

Mount St. Mary's University

PHI 192 Business Ethics TTh 4-5:30pm

Doheny Campus, Bldg. 4, Rm. 202

Instructor: Nate Greely

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Office Hours: TTh 3-4pm, Location TBD

Course Description:

Ethics is the study of the nature of rights and wrong. Business ethics focuses on what business activities are right or wrong. The course will begin with a review of the most popular ethical theories and theories of distributive justice. Then we will explore whether businesses are even the sorts of things that can act morally. We will then cover to whom businesses are morally responsible, what sorts of things can be sold, what sorts of hiring practices are morally acceptable, and finally whether and when advertising is moral.

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to demonstrate their understanding of ethical issues in business by engaging in discussions, completing written exams, and writing and revising an original essay that argues for a specific thesis related to ethical theory.

Textbook:

Course texts will be available for free on Canvas.

Assessments:

The assessments in this course are largely designed to keep you engaged with the lectures, readings, discussions, and other students in the course. Your grades for discussion, quizzes, essay proposal, and rough draft total 55% of your grade. It should be easy to do well on these components if you stay engaged. The midterm, final exam, and final draft of your essay will be graded on quality, and to get top marks on these components you will be required to demonstrate understanding of the material (for the midterm and final exam) and some original philosophical insight (for the final essay). Your grade in the course will be composed of the following:

Attendance and Participation – 15%

Each student is required to post weekly to the Canvas discussion board, **due each Sunday 11:59pm**. The subject of the post will be one of the readings for the upcoming week. The post can be an objection to some claim or argument in the reading, a request for clarification of some claim or argument in the reading, or an extension of some claim or argument from the reading. You should avoid merely summarizing points from the reading. Original thought is the goal. The hope is that these posts will help you begin to formulate an original thesis for your essay.

Quizzes – 15%

At the end of each two-week unit, we will devote one class period to review, followed by a short quiz on that unit. The goal of the quizzes is to assess whether students are keeping up with reading and lectures. They are designed to be quite easy for students who do so.

Midterm – 15%

The midterm will consist of two short essays (1-2 pages each). Students will be given four essay prompts and may choose to write on any two of them. The essay prompts will be on topics from Units 1-3 of the course. The short essays should demonstrate understanding of the claims and arguments from the readings and lectures on the given topic. **The essay prompts will be posted 3/3 by 11:59pm and the midterm will be in class on 3/6.**

Presentations – 10%

Students will give a brief presentation in class in which they explain the general topic of their term papers, the thesis, and the original argumentative strategy they intend to pursue. The paper idea needn't be polished at this stage, but it should reflect an honest attempt to construct an original argument. Students will receive feedback from me and their colleagues, which they should consider when writing the rough draft. After the midterm on 3/6 I will post several essay prompts to Canvas. These prompts are meant as examples of the sort of paper you could write. You are not required to write on one of these prompts, but you may. **Presentations will occur in class on 3/27 and 4/1.**

Essay draft – 15%

One of the most important parts of writing an essay is revision. Students will be required to turn in a rough draft of their final essay, **due 4/17 by 11:59pm, submitted through Canvas.** The essay should present and develop an original thesis on some topic from the course material. Prompts will be provided, but students are welcome to develop their own essay topics, possibly based on a discussion board exchange. The essay should be narrowly focused on a very specific claim, likely a single premise in an argument presented in a lecture or reading. Provide an original argument for your view about that claim and consider objections to your argument. There is no length requirement, but 5-7 pages is a rough target length. The rough draft will be returned with comments on how the essay might be developed and improved. It should be easy to get full points for your draft so long as it reflects an honest effort to make a cogent argument.

Final Essay – 15%

Students will revise their essay drafts based on the comments they receive. You are almost certainly expected to make significant changes to your essay in order to get top marks. The final draft will be graded on quality, not merely on effort. **The final draft will be due 5/5 at 11:59pm, submitted through Canvas.**

Final Exam – 15%

The final exam will be similar in format to the midterm. Students will be given four essay prompts and may choose to write on any two of them. The essay prompts will be on topics from Units 4-6 of the course. The short essays should demonstrate understanding of the claims and arguments from the readings and lectures on the given topic. The final exam questions will be posted 12/3. The final exam will be **in class ?**

Course Schedule

1/14 - Course Introduction

Unit 1 - Ethical Theory Review

1/16 - Utilitarianism – Rachels Ch. 8

1/21 - Deontology – Rachels Ch. 9-10

1/23 - Virtue Ethics/Care Ethics – Rachels Ch.11-12

1/28 – Review and Quiz

Unit 2 - Distributive Justice Review

1/30 - Nozick

2/4 - Rawls

2/6 – Nussbaum

2/11 – Review and Quiz

Unit 3 - Are Businesses Moral Agents?

