externalist Moral Motivation” (FE: #18)
- Wallace, “Moral Motivation” (CDMT: #11)

Meeting 6: Moral Explanation, Disagreement, and Knowledge:

Read:

- N.L. Sturgeon, “Moral Explanations ((FE: #26)
- Zangwill, “Moral Epistemology and the Because Constraint” (CDMT: #15)
- Brink, “Moral Disagreement” (FE: #29)
- P. Railton, "Moral Explanation and Moral Objectivity," *JSTOR* [URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2653637.pdf?acceptTC=true>]

Meeting 7: Psychology and Ethics

Read:

- Jonathan Haidt, “The Moral Emotions” (W / R)
- Jonathan Haidt & Fredrik Bjorklund Lund, "Social Intuitionists Answer Six Questions about Moral Psychology" (W / R)
- Joshua Greene, "The Secret Joke of Kant's Soul" (W / R)
- R. Joyce, “What Neuroscience Can (and Cannot) Contribute to Metaethics,” in W. Sinnott-Armstrong (Ed.), *The Neuroscience of Morality: Emotion, Brain Disorders, and Development*, pp. 371-394.

II Corporate Social Responsibility

This part of the course will focus on the role of the corporation in the larger society, exploring the ethical viability of the free-market, the impact that commercial activity has on the outside world, the social contract, and corporate performance and the ideal of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

A number of practical business ethics/CSR questions will be examined, including business and the environment, outsourcing, philanthropy and volunteerism, issues in stakeholder management, the role of government, and so forth.

Suggested Background Readings:

- Buono, A.F. & Nichols, L.T., *Corporate Policy, Values and Social Responsibility* (Praeger, 1985)
- Donaldson, T. & Dunfee, T.W., *Ties that Bind: A Social Contracts Approach to Business Ethics* (Harvard Business School Press, 1999).
- Freeman, R.E., *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* (Pitman, 1984).
- Freeman, R.E. & Gilbert, D., *Corporate Strategy and the Search for Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 1989)
- Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits,” *New York Times Magazine*, 1970

- Post, J.E., Preston, L.E. & Sachs, S., *Redefining the Corporation: Stakeholder Management and Organizational Wealth* (Stanford University Press, 2002).
- Sisodia, R., Wolfe, D. & Sheth, J., *Firms of Endearment: How World-Class Companies Profit from Passion and Purpose* (Wharton School Publishing, 2007).

NOTE: Depending on schedules, Raj Sisodia, Professor of Marketing at Bentley, will join us to discuss the Conscious Capitalism movement and his noted research, *Firms of Endearment*. Date TBA.

Meeting 8: A Stakeholder Perspective on Corporate Performance

Read:

- **Background Reading:** M. Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits,” *New York Times Magazine*, 1970 (**Bd**)
- S. Ghosal, “Bad Management Theories are Destroying Good Management Practices,” *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 2005(**Bd**)
- L.A. Stout, “Commentary on the Social Responsibility of Corporate Entities: Bad and Not-So-Bad Arguments for Shareholder Primacy,” *Southern California Law Review*, 2002 (**Bd**)
- T. Donaldson & L.E. Preston, “The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence, and implications,” *Academy of Management Review*, 1995 (**Bd**)
- D. Parmar, et al, “Stakeholder Theory: The State of the Art,” *Academy of Management Annals*, 2010 (**Bd**)

Meeting 9: Conceptualizing Corporate Citizenship and Social Responsibility:

- D. Matten & A. Crane, “Corporate Citizenship: Toward an Extended Theoretical Conceptualization,” *Academy of Management Review*, 2005 (**Bd**)
- J. Campbell, “Why Would Corporations Behave in Socially Responsible Ways? An Institutional Theory of Corporate Social Responsibility,” *Academy of Management Review*, 2007 (**Bd**)
- R. Augilera, et al, “Putting the S Back in Corporate Social Responsibility: A Multilevel Theory of Social Change in Organizations,” *Academy of Management Review*, 2007 (**Bd**)

Meeting 10: Issues in CSR Research, Measurement & Governance

Read:

- K.X. Ng, “Inside the Boardroom,” *DePaul Business & Commercial Law Journal*, 2008 (**Bd**)
- M.J. Epstein & M-J Roy, Improving the Performance of Boards,” *Journal of General Management*, 2004 (**Bd**)
- A.F. Buono & L.T. Nichols, “Corporate Responsiveness Policies and the Dynamics of Bank Reinvestment Policy,” *Research in Corporate Social Policy and Performance* (**R**)
- J.D. Margolis, et al, “Does it Pay to be Good? A Meta-Analysis and Redirection of Research on the Relationship Between Corporate Social and Financial Performance,” Working Paper, 2007 (**W**)

III The Individual and the Corporation

What is a corporation? How are they designed? How do they change? Do members of a corporation have particular obligations towards each other? What are the ethical and social responsibility challenges that managers face in dealing with the complex realities of the global business world?

Suggested Background Readings:

- Bird, F.B. & Waters, J.A., “The Moral Muteness of Managers,” *California Management Review*, 1989, 32 (Fall), 73-88.
- Donaldson, T. & Dunfee, T., “When Ethics Travel,” *California Management Review*, 1999 (Summer).
- Driscoll, D.M. & Hoffman, W.M., *Ethics Matters: How to Implement Values-Driven Management* (Center for Business Ethics, 2000)

Meeting 11: Creating a Global Ethical Culture

Read:

- K. Kerber & A. Buono, “Rethinking Organizational Change: Reframing the Challenge of Change Management,” *Organization Development Journal*, 2005 (**Bd**)
- A. Buono, “Evolution of Organizational Forms,” Teaching Note (**Bd**)
- L. Payne, et al, “Up to Code: Does Your Company’s Conduct Meet World-Class Standards?” *Harvard Business Review*, 2005 (**W / R**)
- K. Leisinger, “Capitalism with a Human Face: The UN Global Compact,” *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, 2007 (**Bd**)
 - Review the UNGC and PRME websites:
 - ♦ <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/AboutTheGC/index.html>
 - ♦ <http://www.unprme.org>

NOTE: THANKSGIVING BREAK NOVEMBER 25

Meeting 12: Why Good People Do Bad Things: Applications in Corporate Life

Read:

- S. Gellerman, “Why ‘Good’ Managers Make Bad Ethical Choices” (**W / R**)
- R. Jackell, “Moral Mazes” (**W / R**)
- Messick & Bazerman, “Ethical Leadership and the Psychology of Decision Making” (**W / R**)
- M.R. Banaji, M.H. Bazerman & D. Chugh, “How (Un)Ethical Are You?” *Harvard Business Review*, 2003, 81, 56-64. (**W / R**)

Meeting 13: Applications in Research and Field of Study

Student presentations

Meeting 14: Applications in Research and Field of Study

Student presentations