

# **PHL. 203 BUSINESS ETHICS: SYLLABUS**

## **TEXTS:**

Required:

Snoeyenbos, Almeder and Humber, **Business Ethics**, 3rd edition

Forsberg & Pfeiffer, **Ethics on the Job**, 3rd edition

**THE CT SUPPLEMENT and Other Supplemental material for Philosophy 203 on Educator and Handouts** (You are required to use Educator and to download material on it that is not handed out in class: Begin by downloading the material listed in Topic #1)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The following are the course **objectives**:

1. To give you a practical background in critical thinking generally and as applied specifically to ethical analysis, argumentation, discussion, writing, and the justification of ethical positions.
2. To acquaint you with some of the terms, issues, and conflicts of importance for discussing ethical issues in business. The emphasis is on understanding the facts, concepts and ethical claims in the issues, understanding the arguments on each side of the issue, and being able to formulate and defend your own ethical conclusions.
3. To allow you to apply critical thinking and ethical analysis to various important general issues, personal conflicts and a variety of case studies in business. The aims are to develop your ability to handle various types of ethical situations in business, to be able to analyze personal conflicts you might face in a business setting, to be able to critically assess other people's analyses of ethical conflicts, and to be able to understand and analyze ethical articles concerning business issues. There will be a focus on factual, conceptual and moral elements of ethical reasoning and argumentation.

**Concepts** that may be covered include the nature of the capitalist system, the nature of profit, ethics vs. law, the nature and duties of particular professional roles and environmental justice. **Moral** issues that may be covered include employee and employer rights - privacy, the ethics of leadership, affirmative action, social responsibilities of businesses, misleading advertising, and others.

Throughout the course I will stress personal moral decision making represented by the **RESOLVEDD** strategy, as well as the application of the methods of critical thinking that emphasize objectivity, reasoning, justification and standards of good evidence to our analyses.

## **METHODS:**

The **primary method** of the class will be **discussions of case studies and readings**. For some analyses you will work in groups and present your conclusions; for others, I will conduct in class case or article discussions. This entails that you read the assigned case studies and articles before class and come willing and able to present your analysis of each. The discussions will be Socratic dialogue, open exchange of opinions and objections, and more formal debates/presentations that use a group study approach. There will be a number of such formal debates during the semester (instructions for these activities are covered in DEBATE INSTRUCTIONS on Educator). Introductions to issues or topics will be presented in lectures. There will also be work on ungraded in-class or take-home writing assignments that will form the background for discussions and prepare you for the more formal, graded assignments.

**The focus will be on a group approach to learning the basics of ethical analysis.** The reasons for this are: 1) philosophy is most effective as a group endeavor; 2) group discussion is standard business practice; 3) a large group of informed people, who share a common problem and a familiarity with the issues can formulate more diverse and helpful approaches to an issue than can a single person working alone; 4) in-class discussions are very important since you are helping each other master ethical analyses. The discussions train your mind in the techniques of sound critical analysis, while preparing you for the task of writing down your own opinions and justifications. The ungraded writing assignments help prepare you to discuss your views with others and serve as practice runs for graded papers. You have

much to learn from each other. ***I will assist you in learning together, but the primary job is yours as a group, so attendance and preparation are important. If you object to a good deal of group work, this is NOT the class for you.***

### **GRADES:**

There will be personal case study analyses or papers on specific issues, in which you will be asked to take and defend your own position on a case or an issue using good ethical arguments. There will be a number of objective (multiple choice and critical thinking) exams and quizzes covering the readings. The exact number is determined by how quickly we cover the materials. Ungraded assignments will be collected in a notebook and assigned a grade at midterm and finals based on the percentage of acceptable assignments completed - explanation follows the grade profiles. Class participation and peer evaluations will be figured into the final grade as part of your participation grade.

Attendance will be taken but not counted against you -- it will only figure in on borderline grades (if you have an 89.7 average and good attendance, I will likely turn in an A-; if your attendance is poor, I will turn in a B+, exactly what an 89.7 indicates).

The graded assignments will be weighed as follows:

- 10% Class participation (Dr F's evaluation)
- 10% Peer debate evaluations and **Notebook grade** (5% each)
- 80% Papers/case analyses (2), exams (2) & quizzes, (weighted equally)

**NO SCORES WILL BE DROPPED. NO EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNED. NO REWRITES ALLOWED UNLESS SPECIFIED.** You are responsible for **all** your work, good or bad, just like in the real world.

