**Business Ethics (PHL 2043-02)**

Webb Conference Center, Room 202

T/Th 3:30-5:10pm

Spring 2019

**Professor:** Jonathan Dixon (aka Prof. Dixon)

**Office Hours:** Directly after class and by appointment.

**Email:** jdixon@highpoint.edu

**Course Description:**

In this course we will explore the ethical implications of business and economics in our interconnected world. We will analyze issues including the role of ethics in corporate structures, whistleblowing, advertising, consumption, and the environment. We will seek answers to questions such as, “What do we owe to strangers?”; “Is the role of the corporation to benefit shareholders, employees, or the general public?”; and, “Do people have a right to affordable, life-saving pharmaceuticals?” Students should leave the class with an understanding of the inescapable connection between business and ethics that is often overlooked in the everyday life of the consumer.

**Material:**

There are no required textbooks for the course. All material will be posted in the form of PDFs in Blackboard.

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| **Percentage** | **Letter Grade** |
| 93-100 | A |
| 90-92 | A- |
| 87-89 | B+ |
| 83-86 | B |
| 80-82 | B- |
| 77-79 | C+ |
| 73-76 | C |
| 70-72 | C- |
| 67-69 | D+ |
| 63-66 | D |
| 60-62 | D- |
| 59 and below | F |

**Grading:**

1. Attendance and Participation: 5%
2. Reading Quizzes (6): 15%
3. Case Study Write-ups (5): 30%
4. Midterm Exam: 25%
5. Final Exam: 25%

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance and participation on class days is an important aspect of your grade and of the course. I will take attendance every day. Students learn better when they ask questions and actively participate, and everyone enjoys the class more when there is discussion. Though quality is better than quantity, speak up if you have a question to ask or a comment to add!

**Reading Quizzes:**Throughout the term there will be *6 pop reading quizzes worth 3 points each*. You will not know in advance which days the quizzes will be. The purpose of these quizzes is to make sure that everyone is doing the required reading, so if you have done the reading then the quizzes should be extremely easy! *Students can drop their lowest quiz grade, and quizzes cannot be made-up if students miss class on a quiz day*.

**Case Study Write-ups**: There will be 5 case study write-ups due during the term. Each write-up is worth 6 points. Write-ups must be handed in and uploaded on Turnitin via Blackboard at the start of class. This means that your case studies are *due* *in hard copy form* *and must be successfully uploaded at the start of class on the day the case study is due*. When you turn something in to Turnitin you ought to receive a confirmation email. *If you do not receive this email then it has not been successfully uploaded* and you will not get credit for the paper. Drafts are not accepted, but we can discuss your paper during office hours. A rubric will be provided (and accessible on Blackboard) for how to structure the write-ups. The topics for the case studies are all on Blackboard:

1. “Giving in or Giving up” Clare Barlett, *Markkula Center for Applied Ethics* (1/31)
2. “Follow These Fine-Print Examples if You Want to Fail” Christopher Elliott, *Forbes* (2/14)
3. “VA Whistleblowers 10 Times More Likely than Peers to Receive Disciplinary Action” Eric Westervelt, *NPR* (3/21)
4. “The Average American Worker Takes Less Vacation Time than a Medieval Peasant” Lynn Parramore, *Business Insider* (4/4)
5. “Americans’ Complicated Feelings about Social Media in an Era of Privacy Concerns” Lee Rainie, *Pew Research Center* (4/23)

**Midterm Exam:** The first *in-class* exam will be given on *February 28*. I will give you 5 possible exam questions a week before the exam (February 21) for you to study. On the exam day I will select 2 questions from those 5 for you to answer. You will not know which 2 questions will be chosen until exam day. You will be required to write a short essay of around 300 words per question (the equivalent of about 1 page typed, double-spaced). You are allowed to study with classmates in preparation for the exam, but you are not allowed to use any outside sources to study (internet, books, etc.). Outside sources will likely make things more confusing, and increases the risk of unintentional plagiarism. More information will be given as the exam approaches.

**Final Exam:** The final *in-class* exam will be given at *4pm Wednesday May 8th*. The format for the second exam is the same as the first, and I will give you the possible exam questions a week before.

**Grading Policies**

If students have a reason in advance for not attending the in-class exams, they must contact me at least a week before the exam with a documented excuse. Otherwise, students will not be allowed to make up the exam. In relation to the short papers, for each day that the paper is late I will take off a full letter grade (e.g., if you turn a paper in two days late, a paper that would have been an A is now a C). Each paper that is turned in on the due date but after the time deadline will be reduced a letter grade. No exceptions.

**Class Guidelines**

Please come to class prepared. This means you have done the reading and are ready to discuss it critically. When you are in class make sure that your cell phone is silenced and put away. *Do not keep cell phones on your desk, in your lap, etc*. Also, you may **NOT** *use laptops in this class* unless you have a documented accommodation. There is a ton of empirical research that shows using laptops in class, even for note taking purposes, diminish students’ academic performance (e.g. see the [NYT](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/27/learning/should-teachers-and-professors-ban-student-use-of-laptops-in-class.html) and [Scientific American](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/students-are-better-off-without-a-laptop-in-the-classroom/)). Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a reduction in one’s participation grade.

**Plagiarism**

*I will not tolerate any type of plagiarism in this course*, and I reserve the right to use turnitin.com to check your writing. All in-class exams are independent and closed-book, and all sources in your papers must be cited fully. Any case of suspected (intentional or unintentional) plagiarism will be submitted to the University Honor Court (<http://www.highpoint.edu/studentconduct/adjudication-of-honor-code-violations/>). For information on what plagiarism means and how it is viewed see the High Point University Honor Code: <http://www.highpoint.edu/studentconduct/university-honor-code/>.

