

PHILOSOPHY 251

SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: JOHN DOUARD

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Text: Moral Issues in Business, Shaw & Barry, Cengage

In this course we will examine ethical issues raised by business practices in the United States. Those practices take place in a social and cultural context, and we will begin by considering the moral and social problems of capitalism, including the relationships corporations and small businesses have to their “stakeholders.” Of course, shareholders are stakeholders, but other stakeholders include employees, consumers, communities, other countries and their citizens (who are often employees and of American corporations, and consumers of their products and services – think Apple). The obligations of corporations to various stakeholders often lead to moral conflicts, and we need some way to resolve these conflicts. The moral problems we will discuss affect you. This course will be an opportunity to confront the moral issues of business, especially as they impact not only business practices themselves, but as they impact culture as a whole. We begin with the question: Is there anything that is not for sale? If so, why? Why do we recoil from the commodification of some goods and services? Our answers to those questions express how we wish to live our lives.

You will take a midterm exam and a final exam. In addition, groups of three or four students will each work on a research project, to be determined during the first two weeks of class. The research project will be multi-faceted so each student will have a component of the project to development. You will give a presentation of your research, and you will each write a paper on your part of the project.

Midterm: 20 points

Final: 20 points

Outline of topic: 10 points

Presentation: 10 points

First short paper: 10 points – 5-7 pages

Second short paper: 10 points – 5-7 pages

Final paper based on presentation: 20 points – 10-12 pages

PLAGIARISM IS, OF COURSE, PROHIBITED. *Definition: In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.*

This definition applies to texts published in print or on-line, to manuscripts, and to the work of other student writers.

If you plagiarize any of your work, it will be reported to your Dean and the University has a procedure for dealing with it. At that point, your grade will be out of my hands.

Class participation and attendance will be used increase your grade if the grade is on the border between two grades.

SCHEDULE

Sep. 7	Is everything for sale?	Sandel, Hyde
Sep. 14	Normative Ethical Theories	53-80; 84-95
Sep. 21	Justice and economic distribution	104-127; 132-48
Sep. 28	Nature of Capitalism	149-98

FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE: DOES CAPITALISM PLACE BUSINESSES AND THEIR AGENTS AT MORAL RISK?

Oct. 5	Corporation as Person	199-242; 254-59; French and Citizen's United handouts.
Oct. 12	The Workplace 1	373-426

OUTLINE OF TOPICS DUE

Oct. 19	MIDTERM
Oct. 26	FILM TBA
Nov. 2	The Workplace 2

427-84

SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE: ARE CORPORATIONS PERSONS?

Nov. 9	Job discrimination	547-95
Nov. 16	Consumers	260-326
Nov. 23	The environment	327-72

Nov. 30	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
Dec. 7	PRESENTATIONS & FINAL PAPER DUE
Dec. 21	FINAL EXAM

I reserve the right to revise this syllabus as becomes necessary.