

**San José State University**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**PHIL 186 – Professional and Business Ethics**  
**Spring Semester 2018**

**Course and Contact Information**

**Instructor:** Tim Johnston

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**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Classroom:** n/a

**Prerequisites:** Upper Division Standing

**GE/SJSU Studies Category:** Area S: “Self, Society, and Equality in the U.S.”

“Students are strongly encouraged to satisfy GE Areas R, S, and V with courses from departments other than the major department. Completion of, or co-registration in, a 100W course is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students.”

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**Course Format**

This course is online only, which means that there are no in-person course meetings. No special technology is required aside from regular internet access, and the ability to interact with Canvas.

**Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging**

All course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on Canvas. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates.

Since this course is online, *you should contact me via email* (please do not comment on submissions – I am liable to miss messages communicated this way). I will do my best to answer any emails within 48 hours, or 24 hours in case of (clearly marked) emergencies. No emails will be answered on the weekend or holidays.

## Course Description

This course involves an interdisciplinary study of ethical and moral issues which arise within the contexts of business and the professions. It involves a study of major ethical theories, critique of economic justice, and decision-making techniques. Our primary focus is on issues of justice and equality in the USA facilitated by case studies and research.

## Course Goals Learning Outcomes and Course Goals

### Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

Bus/Phil 186 meets SJSU Studies Area S, “Self, Society, and Equality in the U.S.” The course objectives for Area S courses will be pursued throughout the course. After successfully completing the course, students shall be able to:

1. describe how identities (i.e. religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age) are shaped by cultural and societal influences within contexts of equality and inequality;
2. describe historical, social, political, and economic processes producing diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S.;
3. describe social actions which have led to greater equality and social justice in the U.S. (i.e. religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age).; and
4. recognize and appreciate constructive interactions between people from different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups within the U.S.

### A. Course Goals (GE)

Students will study the interrelationship of individuals, racial groups, and cultural groups to understand and appreciate issues of diversity, equality, and structured inequality in the U.S., its institutions, and its cultures as well as the economic social consequences of such inequalities.

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to recognize, analyze, and articulate solutions to ethical issues that arise in business. Specifically, you will be able to:

- Comprehend the major methods of ethical reasoning, apply these methods to specific business situations, and draw conclusions for action.
- Identify the major stakeholders of business and understand how they may be affected by ethical or unethical behavior.
- Demonstrate familiarity with various ethical issues that arise in business, such as insider trading, misuse of corporate resources, conflicts of interest, and sexual and racial harassment.
- Distinguish among societal, organizational, and individual-level causes of unethical behavior in business.
- Know how well managed companies structure their ethics and compliance function.

Students will also learn and develop,

1. an awareness that the moral dimension of life does not vanish but rather expands in the context of business,
2. an understanding of basic moral concepts as tools for assessing the moral realities of business and professional life,
3. the ability to participate constructively in collective discussion and decision making about the moral dimension of business and professional life.

## Required Texts/Readings

### Textbook

The main text for our course will be:

Shaw, William and Barry, Vincent. *Moral Issues in Business, 13<sup>th</sup> Ed.*  
Wadsworth, Cengage Publishing  
ISBN: 1285874323

*Older editions of the book are not allowed* (the case study numbering and content is different, which creates confusion). The current edition is available in the Spartan Bookstore; you can also buy or rent it at CengageBrain.com.

### Other Readings (Recommended but not Required)

<i>Philosophical Writing</i> (Basil Blackwell) Martinich, A.P. ISBN: 0-631-20281-1	<a href="http://plato.stanford.edu">http://plato.stanford.edu</a> The Stanford Online Encyclopedia of Philosophy
<a href="http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html">http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html</a> Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper Pryor, Jim	<a href="https://prezi.com/z4h1_fwilbxj/a-sample-philosophy-paper/">https://prezi.com/z4h1_fwilbxj/a-sample-philosophy-paper/</a> <i>Sample Philosophy Paper, Annotated</i> Mendelovici, Angela
<a href="http://link.springer.com/journal/10551">http://link.springer.com/journal/10551</a> The Journal of Business Ethics A Peer-Reviewed, Scholarly Journal	<a href="http://library.sjsu.edu/online-tutorials/850">http://library.sjsu.edu/online-tutorials/850</a> Research Help from MLK Library

## Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

### Final Examination or Evaluation

The final examination for the course will be an online essay-based exam. More information regarding this exam, and all the other assignments for this course, can be found below.

