

Chaminade University of Honolulu

RE 334

Business Ethics
Course Syllabus
July 7- Sept. 8, 1998

Adjunct Professor: Lorenn Walker, J.D., M.P.H.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary course examines ethical issues in business from religious perspectives. We will cover five business ethics areas: 1) the employee; 2) the consumer, customer & competitor; 3) the environment 4) society and; 5) government.

Students will develop an understanding of individual and social aspects of ethical issues, methods for dealing with ethical issues, and the historical development of Christian moral teachings as applied to business. The course will also give you some practice analyzing and presenting your ideas both in class discussions and in writing.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

This course will rely on a hands-on, applied method of instruction. Students are expected to participate in weekly class discussions and to make presentations throughout the course. Short talks will supplement and reinforce the concepts and tools in the textbook. Guest speakers will be invited.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Seven (7) essays 2 to 4 pages double spaced—70 points

Papers are due on the topics indicated below under Schedule of Class Meetings and Assignments. Each paper is worth a total 10 points. Late papers can only earn up to 9 points. These papers are based on the text readings and your personal opinions. Please do not copy answers out of the text. Put your opinions in your own words. There are *no right or wrong answers*--you can have any opinion, but it must be explained and supported clearly. Try and use real experiences or analogies to explain the reason for your opinion. Grading will be on the development of your rationale for your

opinion. Your explanation for your particular opinion will be the relevant factor in grading and not your answer. The form of the writing e.g., correct grammar etc., will also influence grading. The class will exchange papers and edit each other's work, but the professor will assign the final grade on the papers.

2. Class participation—20 points

Points will be given by the instructors for your participation in presentations and discussions in class.

3. Final Oral Presentation—10 points

For the final you will be required to prepare an oral presentation to the class on a topic of interest to you in business ethics. You may use overheads or any other media for your presentation. You are encouraged to include class participation. An outline is required for each student and instructor in the class. You may also distribute any other handouts at your discretion. Your final presentation should be at least 10 minutes long.

The possible points total 100. An A will be earned with 100 to 90 for an A, 80-89 for a B, and so on. In other words, you must excel at most things, but not everything, to earn an A.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Text books: *Case Studies in Business, Society and Ethics*, Tom Beauchamp; *Ethics of World Religions*, Arnold Hunt, et al., *Principals of Environmental Management*, Rogene Buchholz. The books are available at the campus bookstore.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

July 7: Introductions and organizing meeting. Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development theory. Values clarification exercise and personal code of ethics explored.

- July 14: No Class--Instructor on Mainland. Students to watch the movie: *Class Action*, featuring Gene Hackman. What are the ethical issues in this movie? How would the issues be perceived from a Judaism perspective? Be prepared to discuss your paper in class on July 21. This will be expected each week.
- July 21: 1st paper, described above, due for class discussion.
- July 28: 2nd paper due. Consumer & customer issues: advertising. Prepare a paper on one of the assigned cases: *Kellogg Cereals* page 146, or *Cisco, the "Wine Fooler,"* p. 227, both in Beauchamp text. What ethical issues arise in the cases? How would the Christian perspective influence the ethical issues and how do this Christian perspective differ from the Judaism perspective?
- Aug 4: 3rd paper due. Environmental issues. Read *The Exxon Valdez* case. Answer the assigned questions at page 426 of Buchholz text. Also consider Islam perspective and how it differs from Judaism and Christian perspectives.
- Aug 11: 4th paper due. Environmental issues: Animal Health and Safety. Read *Save the Turtles* case page 434 Buchholz text. Answer the assigned questions. Consider a Hindu perspective and how it differs from the other three religions we've covered to date.
- Aug 18: 5th paper due. Social issues: Community responsibility. Read *Marketing Infant Formula*, page 172, Beauchamp text. What are the ethical issues in this case? How would one with a Buddhism perspective determine the issues? How does the Buddhism perspective differ from the other four religious views that we've discussed to date?

- Aug 25: 6th paper due. Social issues: Social policy on discrimination in employment. Read *Polaroid In and Out of Africa*, page 275, Beauchamp text. What ethical issues arise from this case? How would one with a Confucian perspective view the ethical issues? How would the other five religious views we'd discussed to date, view the ethical issues?
- Sept 1: 7th paper due: The Government: Regulation and the Legislative Process. Read *Manufacture and Regulation of Laetrile*, page 211 Beauchamp text. 8th paper due. Public Policy and Corporate Responsibility. Read H.B. Fuller in *Honduras: Street Children and Substance Abuse*. Page 185 Beauchamp text. What ethical issues arise from these cases? How do the six religious views we've studied apply to the ethical issues in the cases?
- Sept 8: Final Presentations. Prepare an outline to distribute to the class and give an oral presentation, using any demonstrative or other visual aids, on an ethical issue in business. You may chose any case you want including any of the cases in the text books that we didn't study in class. Students will evaluate each other's presentations and provide feedback.

The true test of intelligence is not how much we know how to do, but how we behave when we don't know what to do.

John Holt