

Course Syllabus
Business Ethics: The Ethics and Economics of Wealth Creation
PHIL 332, Fall, 2014

Instructor: Dr. Matt Zwolinski

Office Hours: 9:15-10:30, 12:15-1:30 (Tues/Thurs)

Office: F167A

Course Website: <http://ole.sandiego.edu> [Blackboard]

Phone: 619-260-4094

Email: mzwolinski@sandiego.edu

Required Books:

David Schmidtz, *Creating Wealth: Ethical and Economic Perspectives*, 2nd edition (Cognella)

Other readings on Electronic Reserve at Copley Library

Core Requirements: This course fulfills the Core Curriculum requirement for Ethics.

Content:

One of the main tasks of business is the creation of wealth. But what exactly *is* wealth? How, and from what, is it created? What role do markets play? And what is the role of government in guiding and constraining those markets?

This course will explore various ethical and economic issues involved in the creation of wealth. Our readings will be drawn from classical economists such as Adam Smith, Frederic Bastiat, and Karl Marx, and from contemporary philosophers such as David Schmidtz, Peter Singer, and Richard Anreson. These readings will explore issues involving the origin and justification of private property, the role of prices and opportunity cost in market exchange, the ethics of voting and political regulation, the philosophical nature of freedom and equality, and the morality of exploitation and sweatshop labor.

Course Requirements:

Philosophical readings are dense and difficult. It will probably take longer than you expect to read them once, and it will probably be necessary to re-read most pieces at least once to come to an adequate understanding of the material. You should expect to spend at least **six hours per week outside of class** time reading and re-reading the material.

- **Quizzes** – I will give 5-10 unannounced, multiple-choice quizzes over the course of the semester. The purpose of these quizzes is to test your completion and comprehension of the day's reading assignment, and to encourage attendance at class. Three things to note about them:
 - First, **quizzes are given at the very beginning of class**. You will not be allowed extra time to take them if you are late, and you will not be allowed to make them up if you miss them. So it is to your advantage to show up and be seated on time every day.
 - Second, you will receive a **zero for any quiz that you miss**, for any reason. However, at the end of the semester, I will **drop your two lowest quiz scores**. So missing a quiz will not destroy your grade. But you will have a better chance of excelling in the course if you show up regularly.
 - Finally, these quizzes are very difficult, so it is vital that you read the material carefully and in advance of class. Read the material actively, with pen (or computer) in hand to take notes. And feel free – encouraged, even – to come to office hours any time to discuss any difficulties you might be having with the readings or the quizzes.

- **Exams:** You will have three in-class exams – two during the regular semester and one final exam. Each exam will consist of multiple-choice questions (drawn from your earlier quizzes), short-answer questions, and possibly a longer essay. The final exam will be cumulative, but will emphasize material covered in the last third of the course. ***All exams must be taken at the date and time at which they are scheduled on this syllabus. No exceptions will be made except for cases of documented medical emergencies. Please look at the dates now and check for conflicts.***
- **Participation** – Philosophy is best learned through active conversation with others. It is therefore important that you be a regular participant in classroom discussions. Ideally, you will be sufficiently engaged with the material to contribute to these discussions spontaneously and voluntarily. As an additional stimulus, however, I will call randomly on students to answer questions in class. If you cannot answer a question satisfactorily (due to lack of preparation or absence), your class participation grade will be affected. Students may ask at any time to be informed of their current class participation grade.

Your Grade

Each activity in this class is worth a certain number of points. Your grade will be determined based on a straight (un-curved) analysis of percentage of points earned vs. total points.

Quizzes 5-10 @ 5 points each	25-50
Exam 1 & 2 @ 30 points each	60
Final Exam	50
Participation	10
Total Points:	145-170

A+	97 - 100%
A	93 - 96.9
A-	90 - 92.9
B+	87 - 89.9
B	83 - 86.9
B-	80 - 82.9
C+	77 - 79.9
C	73 - 76.9
C-	70 - 72.9
D+	67 - 67.9
D	63 - 66.9
D-	60 - 62.9
F	59.9 or below

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course...

