



BU328 Business Ethics

Instructor Information:	Xuanwei Cao Email: caoxw2002@163.com Office Hours: Determined by Instructor		
Term:	June 27, 2022 – July 22, 2022	Credits:	4 units
Class Hours:	Monday through Friday, 120 minutes per teaching day		
Discussion Sessions:	2 hours each week, conducted by teaching assistant(s)		
Total Contact Hours:	66 contact hours (1 contact hour = 45 mins, 3000 mins in total)		
Required Texts (with ISBN):	Business and Society: Ethics, Sustainability and Stakeholder Management, 10th edition ANN K. BUCHHOLTZ / ARCHIE B. CARROLL 9781285734293, Cengage		
Prerequisite:	No		



Course Overview:

Business activity is embedded in larger society, and does not function in a vacuum. Indeed, businesses require legitimacy, or a “license to operate” from society, and cannot function effectively (if at all) without this legitimacy. In this course, you will learn to contextualize business activity within larger society and think more broadly about the interactions between business and other sectors of society. We will cover a number of systematic related topics that help improve your critical thinking on business in modern time. You will leave the course with a deeper understanding of the role of business in society as well as the transformation of business towards sustainable business. Importantly, this understanding of the social context of business will also make you a better businessperson and manager.

General Course Goals:

Through the learning of this course, students are expected to improve their awareness on business ethics and their critical understanding on the essence of business in capitalism. The skills on analysing business ethics related issues including ethical judgment, stakeholder analysis, sustainability. For business students, through the study of this module, it is also expected that more students could keep high ethical standard in their future career.

General Education Objectives:

By the end of the study students should:

- be more aware of the complexity of the various ethical, societal and environmental issues facing business, and thus managers;
- understand how to integrate an ethical component into managerial decision-making;
- be able to better understand their personal values and integrate them into their decision making;
- possess knowledge concerning the transformation of business towards sustainability;
- be better able to engage in constructive dialogue, both with those who share similar views and those who differ.

Specific Course Goals:

- Sensitivity on business ethics related issues;
- Capability on stakeholder analysis;
- Ability of critically analyzing real business cases;

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE:

The study of this course would not be a lecturer-dominated pattern. Learning will be student driven. Discussion is central to this course, and preparation is therefore vital. The role of the instructor will be that of a facilitator, who serves as 1) a resource for student-driven learning, 2) a guide for classroom discussion, and 3) an integrator of concepts and experiences.

In this class, we will discuss topics that may raise strong and diverse opinions. This is a good thing! The real world is complicated, and this class provides a “friendly forum” to discuss complex issues. We must all recognize that each of us, instructor included, come to the class



with their own background, experience, and cognitive processes. Diversity of interpretation and opinion is to be treated as a richness to be enjoyed and encouraged. This appreciation does not mean, however, that anything goes. First, being able to defend an opinion requires being prepared, and it is the responsibility of each participant to prepare themselves for each class. Second, we will build an atmosphere of respect towards the texts that we discuss, as well as to the insight of our classmates. While we are free to disagree about an issue, we must do so respectfully.

In summary, the nature of this class requires a high level of preparation and participation from students. Active learning and class engagement are critical for ensuring the success of the study of this course. Broad reading, active dialogue and conversations with group members as well as curiosity on real-world business phenomena are important to ignite the passion on studying this course with interesting, valuable, and hopefully fun learning experience and valuable learning outcomes.

Resources Needed: access to some business magazines

Student Responsibilities: make preparation before class, active engagement in class.



Grading Policy

Group Report (40%)	Group Report (I)	20%
	Group Report (II)	20%
Exam Paper (40%)	Final exam	40%
Attendance and Participation (20%)	Tutorial engagement	20%

At the early beginning of the study, you will be assigned to groups. Each group should choose a model/case company. Throughout the learning, each group is expected to facilitate class discussion and contribute to introduce the practices of the company on relevant issues. In the third week, each group should present the current practices of the chosen case company on a specific business ethical issue. This is the 20% part of the performance of Group Report. The Group Report (I) aims to nurture students' sensitivity on business ethics related issues and their critical thinking. By the end of the course, before the final exam, each group should present further the second-part report to highlight feasible and rational suggestions/solutions to help the case company to be transformed to a sustainable business. This part composes 20% of the performance of the Group Report.

Exam paper would be composed of two short cases to test your comprehensive understanding and analytical skills after the study of this course. Independent answering to the exam questions reflects to great extent your input in the study as well as the development of your capability on critical thinking.

Participation in each class will be noted, and your participation grade will reflect a sum of your class-by-class participation over the entire term. Class participation will be evaluated with an emphasis on quality over quantity. Good participants would show their excellent preparations and contribute in a very significant way to ongoing discussions.