Grading scale: A = 93+, A- = 90-92; B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72; D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62; E = -59.

**All work is expected to be turned in on the assigned due date. In class exams must be taken on the day scheduled. Late penalties will apply at the rate of 5% off per class. Assignments that are more than four classes late will not be accepted and averaged in as a zero.** If you are absent the day of exams or due dates for papers, late penalties apply unless serious illness can be shown or prior arrangements made. If you ask for an extension and miss the extended due date I will NOT accept the paper or exam and it counts as a zero. Ungraded assignments will be stamped in class on the date due; if you do not turn them in that day you can get half credit by turning them in the next class - after that I WILL NOT accept them.

### **GRADE PROFILES:**

**The Grade of E:** E level work fails to display an understanding of the basic nature of philosophical thinking or of philosophical topics and issues. The work is vague, imprecise, and unreasoned - as much at the end of the course as at the beginning. There is little evidence of being genuinely engaged in the task of taking charge of one's own philosophical thinking. Many assignments seem to have been done with no thought or effort and without putting significant effort into thinking through the issues or assigned tasks. Consequently, the student is not analyzing philosophical issues clearly, not formulating philosophical information accurately, not distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, not identifying key philosophical assumptions, not clarifying key philosophical concepts, not identifying relevant philosophically competing points of view (or arguments), not reasoning carefully from clearly stated premises, nor tracing philosophical implications and consequences. The student's work does not display recognizable philosophical reasoning and analytic skills.

**The Grade of D:** D level work shows a minimal level of understanding of what philosophical thinking is, along with the development of some, but very limited, philosophical thinking skills or abilities. D work at the end of the course shows only minimal use of philosophical thinking skills, but frequent uncritical philosophical thinking. There is some, slight evidence that the student is reasoning through the assignment. Often the student seems to have missed the spirit or depth of the assignment. Philosophical issues are rarely analyzed clearly and precisely, philosophical information almost never formulated accurately, the relevant rarely distinguished from the irrelevant, key questionable assumptions rarely questioned, key philosophical concepts rarely defined or used effectively, philosophical

language frequently misused compared to established professional usage, relevant competing philosophical points of view (or arguments) only rarely considered, reasoning carefully from clearly stated premises almost never demonstrated, or important implications and consequences rarely stated. D level work shows poor philosophical reasoning and grasp of philosophical information.

**The Grade of C:** C level work illustrates some but inconsistent achievement in grasping what philosophical thinking is, along with the development of average philosophical reasoning skills and grasp of philosophical information. C level work at the end of the semester shows some emerging philosophical thinking skills, but also some obvious weaknesses. Some assignments are reasonably well done, others are not. There are more than occasional lapses in reasoning. Philosophical terms and distinctions are sometimes used effectively, sometimes ineffectively. C level thinking displays moderate levels of understanding and reasoning, but rarely real depth. On occasion C level work does display intellectual discipline and clarity. However, it only sometimes analyzes philosophical issues and arguments clearly and precisely, formulates philosophical information accurately, distinguishes the relevant from the irrelevant, recognizes key questionable assumptions, clarifies key philosophical concepts effectively, uses philosophical language in keeping with established professional usage, identifies relevant philosophical points of view (or arguments), and reasons carefully from clearly stated premises, or recognizes important philosophical implications and consequences. On the whole, C level work shows modest or average philosophical reasoning and analytic skills.

**The Grade of B:** B level work represents demonstrable achievement in grasping what philosophical thinking is and a good range of specific philosophical thinking skills and abilities. B level work at the end of the semester is, on the whole, clear, precise, and well reasoned, though with occasional lapses into weak reasoning. Generally, philosophical terms and distinctions are used effectively. Philosophical issues are often analyzed clearly and precisely, philosophical information often stated accurately, the relevant from the irrelevant usually distinguished, key questionable assumptions often recognized, key philosophical concepts usually clarified effectively, philosophical language typically used in keeping with established professional usage, relevant philosophically competing points of view (and arguments) frequently presented, and reasoning shows a general tendency to move carefully from clearly stated premises, as well as a noticeable sensitivity to important implications and consequences. B level work displays good philosophical reasoning and analytic skills. The weakness most often noted will be lack of great depth or breadth, though some of each may be shown.

