INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS POLICY: A BUSINESS ETHICS PERSPECTIVE

2017

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Lectures: Mondays 19.00-20.30.
Tutorials: Monday 18.00-19.00.
Seminars: Tuesday 8.30-9.30-10.30
           Wednesday 9.00-10.30
           13.00-14.30
           14.30-16.00

Presentation of the course

The course addresses international business policy in an ethical perspective.

In recent years ethical issues have become increasingly manifest and pervading in the business world. In the future, managers will have to deal with ethical dilemmas in the course of their career. The course introduces participants to international business issues and provides them with tools to effectively address business ethical dilemmas. Teaching is systematically illustrated with examples of real business ethical dilemmas.

The global context in which social and environmental issues have become a major issue for international business is analysed. The specific trade-off pertaining to the relation between business value on one hand and human, social and environmental values on the other hand is structured. An ethical framework based on different ethical traditions – including philosophical, institutional and cultural – is proposed and coupled with the theory of rationality used in economics and management sciences. Tools and strategies to analyse business ethical dilemmas are presented, with a specific attention to issues of reputation, credibility and communication. In this manner, participants shall develop their knowledge of environmental, social and personal values and their understanding of the place and role of business in society. This increased awareness, coupled with the methodology, constitutes a basis for efficient and responsible management, as participants will be better prepared to think, act and communicate in situations involving tough ethical issues.

Description and Method

The course is built on preparation and required readings prior to class, lectures, videos, case studies, active discussions of business ethical and group work and presentations. All required readings can be found on the course website. The readings and assignments
required for a particular session must be completed BEFORE coming to class that day. For those who want to go further, optional readings are also proposed and can help the understanding of the issues.

There are two types of classes: Lectures (all students at the same time) and Seminars (6 groups of approximately 25 students each). In reality, active participation is encouraged in both. Two plenary Lectures are dedicated to Groups’ Presentations.

**Grading**

Students receive a grade for each class. Theory classes are graded by answering a specific Theory question as part of the assignment to be handed in when coming to the seminar. Answers should demonstrate 1) that the students have read the required material and 2) thought about it enough to express an interesting and personal opinion. Each theory assignment is graded over 5 points. To know more about Theory grades, you are invited to read "Grading of Theory assignments".

For each of the Seminars, an assignment is also proposed and must be handed in when arriving in class. These assignments build on required readings and help the work (individual or in group) during the class. Each assignment is graded over 5 points. The four lowest grades will be omitted in the final account. Overall, grades are adjusted so that the group presentation amounts to 25% of the grade.

To know more about Groups’ Presentations, please read "Guidelines to Groups’ Presentations".

There is no exam.

Participation to the Theory lectures is not mandatory. Note however that I make a special effort to make it interesting for the students and that it considerably helps to answer the Theory question of each week.

Participation to the seminars sessions is mandatory in order to hand in the assignments of the relevant session. Note that the system allows you to miss 4 classes without cost. Groups Presentations can’t be missed.

If you want to change seminar group, please use the forum of the first seminar to find a substitute. Once you have a pair of students willing to switch, write an email to me to validate the change.

**Schedule Overview**

1. **Introduction: Is Business Ethical?**
2. **Business, Ethics and Profit: Economic Approaches**
3. **Science, Ideology and Propaganda**
4. **Corporate Social Responsibility: The Bhopal Gas Tragedy**
5. **Social vs. Legal Responsibility: What should Dow Chemical do?**
6. **Business and Global Environmental Issues: The Oil Industry and Climate Change**

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7. Thinking our Natural Environment
8. Values, Ethics and Rationality: A theoretical Framework
9. Goals and Success: the Parable of the Sadhu
11. International Business and National Politics: Royal Dutch/Shell in Nigeria
12. Financial and/or Ethical Crisis: Values and the Future of Business
13. From Nightmares to Dreams - What is needed for Sustainable Business
15. Corruption & Obedience (Case Study and Discussion)
16. Meeting the digital challenges: The Fairphone case-study
17. We Dream Business
18. Dreaming and Deciding your life
19. Conclusion and Sharing of Key Learning