

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

PHIL 225

Business Ethics

Sample Course Outline

Panama Program

General Overview: In this class we will examine a central question: When is it permissible to profit from harm to others during business? It is accepted that many harms are merely the price society and individuals pay in order to have the influence and prosperity commerce brings us. Do we ever stop to consider whether that influence and prosperity are always good? What about the rights of those who pay some price without choosing to do so? What are the responsibilities of corporations? What about personal responsibility on the part of consumers? Does the government have a role to play? There are rules for business operations, but are those rules absolute? What are their ethical foundations? How does logic fit into the picture? Can multiple sides be right at the same time? What do my business actions have to do with my own happiness? We will examine these questions and many others, paying particular attention to Panama City and its environment.

The Objectives for the course are as follows:

1. Become a better thinker.
2. Develop and apply critical thinking skills, especially the Paul-Elder Framework.
3. Become more aware of the role of corporations.
4. Develop some informed ideas about shareholder versus stakeholder theories.
5. Decide when it is permissible to profit from harm to others within business.
6. Learn several methods for critically assessing discourse.
7. Gain some understanding of the nature of truth.
8. Become a more informed consumer.
9. Learn some ethical theories and how to apply there.
10. Become conversant in the language of Business Ethics.

Required Texts and Video (all provided on Blackboard)

The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking—Paul/Elder (2009)

The Myth of Gyges--Plato

The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Profits--Milton Friedman(1970)

The Ethics of Being--William Clifford (1877)

All readings will be posted on Blackboard.

You will be required to watch some videos outside of class. The links to these videos will be posted to Blackboard.

The Smartest Guys in the

Room The Corporation

Inside Job

Black Gold

No Logo

selections from *The Yes Men* media

selections from www.justiceharvard.org