**The Grade of A:** A level work demonstrates real achievement in grasping what philosophical thinking is, along with the clear development of a broad range of specific philosophical thinking skills or abilities. The work at the end of the course is, on the whole, clear, precise, and well reasoned, though with some minor lapses into weak reasoning. Philosophical terms and distinctions are used effectively. The student usually analyzes philosophical issues (and arguments) clearly and precisely, often formulates philosophical information accurately, usually distinguishes the relevant from the irrelevant, often recognizes key questionable assumptions, usually clarifies key philosophical concepts effectively, typically uses philosophical language in keeping with established professional usage, frequently identifies relevant competing philosophical points of view (and arguments), shows a general tendency to reason carefully from clearly stated premises, and clearly recognizes important implications and consequences. A level work consistently displays excellent philosophical reasoning and analytic skills, great depth and breadth, and originality of thought.

#### **UNGRADED ASSIGNMENTS & NOTEBOOKS:**

Ethical analysis relies on the practices of rational analysis, critical thinking, argument analysis, and argument formation or justification. While all of these may be done mentally or orally, they cannot be done as well as when combined with writing. Clear thinking and clear writing are necessary to each other; without the ability to **state** clearly your beliefs, positions, and reasoning there is little chance that you will be able to **defend your conclusions** clearly. Because philosophy relies upon an exchange of ideas and criticisms in a search for the truth, the clearest and best way of working is to write and use what you write as a starting point for further thinking and discussion. Writing is the basis of thinking, verbal argument, and analysis; as a colleague once said when I asked her what she thought about a particular philosophical problem, "I won't know what I think until I finish writing it down."

You will be asked to do in-class and at-home writing assignments that will be ungraded. Having something written down means that you have thought about the material, formulated some clear opinions, and can at least read what you've written to the class, thus opening up discussion. Since

writing is very much like other skills, the more you practice the better you get, so think of these assignments as practice papers for your graded assignments. Even when you may not have time to write down your thoughts, the process of "thinking on your feet" is improved by previous written practice and trains your mind to think logically before writing down your thoughts. "Writing-to-learn" means more than learning to write.

Finally, the purpose of the writing is to help you understand and think about the course materials and issues. There is a good deal of evidence that people retain information more effectively, think more clearly, and understand things more thoroughly when they combine writing with their other thought processes. The concept behind the "W" class is to take advantage of this fact in order to help students learn and understand course materials. This process works at the time of the writing, not as a result of grading or even receiving comments by the instructor. Immediate feedback and comments are helpful and can be just as effective if given by other students individually or in groups.

There will be a cumulative, quantitative grade assigned for the collected ungraded assignments. I will mark them as accepted or unaccepted. You will receive a grade based on the percentage of accepted assignments at the end of the semester. No missing assignments will count, you may get half credit by turning them in the very next class, after that no credit. The notebook will count in your final grade as noted above.

### **POLICIES and STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

YOU ARE REQUIRED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH EDUCATOR AND TO USE IT FOR INFORMATION, MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR CLASS THAT ARE NOT HANDED OUT, AND OTHER ASSIGNMENTS DURING THE SEMESTER. I will also place worksheets, exams, and other written assignments on Educator as backups to what was handed out in class.

Attendance will be taken and class participation noted. Both will be figured into your final average as explained in the section, "Exams and Papers" above. Philosophy in this class is a cooperative effort, to cooperate means you must be in class and prepared. It is up to you to attend classes and meet specific class expectations and requirements. Students are responsible for, and must accept, any negative impacts or penalties due to missed classes, late arrival, late assignments, missed assignments, in class work, papers or examinations.

It is your responsibility to be aware of times, dates, places and policies set out in the syllabus or in class. For each written assignment and each exam explicit instructions will be given. It is your responsibility to be aware of, understand and comply with directions and expectations for all work. Students must also accept the realities of given situations that require changes in schedules, plans, or policy and assist in making adjustments as smooth as possible. It is up to you to obtain such information if you are not in class for any reason. Some such information will be available on the Delta College Educator site, as noted above.