**Writing Center**

The Writing Center provides writing assistance for students at any level of study – from freshman to graduate – at any stage in the writing process, from invention through revision.  The Writing Center staff will be available in a variety of locations around campus during various hours throughout the day, Monday through Friday.  Go to[https://highpoint.mywconline.com/](https://mobile.highpoint.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=k6oUOg8QjGPRpnXu0iQ1PrgJCNGtwqcnJmpRI4OiWI-jEv7_SwTWCA..&URL=https%3a%2f%2fhighpoint.mywconline.com%2f) to make an appointment. Writing Center tutors do not proofread or edit students’ papers for them, but they do work with students to help them develop strategies for improving their writing in light of their respective assignments, instructors, and writing styles.  For more information, contact Writing Center Director, Dr. Leah Schweitzer at [lschweit@highpoint.edu](https://mobile.highpoint.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=kS-zA0fAKJ5krUbxErAMFKNupsUxJQkUXF3Plf39f0qjEv7_SwTWCA..&URL=mailto%3alschweit%40highpoint.edu) or 336-841-9106.

**Diversity & Inclusivity Statement**

High Point University is committed to fostering an inclusive learning and living environment. We welcome and respect all students, faculty, and staff of all races, ethnicities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, sexual identities and gender expressions, abilities, classes, ages, and political ideas. Diversity in identity, thought, belief and perspective enrich the academic experience and is critical to your growth as a lifelong learner. It is our expectation that every member of our university community uphold a standard of civility and respect both inside and outside of the classroom. HPU Multicultural Affairs (Slane 319) is a campus resource available to anyone seeking support or with questions about diversity and inclusion at High Point University. If you experience or witness an act of bias at HPU or would like to learn more about our Bias Reporting Process, please email [diversity@highpoint.edu](https://mobile.highpoint.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=AOyUmzBwV_7-o0OccDMW4GjpqZDeAwXGNul7XYG2_JsMbWC60_fVCA..&URL=mailto%3adiversity%40highpoint.edu).

**Accommodations**

Students who require classroom accommodations due to a diagnosed disability must submit the appropriate documentation to the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS), 4th Floor Smith Library. Requests for accommodations should be made at the beginning of a course. Accommodations are not retroactive.

Contact us at [http://www.highpoint.edu/oars/contacts/](https://mobile.highpoint.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=9eAbOa5UsDThDGhZx5znHT1fLWPnWGB91BQ0AQEy98B9WtZ3TQTWCA..&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.highpoint.edu%2foars%2fcontacts%2f), or call Ms. Dana Bright, Director of OARS, at 336-841-9361, for additional information.

**Reading Schedule**

*All reading assignments should be completed before you arrive in class on that date*

**Week 1: Introduction to Ethics**

T, January 15: Introduction, no reading

Th, January 17: James Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism”

**Week 2**: **Utilitarianism and Kantianism**

T, January 22: Joseph DesJardins and John McCall, “Utilitarian Defense of the Free Market”

Th, January 24: Onora O’Neill, “A Simplified Account of Kant’s Ethics”

**Week 3**: **Stockholders and Stakeholders**

T, January 29: Milton Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Profits”

Th, January 31: R. Edward Freeman, “Managing for Stakeholders,” *Case Study 1 Due*

**Week 4: Egoism and Business**

T, February 5: James Rachels, “Ethical Egoism”

Th, February 7: Amartya Sen, “Does Business Ethics Make Economic Sense?”

**Week 5**: **Advertising**

T, February 12: John McCall, “Deceptive Advertising”

Th, February 14: David Holley, “Information Disclosure in Sales” *Case Study 2 Due*

**Week 6**: **Justice**

T, February 19: John Rawls, “An Egalitarian Theory of Justice”

Th, February 21: Robert Nozick, “The Entitlement Theory”

**Week 7**: *(Review and Midterm)*

T, February 26: Midterm review

Th, February 28: Midterm Exam

**Week 8**: **Whistleblowing**

T, March 5: Michael Davis, “Some Paradoxes of Whistleblowing”

Th, March 7: Ronald Duska, “Whistle-blowing and Employee Loyalty”

**Week 9**

**No Class**, Spring Break

**Week 10: Globalization**

T, March 19: Carol Gould, “Moral Issues in Globalization” (305-316)

Th, March 21: Same (316-320), *Case Study 3 Due*

**Week 11: Cosmopolitanism and Consumption**

T, March 26: Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Kindness to Strangers”

Th, March 28: Juliet B. Schor, “Why Do We Consume So Much?”

**Week 12**: **Pharma**

T, April 2: Richard T. DeGeorge, “Intellectual Property and Pharmaceutical Drugs: An Ethical Analysis”

Th, April 4: Same (no new reading), *Case Study 4 Due*

**Week 13**: **Privacy**

T, April 9: Deborah Johnson, “Privacy” (428-34)

Th, April 11: Same (434-41)

**Week 14**: **CEO Pay**

T, April 16: **No Class**, Honors Day

Th, April 18: Jeffrey Moriarty, “Do CEOs Get Paid Too Much?”

**Week 15**: **Environment**

T, April 23: Norman Bowie, “Morality, Money and Motor Cars,” *Case Study 5 Due*

Th, April 25: Joseph DesJardins, “Sustainability: Business’s New Environmental Obligation”

**Week 16**: *Review*

T, April 30: Final Exam Review

*Final Exam on Scheduled Class Exam Date: 4pm Wednesday May 8th*