Ethics in Business (Phil 243)

Course Description: Do we have a responsibility to seek the common good? Why is there so much inequality in the U.S.? Does inequality harm democracy? What leads good people to do bad things—such as committing fraud or discriminating against certain groups? How do we create non-toxic work environments? Is capitalism good or bad? We will explore these questions and more. This class is an invitation to venture further away from consumerism and complacency—and, instead, sojourn down pathways of care, conscientiousness, and a commitment to the common good. I look forward to taking the journey with you.

Instructor: Joel Ballivian
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Meeting time: MWF 9:55am - 10:45am
Location: Mosse Humanities, 1121

Office hours: MW, 11am–noon, Helen C. White (or by request)

TA: Laura Bianchi
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Office Hours: MW, 11am-noon. Helen C. White, 5112

❦ Readings and Texts

There are no required readings. All other readings and resources will be posted on Canvas.

❦ Course Objectives:

From the university template:

1. Ability to think critically about arguments.
2. Ability to interpret complex texts accurately and analyze them logically.
3. Ability to communicate precisely and concisely in both writing and speech.
4. Ability to exchange reasons about controversial matters respectfully and with the aim of uncovering the truth.
5. Interpretive charity and intellectual honesty, which includes appropriate attribution others of their ideas, and recognition and frankness about the limitations of one's own ideas.

My (Joel's) hopes:

6. Increased conscientiousness (about problems in the workplace and in society).
7. Increased care (about the rectification of these problems).
8. Increased creativity (about how to rectify these problems).
9. Increased commitment to the common good.

❦ Overview of Assignments and Grading:

Component	% of final grade
Annotated readings	20%
Class debates	20%
Participation	30%
Assessments/reflections	20%
Group presentation	10%

93-100% - A
88-92.9% - AB
83-87.9% - B
77-82.9% - BC
70-76.9% - C
60-69.9% - D
0-59.9% - F

*Optional final paper for med students or Phil majors

❦ Assignments in Detail:

Annotated Readings (20%): You will be required to submit reading annotations each week (usually 5). These annotations will be submitted through Perusall, which is incorporated into Canvas. You may submit by clicking on the assignment link in Canvas. The requirements for these assignments will vary by the length of the reading, but you will generally be expected to submit 3-5 annotations, including at least one question and at least one critical comment—

elaborating, criticizing, supporting—either the text or another student's annotation.

Due: check the weekly module and the Perusals assignment for the exact time, but annotations will be turned in before we discuss the topic/reading in class.

Class Debates (20%): Don't be triggered by the word "debate." These are friendly, staged discussions where you will have the chance to hone your reasoning and communication skills. By working together with your team, you will put together a set of arguments in favor of a view (perhaps a view you don't agree with) and then "debate" your position with the opposing team. Debates will take place in discussion sections. For every debate, there will be two debate teams and a group of student judges. Preparing for the debate outside of class (with your team) is expected. There will be no time in class to prepare arguments. *No written scripts allowed;* you may use note cards and handouts. There will be 4 throughout the semester.

Assessments/reflections (20%): Assessments are short essay questions you will periodically answer in class. I will ask you to evaluate an argument or respond to a question. Other times, I will simply ask you to share your personal reflections on something. Unfortunately, because ChatGPT has ruined the humanities (only half kidding), I don't assign take-home writing assignments. *I will announce ahead of time the upcoming times of assessments.*

Participation (30%): philosophy is done best in community and through dialogue, but good dialogue is something that requires cultivation and virtue. We will attempt to develop the skills and virtues necessary for sustaining good philosophical discussion. Hence, a large part of your grade consists of your participation in class. To effectively participate, come to each class having studied the assigned readings and ready to discuss them. Throughout the term you will complete in-class reflection assignments and polls that will also count toward your participation grade. I will do my best to create a class environment that conduces to good discussion, charitable disagreement, and freedom to speak up. *Class surveys:* I will also send out periodic class surveys; taking the surveys is required and counts toward your participation grade.

Note on Attendance: Attendance in lecture and discussion section is expected but will not be graded directly. Instead, absences from lecture or discussion sections will count against your *participation grade*. We will use the app **Arckaive** to keep attendance (to be used starting week 2). Log in at the start of each class and mark yourself present. You are permitted to miss 10% of the

class (5 unexcused) before it starts to count against your participation grade.[1] Once your attendance rate is below 90%, you start to lose participation points—1.5 points for every 1% dip below 90% attendance. This means that dipping below 70% participation (14 unexcused absences) will result in *total forfeiture* of participation points (yikes!). To illustrate:

If 90% > your attendance ≥ 89%, your participation grade = 28.5/30.
If 89% > your attendance ≥ 88%, your participation grade = 27/30.
If 88% > your attendance ≥ 87%, your participation grade = 25.5/30.
.
.
If 70% > your attendance, your participation grade = 0/30.

Hence, your final grade can be no better than a C if your attendance is at 70% or below. Please contact me or the TA if you need to miss class or discussion section (I'm very lenient here).

Group Presentations (10%): Your group will do one in-class presentation (either in lecture or in discussion section). The goal is to introduce a solution or perspective on a business problem (or social-political problem more generally). Your topic needs to intersect with the topic of the unit. For example, suppose your group is presenting during the week on workplace discrimination. Your group needs to propose a policy or practice that businesses can implement to prevent discrimination. You should take a stand and try to convince the class that your proposal is worthwhile. The class's responsibility is to asks questions and offer critical feedback on your proposal.

❦**COURSE CREDITS AND SATISFACTION:** 4 credits. The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 180 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (45 hours per credit), which includes time spent in class, reading, writing, posting on the course website, and other student work as described in this syllabus.

❦**ELECTRONICS:** No electronics for face-to-face meetings. Exceptions: (a) special accommodations, (b) you want to take handwritten notes on a tablet, or (b) when electronics are needed for in-class activities.

❦ **PRIVACY OF STUDENT RECORDS and the USAGE of AUDIO RECORDED LECTURES.**

View more information about FERPA.

[1] You can check the math here. I calculate that there are 52 days of class time (lecture + discussion). 52 x .9 = 46.8. Let's round up to make that 47. So, 5 free unexcused absences.

Lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

❦ Students' Rules, Rights & Responsibilities

❦ **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

❦ **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**. The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: McBurney Disability Resource Center)

❦ **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION. Institutional statement on diversity:** "Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in

teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world." https://diversity.wisc.edu/