



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2013/2014

ELE 3710 Business and Professional Ethics

Programme

Elective

Responsible for the course

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Department

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Term

According to study plan

ECTS Credits

7,5

Language of instruction

English

Introduction

Business and professional ethics as an academic field has two main functions. On the one hand, ethics is potentially helpful when it comes to analyzing, handling and preventing moral conflict cases in business contexts. On the other hand, it invites a critical look at business professional roles and at business practices. The course emphasizes work on cases and reflects that the subject business and professional ethics is (should be) a field of listening, reflection and discussion (rather than a preaching discipline).

The following lines can serve as a first step-by-step presentation: "Ethics" most often refers to a domain of inquiry, a discipline, in which matters of right and wrong, good and evil, virtue and vice, are systematically examined. "Morality", by contrast, is most often used to refer not to a discipline but to patterns of thought and action that are actually operative in everyday life. In this sense, morality is what the discipline of ethics is about. And so business morality is what business ethics is about" (source: K. E. Goodpaster).

Learning outcome

Acquired knowledge

After completing the course, students should:

- know the most important terminology, theories and authors' names within normative and descriptive ethical theory
- understand the strengths and weaknesses of chosen approaches

Acquired skills

On completion of the course students should:

- be able to apply concepts and theories fruitfully and critically to business ethical and professional ethical problems in the literature as well as in real business and business school life
- be able to draft and organize work with real moral conflict situations and business contexts
- be able to identify ethical aspects in other business school subjects
- be able to ask critical questions about such theories and about business practices

Reflection

- Ethics means reflection about complexity, dilemmas, questions of right and wrong, in this case in business and professional contexts
- After completing the course, students should have acquired a reflected attitude when it comes to their own morality, i.e. have developed personal ethics and a sense of social responsibility as a business school graduate and have acquired an ability and a willingness to follow up words with deeds, never forgetting that business ethics is about the wise and responsible balancing of business and non-business considerations

Prerequisites

No special prerequisites are required.

Compulsory reading

Books:

Crane, Andrew, Dirk Matten. 2010. Business ethics : managing corporate citizenship and sustainability in the age of globalization. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press. Students may replace the whole Crane&Matten book or chapters of it by a comparable text (in agreement with the teacher)

Collection of articles:

Brinkmann, J., ed.. 2010. Texts in Business and professional ethics. Handelshøyskolen BI. A few additional texts will be made available for free via It's Learning

Recommended reading

Books:

Brinkmann, Johannes. 2008. Ubehagelig næringslivsetikk : en essaysamling. Licentia forlag

Course outline

- Why moral conflict cases are ubiquitous and at the same time a question of sensitivity and perception
- Cases with debriefing sorted by fields: human resource management ethics, marketing and PR ethics, professional ethics, environmental ethics, cross-cultural business ethics
- Business and professional ethics – other topics and approaches
- Business ethics as an academic and a teaching discipline
- Different approaches to moral philosophy
- Summarizing and transcending the case-focus: business ethics as professional ethics

Computer-based tools

No specified computer-based tools are required.

Learning process and workload

The students are expected to document their learning process across various assignments and in a minimum diary (see below). The work on the term paper begins typically two weeks after the start of the course, at the latest.

Recommended workload in hours:

Student activity	Hours
Lecture participation	30
Prepare for lectures, follow up lectures	30
Read mandatory /recommended course readings independently of class	20
Write term paper, individual and group work together	70
Assignments and indiv feedback	20
Other group work during and in addition to class , e.g. related to presentations	30
Total recommended use of time	200

Students must write a short diary of one's learning process, covering each class meeting typically with 3-5 lines. This diary must be available as a basis for a short conversation with the instructor in the periphery of a class meeting.

Use of hours

30 hours - Lectures (30+0)
6 hours - Group supervision and listen to presentations (3+3)
5 hours - Individual feedback (2+3)
4 hours - Identify and use web and online resources (0+4)
45 hours total

Examination

The final grade in the course is based on the following activities and weighting:

- 1) A term paper in groups of 2 or 3 students, accounts for 60 % of the grade in the course.
- 2) Group presentation in class, accounts for 25 % of the grade in the course.
- 3) Individual participation/assignment, accounts for 15 % of the grade in the course. (Students are expected to show up for at least 80% of all class sessions).

Examination code(s)

ELE 37101 - Process evaluation, counts 100% towards the final grade in ELE 3710, 7,5 credits.

Examination support materials

All support materials are allowed.

Re-sit examination

A re-sit is held in connection with the next scheduled exam in the course.

Students who are taking new exam must take the course all over including all the activities on which the evaluation is based.

Additional information

The term paper topic is either chosen by the group members and approved by the lecturer, or chosen from a lecturer's list

which will be made available in the third session the latest. The max term paper length is 15x350 words; contents, abstract and necessary appendices are permitted in addition.
The group presentation is peer-graded, but the lecturer has a veto right
The additional text selection is updated once a year and preferably available online instead of in paper.