

Course title: Ethics in a globalization and sustainability context

Language of instruction: English

Professor: Jeaninne Horowitz Gassol

Professor's contact and office hours: by appointment, e-mail:
jeanine.horowitz@upf.edu

Course contact hours: 45

Recommended credit: 6 ECTS credits

Course prerequisites: there are no prerequisites for this course

Language requirements:

Recommended level in the European Framework B2 (or equivalent: Cambridge Certificate if the teaching language is English, DELE or 3 semesters in the case of Spanish).

Course focus and approach:

This course is concerned with the application of ethical theory and behaviour in a global and sustainability context and as such it is multi-disciplinary.

Course description:

Globalization and sustainability have become familiar terms that are however at cross purposes. The way globalization has been conducted with an emphasis on the economic sphere—international trade and cross border investment flows, has created a series of crises that threaten the ethical values and beliefs of a sustainable society. Ethics goes beyond with what is legal because it is concerned with the moral reflection of what represents right and wrong behaviour in a complex, dynamic and global environment. In this course we will navigate through what ethics as a discipline represents, will learn to use systems thinking for ethical reasoning and will discuss ethical approaches to global issues that are enhanced by the process of globalization and increasing multiculturalism, e.g., the environment, global citizenship & governance, poverty and inequality, peace and conflict, human rights, health, and the effects of technology among others.

Learning objectives:

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize the complexity of today's economic and global business setting and its effect on social and environmental issues.
- Appreciate the role of ethics as central in decision making.
- Understand basic ethical theories and apply them to ethical issues.
- Discuss the concept of ethical responsibility.
- Describe different ways of managing business ethics in a global context.
- Apply concepts and frameworks for ethical reasoning to complex global issues.

- Develop a systems perspective to help formulate, analyse, and defend decisions in ethical terms.
- Critically examine one's personal ethics.

Course workload:

Readings, lectures, class discussions, exams, student reports, presentations and debates, documentaries, cases studies.

Teaching methodology:

Lectures – Students are presented with content, motivated and challenged to reflect on issues. Issues are clarified and expanded upon.

Class discussions and debates – Analysis of readings, videos, case studies exchange of ideas and cultural perspectives.

Online Reader – Selection of reading material in different areas of ethics.

Case Studies – Opportunity to study real life situations and how the actors involved reacted.

Movies – Documentaries related to global ethical issues.

Quizzes and reading assignments – Short multiples choice quizzes and assignments forum style and debate on course content.

Student presentations and debate leading – Students will have the opportunity to promote class discussions and debates on global ethical issues.

Assessment criteria:

Active class preparation and participation. Assessment will be based on quality participation, which means reading and reflecting before class, using systems thinking to address the issues instead of using personal moral judgments, bringing new insights to class, debating issues based on course material, etc. 20%.

Team project and roundtable presentation: Students will form teams of up to 5 students and will research and analyse a business ethical issue chosen from a list. Each team will write a report of their analysis and power point presentation and prepare a Roundtable type of discussion that promotes the participation of fellow students. All the presentation sessions are mandatory assistance regardless of whether your team presents or not. Unjustified absences will receive a 20% grade reduction for each missed session. 30%

In class working of case studies: Students working in teams will analyze a case study and present a report. There will be 4 case study sessions. Students who miss a case study session will receive zero credit points for that assignment. If the absence is justified, there will be no grade penalty. 30%.

Partial tests. There will be two partial tests to measure the individual integration of ethical concepts into knowledge: 20%

BaPIS absence policy:

Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student's final grade as follows:

Absences	Penalization
Up to two (2) absences	No penalization
Three (3) absences	1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Four (4) absences	2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Five (5) absences or more	The student receives an INCOMPLETE ("NO PRESENTADO") for the course

The BaPIS attendance policy does not make a distinction between justified and unjustified absences. All absences—whether due to common short-term illnesses or personal reasons—are counted toward the total amount and cannot be excused. Therefore, students are responsible for managing all their absences.

Only in cases of longer absences—such as hospitalization, prolonged illness, traumatic events, or other exceptional situations—will absences be considered for exceptions with appropriate documentation. The Academic Director will review these cases on an individual basis.

Students must inform the Instructor and the International Programs Office promptly via email if serious circumstances arise.

Classroom norms:

- No food or drink is permitted in class.
- Students will have a ten-minute break after one one- hour session.
- ...

Weekly schedule:

Please note that sessions and required readings may change at the beginning of the course. Web content reading will be posted in Aula Global.

WEEK 1

Session 1 Introduction: What is ethics and why is it important in a global context?
Absolutisms versus relativism.

The objectives, methodology, content, and organization of the course are presented in detail.

Required readings:

Rezkalla, P. 2019. Aren't right and wrong just matters of opinion? On moral relativism and subjectivism. Chapter 1. In: Introduction to Philosophy: Ethics. Authors: Frank Aragbonfoh Abumere, Douglas Giles, Ya-Yun (Sherry) Kao, Michael Klenk, Joseph Kranak, Kathryn MacKay, Jeffrey Morgan, Paul Rezkalla, George Matthews (Book Editor), and Christina Hendricks (Series Editor). Open Download, The Rebus Press.