## Grading Information

**A Rubric for grading all written work can be found on Canvas, in the files section.**

**5 percent: Opening Pre-requisites** – before you get access to any of the course content, you are required to complete two assignments: (1) the University's plagiarism tutorial, and (2) a quiz on the content of this syllabus. *If you do not pass these two in the first week, it will be taken to be evidence that you do not intend to engage with this course, and you will be dropped.*

You are required to record a perfect score on the plagiarism tutorial, though you may take it as many times as you need to achieve this score. You must upload evidence of success. In the case of the syllabus quiz, you are merely required to pass.

**15 percent: Case Study Responses** – you will be assigned to one of four groups. Each week, one group will be responsible for (individually) writing responses to the assigned case study for the week (picked by me, and found in the course schedule below). Since there are four groups, the groups will be on a four-week rotation, and so each person will be obligated to write three responses during the course. You will be assigned a moral theory to use in each of the three CSRs you do over the semester. *The CSR is due by Saturday night (midnight) of the week you're assigned to write.*

Each response should be between 500 and 1000 words in length. They should, as the name might have suggested, be responses to the assigned case studies. Your response must address the case directly – it should not just be a discussion of some issues that are in the neighborhood, but should assess the situation or actions of the people in the case. You should *not* answer the discussion questions found at the end of the case in the textbook; they can be a fine place to help you get going, but what I want you to do is to write your own assessment of the case.

These responses will be graded on clarity of argumentation (yes, these responses should be argumentative!) as well as your usage of the moral theories we have learned in the course. Merely mentioning a moral theory is not enough – so, for example, if you think that raising the minimum wage would be the correct course of action for utilitarian reasons, then you ought to proceed to give an argument why Utilitarians in particular should agree with you. That is, you should argue not just that raising the minimum wage would be nice, or make people feel good, but that it would have the best consequences (this line of thinking will make sense when we cover what Utilitarianism is). Moreover you should be specific about what those consequences would be, and why they support your conclusion.

The purpose of the CSR is for you to get comfortable writing about moral issues, and using the theories we will learn in the class. You can think of them as a kind of preparation for the Research Paper and the Proposal for that paper.

**15 percent: Test 1** – Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4. Test may include multiple choice and True/False type questions. It will definitely include at least one essay question; answers to this question will be in the form of an essay of about 500 words. This test covers: Morality, Normative Theories of Ethics, Justice, Economic Distribution, the Nature of Capitalism.

**15 percent: Test 2** – Chapters 5, 6, 8, 10. Test may include multiple choice and True/False type questions, and at least one short essay of the same kind as Test 1. This test covers: Corporations, Consumers, The Workplace 1, and Moral Issues Facing Employees.

**10 percent: Research Paper Proposal** – a proposal of no less than 500 words. This will be a preliminary discussion of the topic for your research paper. The proposal should give an overview of the problem (i.e. what's the *moral* issue?), and also give a sketch of your argument. Since this is just the proposal, you do not need to have done all the research you intend to do yet – but there should be indications that you have done at least some of it.

**5 percent: Proposal Peer Review** – you are required to review another student's paper proposal; you will be assigned a proposal to review by me. The purpose of the review is for you to offer feedback on (1) the approach they are taking to their issue, and (2) the clarity of their argument and argumentative strategy. These will be due one week after the proposal is submitted. More details can be found in the assignment on Canvas.

**20 percent: Research paper** – no more than 1,500 words (not counting words in the Works Cited page). At least three scholarly (i.e. peer-reviewed) articles required as a minimum for the final paper. The quality of your research will be evaluated as well as the content and argumentation final in your paper. You should pick a topic relevant to the course material – that is, not only should you choose an issue that arises in the world of economics or business, but it should be such that it can be evaluated morally. Specifically, what I will be looking for are the following two things: (1) how well you argue for your position – I do not want to read a paper that either fails to take a stand on the issue, or simply asserts some view or other, you ought to present an argument with your stand on the issue as conclusion; and (2) that you make use of one (and no more!) of the moral theories we cover in the course. The most important phrase in (2) was 'make use of' – that is, I do not want to read papers which merely mention some theory, but neither explain the theory or why and how it is being used in this case.

**15 percent: Final** – This final examination will be delivered online, through the Canvas learning management system. It will consist of a series of essay prompts, of which students will be able to choose two that they wish to answer. Answers will be in the form of a short essay of approximately 500 – 1000 words. Of utmost importance will be the quality of your argumentation; other factors in determining a grade will include whether the prompt is addressed directly, and the extent to which the essay demonstrates command of, *and makes use of*, the course material. In particular, I will be looking for how well you *use the moral theories*; just as in the research paper, merely mentioning them is *not* enough. Beyond this, make sure to observe the canons of good academic writing – use correct punctuation, separate paragraphs for separate ideas, and correct spelling.

Because of a quirk in the way Canvas handles tests, your grade on the final exam will be recorded in a separate assignment called 'Final Examination Grades'.