2/13 – French 1979

2/18 – Velasquez 1983

2/20 – Hasnas 2012

2/25 – Review and Quiz

Unit 4 - Who are Businesses For?

2/27 – Friedman 1970

3/4 – Stout; Review for Midterm

3/6 – Midterm; Essay Prompts Posted

3/11 – Spring Break, No Class

3/13 – Spring Break, No Class

Unit 5 – What Can You Sell?

3/18 – Brecher; Taylor

3/20 – Nussbaum; Anderson

3/25 – Review and Quiz

3/27 – Presentations

4/1 – Presentations

Unit 6 - Environmental Responsibility

4/3 – Sinnott-Armstrong

4/8 – Banks

Unit 7 - Hiring

4/15 – Mosley; Wolf-Devine

4/17 – Review and Quiz; Draft Due

Unit 8 - Advertising

4/22 – Crisp

4/24 – Paine

4/29 – Review for Final Exam

5/1 – Study Days, No Class

5/5 - Final Exam; Final Paper Due

Grading:

Numeric	Grade	Numeric	Grade
Over 93%	A	73% to 76%	C
90% to 92%	A-	70% to 72%	C-
87% to 89%	B+	67% to 69%	D+
83% to 86%	B	63% to 66%	D
80% to 82%	B-	60% to 62%	D-
77% to 79%	C+	<60%	F

Diversity and Inclusion

Mount Saint Mary's University's commitment to equity, diversity and justice (EDJ) is steeped in the tradition and legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJ), our Catholic

identity, mission and values. We are unwavering in our pursuit of inclusion, belonging and antiracism. We aspire to achieve our love of dear neighbor without distinction, which permeates all forms of social identities and human experiences. We honor and celebrate our similarities and differences. We are committed to the full inclusion of the entire Mount community. Due to historical legacies of exclusion, we offer particular care for underrepresented populations. We define diversity in the broadest sense, including but not limited to, age, differences in culture, citizenship status, disability, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, generational history, genetic information, geographic origin, language, political perspectives, mental and physical ability, military service, national origin, race and ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, size and socioeconomic class. Welcoming individuals from a variety of backgrounds improves and enriches our learning, living and working environments. Any breach of these values harms our community. Mount Saint Mary's University transforms its culture through the radical pursuit of institutionalized change. We strive for a campus where students, staff, faculty, alumnae and all whom we encounter feel welcomed, valued and are supported to reach their full potential. As we pursue our never-ending journey toward a more equitable, inclusive and antiracist campus in our richly diverse community, we welcome you.

Change in Modality SOP

Potential Emergency Disruption: Should the course modality undergo a long-term or permanent change during the semester, the instructor (with permission of the Department Chair/Program Director and approval of the Provost for long-term changes) will provide a comprehensive update of how the class will continue and any changes that may result.

University PPE Policy

All students must comply with the University personal protective equipment (PPE) policy while on campus. Non-compliant students will not be allowed to stay in class.

Generative AI/AGI and ChatGPT

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments and activities for this course require your original and authentic work, submitted for the first time in any academic or professional context. Use of AI-generated material (such as ChatGPT and other AI tools) is academically dishonest unless (1) you are asked to include material using AI as part of an assignment or (2) you request and receive express permission from an instructor.

Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) Guidelines

Mount Saint Mary's University, Los Angeles is an institution committed to delivering an exceptional educational experience for its students. As one of our Five Pillars of Distinction, Innovative Teaching and Learning is woven into the fabric of the University. Therefore, it is our responsibility as an institution to outline and inform our faculty and students in instruction and practice of the "Regular and Substantive Interactions" (RSI) Guidelines set forth by the Department of Education, and subsequently our accreditor, WSCUC Senior College and University Commission (Faculty, visit myMSMU "Just for Faculty" for more information). Substantive interaction refers to a variety of faculty actions that support student learning, such as

initiating class activities, facilitating discussions, giving feedback for assignments and responding to student questions. Some of the ways students play a role in substantive interaction include participation with activities, reflecting on topics, listening to their peers and collaborating on group projects.