Session 2 The individual responsibility. We will examine the importance of personal responsibility in global ethics. We will discuss determinism and free will concepts as well as whistleblowing.

Required readings:

Benson, R. SUPPORT MATERIAL FOR 'DETERMINISM AND FREE WILL ' (UNIT 2 TOPIC 5). Online resource:

<https://www.scribd.com/document/334598351/Determinism-and-Free-Will>

O'Neill, B. 2013. The ethics of whistleblowing. Ludwig von Mises Institute. Online resource: <https://mises.org/library/ethics-whistleblowing>

Recommended Reading:

Bhide A, Stevenson H. 1990. Why be honest if honesty doesn't pay. Harv Bus Rev; 68:121– 30 (September– October).

<https://hbr.org/1990/09/why-be-honest-if-honesty-doesnt-pay>

Fischer, J. M. 2009. Free Will and Moral Responsibility. In The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195325911.003.0013>

Kane, R. 2005. Introduction: The Contours of Contemporary Free Will Debates The Oxford Handbook of Free Will (1st edn). Edited by Robert Kane.

<https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195178548.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195178548-e-1>

WEEK 2

Session 3 Philosophies of Ethics and Ethical Dilemmas.

We will study the philosophical basis of ethics and will look at what are ethical dilemmas and how to deal with them.

Required readings:

Chapters 2-6 of Introduction to Philosophy: Ethics. Authors: Frank Aragbonfoh Abumere, Douglas Giles, Ya-Yun (Sherry) Kao, Michael Klenk, Joseph Kranak, Kathryn MacKay, Jeffrey Morgan, Paul Rezkalla, George Matthews (Book Editor), and Christina Hendricks (Series Editor). Open Download, The Rebus Press.

Ethics, morality, law – what's the difference? ARTICLEBIG THINKERS + EXPLAINERS

BY THE ETHICS CENTRE 27 SEP 2016 (Online resource).

Recommended Reading:

Khemka, P. 2020. Contemporary Ethical Theories: A comparison between decision making and ethical decision making. Online publication ResearchGate

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339300740>

Copp, David. 2005. Chapters 13 to 18. The Oxford handbook of ethical theory [Rekurs electrònic]. Oxford University Press.

Ethics in Internet Encyclopedia of philosophy

Session 4 Case Study 1 Employer-employee relations

WEEK 3

Session 5 Globalization and Sustainable Development. The issues and challenges of globalization and the concept of sustainable development are analysed. Discussion of team projects and guidelines.

Required readings:

Fujimoto, Kazuisa. 2013. Globalization and Ethics for the Future. In WASEDA RILAS JOURNAL NO. 1.

https://www.waseda.jp/flas/rilas/assets/uploads/2013/10/165-170_Kazuisa-Fujimoto.pdf

Assadourian, Erik. 2010. The Rise and Fall of Consumer Cultures. In State of the World 2010, Worldwatch Institute Report, New York: W.W. Norton, pp. 3-21.

Ehrenfeld, Sylvain. 2012. Ethical Dilemmas of Globalization.

<https://ethicalfocus.org/ethical-dilemmas-of-globalization/>

Recommended bibliography:

The Circular Economy: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of the Concept and Application in a Global Context. Journal of Business Ethics.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2693-2>

Session 6 Business, economics, and ethics: We will analyse the relationships between ethics and economics from different perspectives.

Required readings:

Chee Soon Juan. 1998. A Robinson Crusoe Allegory, excerpt from: To be free, Bagha, J., Lacznia, E.R. 2015. Seeking the Real Adam Smith and Milton Friedman. Philosophy of Management 14, 179–191.

Carr, Albert Z. 1968. Is Business Bluffing Ethical? HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW 46(1): 143-146

Annett, Anthony. 2018. Restoring Ethics to Economics. FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT.

Friedman, M. 1970. The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. The New York Times Magazine (September 13), New York.

Wolf, M. 2020. Milton Friedman was wrong on the corporation. Financial Times. December 8, 2020.

Recommended bibliography:

- Broome, J. 2001. Economics and Ethics. In N. J. Smelser & P. B. B. T.-I. E. of the S. & B. S. Baltes (Eds.), International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, pp. 4146–4152. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Kliksberg, B. 2012. Re-examining the relationship between ethics and the economy. In OpenMind Values and Ethics for the 21st Century.
- Sen A. 1987. On Ethics and Economics. Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell.

WEEK 4

Session 7 Case Study 2 Oil Spill in British Columbia

Session 8 Partial test 1 and discussion of team projects

WEEK 5

Session 9 International Governance and Corporate Social Responsibility. The issue of international governance as well as the rise for corporate social responsibility will be addressed.

Required readings:

- Global governance models in history. Global Challenges Foundation 2017. Global governance models in history. Global Challenges Foundation 2017.
- Orr, David. 2013. Governance in the long emergency. In: State of the World 2013: Is sustainability still possible? Worldwatch Institute.