### **Determination of Grades**

- Grades will be determined according to the rubric above. Intermediate grades will be used (that is, grades using + and –) according to the following formula:
  1. 100 – 98: A+
  2. 97 – 94: A
  3. 93 – 90: A–
  4. and so on ...

- *No extra credit will be offered.* Make sure to factor this in – if you want to get a good grade in this course, put effort into your work from the very beginning of the semester.
- *All work is due when it's due.* Any work submitted after the deadline will not be accepted, and if there are extenuating circumstances which prevent you from submitting your work on time, *you* are responsible for contacting the professor (i.e. me) as soon as you know about them.
- Though this should go without saying, *all work must use proper grammar and spelling* – this is, after all, a university level course.
- If you believe that there has been a mistake in *calculating* your grade, please contact me. However, any emails sent where you either (1) simply disagree with a mark I have given you, or (2) are asking me to round or otherwise alter your grade will not be answered.
- Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), and completion of Core General Education are prerequisite to all SJSU Studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students.

### **Classroom Protocol**

Since this course is online, many traditional classroom issues do not arise. However, discussions hosted on the internet can be heated and full of discriminatory or offensive language. *This will not be tolerated in my course.* Comments of a racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or otherwise discriminatory nature will be grounds for disciplinary action; the determination of which comments violate this policy will be mine alone.

### **University Policies**

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

## PHIL 186 – 21, Spring 2018, Course Schedule

### Course Schedule

Week	Week Begins	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/24	Introduction <b>Pre-requisite quizzes</b>
2	1/29	The Nature of Morality Read: Shaw, Chapter 1 <b>CSR 1, Group A: Case 1.3 (Shaw, pp. 35 – 37)</b>
3	2/5	Normative Theories of Ethics: Utilitarianism Read: Shaw, Chapter 2, pp. 54 – 66 and 77 – 79 <b>CSR 1, Group B: Case 2.2 (Shaw, 85 – 87)</b>
4	2/12	Normative Theories of Ethics: Deontology (Kant's Ethics) Read: Shaw, Chapter 2, pp. 66 – 77 <b>CSR 1, Group C: Case 2.3 (Shaw, 88 – 89)</b>
5	2/19	The Nature of Justice Read: Shaw, Chapter 3, pp. 105 – 120 <b>CSR 1, Group D: Case 3.1 (Shaw, 129 – 131)</b>
6	2/26	The Nature of Justice: Rawls Read: Shaw, Chapter 3, pp. 120 – 128 <b>CSR 2, Group A: Case 3.3 (Shaw, pp. 133 – 135)</b>
7	3/5	Capitalism Read: Shaw, Chapter 4, pp. 150 – 173 <b>CSR 2, Group B: Case 4.5 (Shaw, pp. 182 – 184)</b> <b>Test 1 Available on Canvas (8:00 AM)</b>
7	3/11	<b>Class Test 1 Closes 11:59 PM</b>
8	3/12	Corporations and Social Responsibility Read: Shaw, Chapter 5, pp. 202 – 226 <b>CSR 2, Group C: Case 5.2 (Shaw, pp. 230 – 232)</b>
9	3/19	Consumers Read: Shaw, Chapter 6, pp. 262 – 296 <b>CSR 2, Group D: Case 6.5 (Shaw, pp. 304 – 305)</b> <b>Paper Proposals Due</b>
10	3/26	<b>No Class – Spring Break</b>

Week	Week Begins	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
11	4/2	The Workplace Read: Shaw, Chapter 8, pp. 379 – 408 <b>CSR 3, Group A: Case 8.3 (Shaw 412 – 413)</b>
12	4/9	The Workplace Part 2 Read: Shaw, Chapter 9, pp. 434 – 457 <b>CSR 3, Group B: Case 9.3 (Shaw, p. 462)</b>
13	4/16	Moral Choices Facing Employees Read: Shaw, Chapter 10, pp. 493 – 520 <b>CSR 3, Group C: Case 10.1 (Shaw, p. 521)</b>
14	4/23	Job Discrimination Read: Shaw, Chapter 11, pp. 558 – 580 <b>CSR 3, Group D: Case 11.3 (Shaw, pp. 584 – 585)</b>
15	4/30	The Environment Read: Shaw, Chapter 7, pp. 331 – 355
16	5/7	<b>Test 2 Available on Canvas</b>
17	5/13	<b>Test 2 Closes on Canvas 11:59 PM</b>
17	5/17	<b>Final Papers Due</b>
FINAL EXAM	5/17 – 5/23	Exam will be online. <b>Exam available: 5/17 8:00 AM – 5/23 11:59 PM</b>