Grading Scale

Number grade	Letter grade	GPA
90-100	A	4.0
85-89	A-	3.7
80-84	B+	3.3
75-79	B	3.0
70-74	B-	2.7
67-69	C+	2.3
65-66	C	2.0
62-64	C-	1.7
60-61	D	1.0
≤59	F (Failure)	0



Class Schedule

Date	Lecture	Readings
Day 1	Introduction & Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Video: Celeste Headlee. https://www.ted.com/talks/celeste_headlee_10_ways_to_have_a_better_conversation • Case: Harris, Sophia. 2016. Healthy fast food? McDonald's kale salad has more calories than a Double Big Mac. CBC News, Feb 3, 2016. http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/mcdonalds-kale-calorie-questions-1.3423938
Day 2	Critical thinking	<p>http://www.smarthinking.ir/dl/Asking%20the%20Right%20Questions,%20A%20Guide%20to%20Critical%20Thinking,%208th%20Ed.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul, Richard and Elder, Linda, (2001) Center for Critical Thinking: http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/critical-thinking-distinguishing-between-inferences-and-assumptions/484 • Discussion: documentary film. American Factory
Day 3	The Emergence and Nature of the Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion documentary film. The Corporation.
Day 4	The Purpose of Business Corporations	<p>Friedman, Milton. 1970. The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits. New York Times Magazine: 122-126.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shareholders vs. Stakeholders. The Economist. Apr 22, 2010. • Competing on social purpose. Harvard Business Review. 2017.9 • Larry Fink's 2019 Letter to CEOs. Purpose & Profit. • Business Roundtable's Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation • Case: Roche
Day 5	The Concept and Critique of Corporate Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, N. Craig. 2003. "Corporate Social Responsibility: Whether or How?" California Management Review 45.4: 52-76. Karnani, Aneel. 2010. The Case Against Corporate Social Responsibility. Wall Street Journal, Europe [Brussels] 23 Aug 2010: R.1. • Why Corporate Social Responsibility Could Be Your Next Strategic Priority. Forbes, July 25, 2017.



Day 6	Corporate Citizenship and the Stakeholder Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Would It Take to Get Businesses to Focus Less on Shareholder Value? Harvard Business Review. 2018.8 Case: Nestle
Day 7	Business Ethics Fundamentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://vault.temple.edu/video/business-ethics/ • Exercise: Cave Rescue
Day 8	Personal and Organizational Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Case for Ethical Leadership • Why I Am Leaving Goldman Sachs • Exercise: Ethical Judgment
Day 9	Ethical and Social Issues in Global Arena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical Dilemmas of Globalization • Discussion: The World is Flat • A New Paradigm for “Just” Business • Net Positive
Day 10	Business Ethics and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business, Technology, and Ethics: The Need for Better Conversations. MIT Sloan Management Review, July 5, 2018. https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/business-technology-and-ethics-the-need-for-better-conversations/ • The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. McKinsey. Jan 2019. https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/artificial-intelligence/the-ethics-of-artificial-intelligence • Discussion: The Dilemma of Data Ethics • https://blogs.oracle.com/datascience/it's-time-to-talk-about-data-ethics
Day 11	Group Report (I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group #1 _____ • Group #2 _____ • Group #3 _____ • Group #4 _____
Day 12	Consumer Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Consumer Social Responsibility? • Responsible Purchasing: A Fair Cup---towards better tea buying • Case: Unilever
Day 13	Employee Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hero or pariah? A whistleblower's dilemma • Case: Apple
Day 14	Business Ethics and Sustainable Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When Sustainability Means More Than Green
Day 15	Open Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online synchronous communication (zoom meeting)
Day 16	Business as Usual and the Challenge of Capitalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalism at Risk. Harvard Business Review. 2011.9 • Can Capitalism Be Fixed By Making Companies More Just?



		<p>https://hbr.org/podcast/2020/01/can-capitalism-be-fixed-by-making-companies-more-just</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Shared Value <p>https://www.exed.hbs.edu/creating-shared-value/</p> <p>Davos Manifesto 2020: The Universal Purpose of a Company in the Fourth Industrial Revolution</p> <p>https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/12/global-economy-trends-50-years-davos-world-economic-forum/</p>
Day 17	The Future of Corporations, Capitalism, and Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mintzberg, Henry. 2015. Rebalancing Society. Read Chapters 4 and 5 (pp. 47 – 93).http://www.mintzberg.org/sites/default/files/page/rebalancing_full.pdf • Video: Saving Capitalism with Robert Reich. University of California Television (UCTV). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbQEPjH5XF E [Watch to 45min52sec; remainder (Q&A) is optional] <p>And finally, two <u>optional</u> readings for you, hopefully of interest and use in your careers & lives:</p> <p>How will you measure your life? Harvard Business Review. 2010.7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mullainathan, Sendhil. (2015). “Why a Harvard Professor Has Mixed Feelings When Students Take Jobs in Finance.” The New York Times. April 10, 2015: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/12/upshot/why-a-harvard-professor-has-mixed-feelings-when-students-take-jobs-in-finance.html?_r=0
Day 18	Group Report (II)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group #1 _____ • Group #2 _____ • Group #3 _____ Group #4 _____
Day 19	Revision	
Day 20	Final Exam	