Academic Integrity

Degree candidates are expected to adhere to the MSMU [statements on Academic Integrity](#) in the MSMU catalog and myMSMU. This includes avoiding plagiarism and constructing your best work on each assignment. Papers and other work including images, should not be copied from the Internet. Infractions may be addressed by the MSMU administration and possibly include an Academic Integrity Board review.

Academic freedom statement

For faculty, academic freedom in research, teaching, and publication is fundamental to the advancement of truth and learning. Freedom of thought and expression is essential to fulfill the mission, and obligations, of academics and educators. The student has the freedom to express ideas that differ from any interpretation or any viewpoint presented by an instructor. In exercising this freedom, there should be no disruption of the academic process of the class. The student has the right to be evaluated accurately and fairly on academic performance as outlined by the instructor at the beginning of the course. The student has the right to discuss and review any academic performance with instructors. A student who believes that an evaluation was made on a basis other than academic performance has the right to an appeal procedure. See the University [Academic Freedom Policy](#) for more information.

Academic Grievance statement

The Academic Grievance Committee shall receive and investigate complaints, excluding those pertaining to a learning disability (see College Disability Grievance Procedure) that have not been resolved on a lower level (Instructor and Department Chair/Program Director). Students have 14 business days from the posting of grades or dismissal notice to appeal a grade/standing in program. The burden of proof is on the student. A student who believes that the instructor made a clerical error in computing the grade or an egregious error of judgment in evaluating the student's performance has the right to an appeal procedure. See the University [Academic Grievance Policy](#) for more information on the Academic Grievance Committee's jurisdiction, functions, and resolution process. Email: AcademicGrievance@msmu.edu

Disability Statement

MSMU is committed to ensuring the full participation of all qualified students in its programs and activities. MSMU will provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, provided the accommodations do not create an undue hardship or fundamentally alter the nature of the University's programs or activities. Reasonable accommodations are provided on an individual, case-by-case basis.

If you have a documented disability, or if you think you may have a disability, and you need a reasonable accommodation, you must register with Disability Services and follow MSMU's

procedures to request accommodations. Disability Services works with students confidentially, through an individualized and interactive process, to identify reasonable accommodations. MSMU does not disclose disability-related information without student consent. Only Disability Services may approve disability accommodations.

Each semester, it is the student's responsibility to generate accommodation letters for each instructor through the myDSP portal. After delivery of the accommodation letters, it is the student's responsibility to request a meeting with each instructor, and it is the instructor's responsibility to participate in such a meeting, to discuss the approved accommodations and agree upon how to implement. If the student and instructor are unable to agree on implementation, or if the instructor believes the approved accommodations may compromise the academic integrity or create a fundamental alteration of the course and/or program, both the student and the instructor must consult Disability Services.

For further information about services for students with disabilities, contact Disability Services by email at disability@msmu.edu or by phone at (310) 954-4144. You may also visit the Chalon Academic Support Center, H207, or the Doheny Academic Support Center, Building 3. Information is also available on myMSMU under Student Life, Disability Services.

Please be advised that this class may be audio- or video-recorded as an accommodation under the American with Disabilities Act, but only with prior permission from Disability Services and the instructor. Students may only use such recordings for personal use; no posting or further distribution or use is permitted.

Student credit hour policy

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that reasonably approximates not less than:

- (1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) for other academic activities, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours

Taken from: <http://msmu.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2016-2018/2016-2018-Catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/General-Information-for-Undergraduate-Programs/Student-Credit-Hour>

Academic Accommodation:

If you require any form of accommodation on the grounds of disability, please visit this link: <https://www.msmu.edu/academics/academic-support/disability-services/> well in advance so that you can submit the necessary documents.

Contact information is disability@msmu.edu

Religious Accommodation:

If you require any accommodation on religious grounds, please alert me in writing as soon as possible.

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