You are expected to purchase and use every text listed on page one. Assigned readings are expected to be done, even if we do not discuss them in class. Readings often form the background for discussions, debates and future exams, failure to keep up with the reading will hinder you in all these activities. Exams or quizzes will include material from the assigned readings even if it has not been covered in class. This means you are expected to be self-motivating and to accept that some knowledge or learning is acquired only with personal effort.

Courtesy in discussions and debate is expected. When someone is talking, do not interrupt. Raise your hand when you wish to comment and you will be called on as soon as possible, or else join the discussion when there is a pause. Listen to what others are saying before you try to respond. Do not talk privately to others while discussions or lectures are in progress. I may not correct you openly but I will take disruptive behavior into account when deciding class participation grades -- being disruptive will count against you. It is up to you to act in an appropriate manner that is not disruptive to the learning and teaching process. Students who create major problems can be asked to leave the room for the remainder of the class period, in accordance with Delta's disruptive student policy.

Incomplete grades will only be given if you have requested one, I will not simply turn in an incomplete if you have missing work; in such cases the missing work will be weighted and averaged at the discretion of the instructor (most often they will be averaged as a zero). Be aware, however, that the track record for completing incompletes is under 50%.

There may be times when the instructor will be occupied elsewhere for professional reasons

(conferences, presentations, etc.) and cannot attend class. Under these circumstances prior arrangements will be made for the class session (group work, film, library assignment, etc...) and students will be expected to attend the class if so indicated.

In the event of illness, bad weather or other such circumstances affecting the instructor every attempt to notify the secretary will be made if the class is canceled. The secretary will make every attempt to contact students and inform them of any cancellations. However, this may not always result in reaching every student, for which I apologize ahead of time. In the case of extreme weather, if you believe a class may be canceled, even if Delta College itself is open, you should contact the secretary to confirm your suspicions. If possible, I will send an e-mail through the Educator site to all members of the class informing you of the above and will post it in the Announcements section of the Educator site for this class.

## **EXPLANATION OF PLAGIARISM**

Briefly, plagiarism is ***“Representing someone else’s work as your own.”*** ***This includes falsifying sources or quotations, purchasing, downloading, or having someone else write your paper, or copying someone else’s work without attribution, even if this is just a paraphrase of the other person’s work.*** Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Some things that you should be aware of when deciding if you must cite a source or if a particular work of yours contains any plagiarized materials:

1. If you have either directly quoted or paraphrased an author or outside source, you must cite the source clearly, using an acceptable citation format. If there is any question in your mind that a source needs to be cited, **CITE IT!** There is no penalty for citing a source when unnecessary, but there is for not citing one when necessary. Take no chances.

2. Any material taken from or found on the Internet and used in your paper, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, must be cited according to the same rules outlined in #1 above. Material on the Internet is **NOT** there for public use without citation. The same rules that govern the use of printed or spoken material govern use of Internet material. When in doubt **CITE IT!**

3. Any paper that is completely copied from any source constitutes plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for the course. Even if this were not plagiarism, there is no paper for this class that is not supposed to be your own work and thought, therefore turning in someone else’s work can never fulfill the assignment.

4. If you are quoting someone’s spoken words (from an in class lecture, for example), be sure to cite this fact. Here you may simply write: “Oral lecture” or “Personal conversation” or some other appropriate description indicating that you are quoting someone’s spoken words.

To be clear as to penalties for plagiarism: these are up to the discretion of the instructor and there may be mitigating circumstances involved. If the plagiarism is the result of a simple error (typing, forgetting to include a footnote citation, unclear citation, etc...) and is not deemed to be intentional, the penalty may be slight. If the plagiarism is determined to be extensive, intentional, or the result of other forms of cheating, the penalty will be ***failure for the assignment, up to failure for the entire course***, depending on the degree of the violation. Please be very clear that if an entire paper is copied, reproduced, downloaded, borrowed or otherwise taken from some outside source, this will mean an “E” for the class - there are no acceptable excuses for this action. Determination of the seriousness of the plagiarism is up to the instructor (see the Delta College Catalogue for details). Rulings are subject to the appeals process as outlined in the Delta Senate Handbook section 4.090.

***I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE OR ALTER ANY OF THE ABOVE IF NECESSARY DURING THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER. This will happen only for serious reasons (such as time constraints for assigned work or topics).***