Recommended bibliography:

- Crane, Andrew and Matten, Dirk and Spence, Laura J. 2013 Corporate Social Responsibility in a Global Context. Chapter in: Crane, A., Matten, D., and Spence, L.J., 'Corporate Social Responsibility: Readings and Cases in a Global Context', 2/e. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 3-26.

Session 10 Ethical leadership and organizational culture. Goals, Processes, Success Through a case study depicting a Wall Street financial analyst facing a dilemma in mountaineering, we study how each of our behaviors combine a process and a goal.

Required readings:

- McCoy, Bowen. 1997. The Parable of the Sadhu. Harvard Business Review, (75 N°3). May-June 1997. pp. 54-61.
- Ouma, C. 2017. Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture: Literature Perspective. International Journal of Innovative Research & Development, Vol 6 Issue 8.

Recommended bibliography:

- Terzieva, Kalina . 202. The Rise of Ethical Leadership In Modern Business Enterprises. Forbes Newsletter.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2023/02/28/the-rise-of-ethical-leadership-in-modern-business-enterprises/>

WEEK 6

Session 11 Case Study 3 Environmental Services Company

Session 12 Global Labour Markets: Exploitation or Development? We will address the issues raised by competitiveness and businesses trying to cut costs.

Required readings:

Burtless, G. Workers' Rights: Labor standards and global trade. Bookings online article, Saturday, September 1, 2001.

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/workers-rights-labor-standards-and-global-trade/>

Deen, T. Modern Day Slavery Rated World's Largest Single Crime Industry. Inter Press Service Feb 25, 2019.

http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/02/modern-day-slavery-rated-worlds-largest-single-crime-industry/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=modern-day-slavery-rated-worlds-largest-single-crime-industry

Disguised employment / Dependent self-employment. International Labour Organisation. Online resource.

https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/non-standard-employment/WCMS_534833/lang-en/index.htm

Meyers, C. 2004. Wrongful Beneficence: Exploitation and Third World Sweatshops. Journal of Social Philosophy, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 319–333.

Poulter, S. 2007. That 'ethical' bag is made by Chinese cheap labour (... and it's not organic, either). The Daily Mail Online (April 27).

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-451004/That-ethical-bag-Chinese-cheap-labour---organic-either.html>

Recommended bibliography:

Powell, B. W, & Skarbek, D. B. 2004. Sweatshops and third world living standards: Are the jobs worth the sweat? (Independent Institute) (September 27).

<https://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1369>

WEEK 7

Session 13 Marketing Ethics. We will discuss the ethical implications of marketing practices, examining how strategies can influence consumer behaviour and decision-making.

Required readings:

Marketing ethics. The Chartered Institute of Marketing.

<http://www.cim.co.uk/Resources/OnlineJournals.aspx>

Carr, Albert. 1968. "Is Business Bluffing Ethical?" Harvard Business Review 46, January-February, pp. 143-53.

Ferrell, Linda. Marketing Ethics.

<http://college.cengage.com/business/modules/markngethics.pdf>

Recommended bibliography:

Ferrell, Linda. Marketing Ethics.

<http://college.cengage.com/business/modules/markngethics.pdf>

Session 14 Case Study 4 Overseas Plant Manufacture

WEEK 8

Session 15 Partial test 2 and discussion of team projects

Session 16 The ethics of global water

Required viewing of assigned documentaries.

Required readings:

Water ethics network. 2012. The Water Ethics Charter.

<https://waterethics.org/the-water-ethics-charter/>

Priscoli, J.D., Dooge, J. and Llamas, R. 2004. Water and Ethics: Overview. Published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO.

Kammeyer, C. 2021. On World Water Day, Reflecting on the Value of Water. Pacific

Institute. <https://pacinst.org/on-world-water-day-reflecting-on-the-value-of-water/>

Raising Awareness or Drumming Up Sales? Scientific American Mind Volume 26, Issue 5.

WEEK 9

Session 17 The ethics of financial speculation

Required viewing of assigned documentaries.

Required readings:

Katz, C. 2011. Interpretations of the economic crisis. International Socialist Review.

Issue 75, January–February

Carr, E. 2009. Greed—and fear. The Economist. Special report Jan 24th 2009 edition

World Economy What went wrong. The economist. Editorial. Mar 6th 2009

Recommended bibliography:

de Bruin, Boudewijn. 2015. Ethics and the Global Financial Crisis: Why Incompetence is Worse Than Greed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Session 18 The ethics of Artificial Intelligence

Required viewing of assigned documentaries.

Required readings:

Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. 2020. Stanford Encyclopedia of Robotics.
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-ai/>

Recommended bibliography:

Unesco. 2024. Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. Global Forum on the Ethics of AI.
<https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence/recommendation-ethics>

WEEK 10

Session 19 Team project presentations and roundtables

Session 20 Team project presentations and roundtables

WEEK 11

Session 21 Team project presentations and roundtables

Session 22 General discussion and final considerations

Last revision: April 2025.