- Students should be able to describe, in essay form, the main tenets of major ethical theories such as utilitarianism and deontology.
- Students should be able to apply these ethical theories to various questions involving property and commerce.
- Finally, students should be able to critically evaluate these theories in in-class essays.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to know and follow University Policies on cheating and plagiarism. See the Code of Academic Integrity. Outside research is *a good thing* in philosophy. Just cite it! If it is determined that you have cheated, you will fail the course and I may recommend that you be expelled from the University.

Schedule for PHIL 332: Business Ethics
Fall, 2014
Professor Zwolinski

KEY DATES AT A GLANCE

Sep 30	-	First Exam
Oct 2	-	Instructor Away: no class
Oct 23	-	Instructor Away: no class
Nov 11	-	Second Exam
Nov 20	-	Instructor Away: no class
Nov 27	-	Thanksgiving Break: no class
Dec 16	-	Final Exam at 8:00 AM (section 1) or 10:00 AM (section 2)

Schedule of Readings

Note: All readings are in Schmidtz and Thrasher, *Creating Wealth* except those marked by [ER], which are on Electronic Reserve.

Week 1 (Sept 4) – Introduction to Philosophical Ethics

Week 2 (Sept 9-11) – Ethics, continued / The Tragedy of the Commons

David Schmidtz, “The Language of Ethics”
Garrett Hardin, “Tragedy of the Commons”

Week 3 (Sept 16-18) –Property

John Locke, “Two Treatises of Government”
David Schmidtz, “The Institution of Property”

Week 4 (Sept 23-25) – The Division of Labor and Opportunity Cost

Adam Smith, “Wealth of Nations: Book I”
Frédéric Bastiat: “What Is Seen and What Is Not Seen”

Week 5 (Sept 30) – First Exam

First Exam: September 30th

Week 6 (Oct 7-9) – Markets, Knowledge, and Market Failure

Friedrich Hayek, “The Use of Knowledge in Society”
Charles Wolf, “Market Failure” [ER]

Week 7 (Oct 14-16) – Externalities

Ronald Coase, “The Problem of Social Cost” [ER]
Edwin Dolan, “Controlling Acid Rain” [ER]

Week 8 (Oct 21) – The Ethics and Economics and Regulation

Adam Smith, “The Man of System,” and “Price Fixing”
Randy Simmons, “Pathological Politics” [ER]

Week 9 (Oct 28-30) – Voting

Geoffrey Brennan and Loren Lomasky, “Is there a Duty to Vote?” [ER]
Jason Brennan, “Polluting the Polls: When Citizens Should Not Vote” [ER]

Week 10 (Nov 4-6) – Freedom and Paternalism

John Stuart Mill, “On Liberty” [ER]

Gerald Dworkin, “Paternalism” [ER]

Week 11 (Nov 11-13) – Second Exam / Equality

Second Exam: November 11th

Harry Frankfurt, “Equality as a Moral Ideal” [ER]

Week 12 (Nov 18) – Equality, continued

David Schmidtz, “Equal Respect and Equal Shares”

Week 13 (Nov 25) – Equality, Continued

Richard Arneson, “Equality of Opportunity and Equal Opportunity for Welfare” [ER]

Week 14 (Dec 2-4) – Exploitation and Fair Trade

Karl Marx, “Wage Labor and Capital”

Robert Nozick, “Marxian Exploitation” [ER]

Thomas Aquinas, “Sins Committed in Buying and Selling” [ER]

John Locke, “*Venditio*” [ER]

Week 15 (Dec 9-11) Exploitation and Fair Trade Continued

Matt Zwolinski: “The Ethics of Price Gouging”

Janet Radcliffe-Richards, “Nephrarious Goings-On: Kidney Sales and Moral Arguments,”
[ER]

December 16th, 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM – Final Exam for section 01 (7:45 AM class)

December 16th, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM – Final Exam for section 02 (10:45 AM class)