SFU 1489 Ethical Challenges in Finance

Programme
Bachelor of Management, Banking and Insurance

Responsible for the course
Kristian Alm

Department
Department of Communication and Culture

Term
According to study plan

ECTS Credits
7,5

Language of instruction
Norwegian

Introduction

The purpose of the course is to raise the level of students' awareness of the ethical challenges and dilemmas facing us in our own day and time. Theories will be presented that aid students in handling these challenges by establishing the grounds for their own ethical standpoints. In addition the course aims at developing students' capacity to be proactive, confident in their own ethical judgment and capable of articulating their own ethical positions when meeting the expectations and demands of the financial world and society

Learning outcome

Acquired knowledge
During the course students will:

- Develop solid understanding of the ethical demand put to advisors by the society to place customers' interests first and what grounds the society has for making this demand
- Develop solid knowledge of the financial world's ethical guidelines – rules for good advisory practice
- Learn the most central ethical theories
- Become acquainted with central Norwegian examples of ethical investments
- Establish knowledge of the most important grounds for the need for internal and external warning

Acquired skills
At the conclusion of the course students will be able to:

- Explain the different stages in the advisory process in a customer's decision making process in accordance with good advisory practice
- Identify their own ethical standpoints in meeting contemporary demands for profit in companies and the world of finance
- Identify an ethical dilemma and discuss how to manage it in an advisory situation or otherwise
- Identify and understand how difference in power impacts both the relationship between the advisor and customer and that of the financial institution and the advisor
- Seek a balance of power between the advisor and the customer
- Exercise critical discretion in assessing one's own and others' arguments
- Account for ones' own choices and decisions in a systematic and principled fashion
- Preclude misunderstandings and conflicts of interest in providing advice

Reflection
At the conclusion of the course students will be able to enhance their loyalty to the professional ethical values in a company and further develop approaches that create an atmosphere of confidence with regard to both the customer and public opinion in general. Moreover, they will be able to further develop their interest in professional ethics and responsibility to the society while in a position to demonstrate loyalty to their personal integrity and ethical values.

Prerequisites

Compulsory reading

Books:

Alm, Kristian. 2012. Yrkesetikk : utfordringer for næringsliv og finans. Universitetsforlaget
Kvalnes, Øyvind. 2008. Se gorillaen! : etikk i arbeid. 2. utg. Universitetsforlaget

Book extract:
Olsen, Jørn Bue og Henrik Syse. 2013. Næringslivsetikk og samfunnsansvar. Fagbokforlaget. Kapittel 5, s. 95 - kap. 9, s. 207.

Recommended reading
Books:
Tollefsen, Torstein, Henrik Syse og Rune Fritz Nicolaisen. 1998. Tenkere og ideer : filosofiens historie fra antikken til vår egen tid. 2. utg. Ad Notam Gyldendal

Course outline

- Theoretical perspectives with relevance for the world of finance
- Advisory tasks as ethical communication
- The issue of return on investment in the world of finance as a context for ethical reflection
- The use of ethical reflection in analyzing and discussing a case
- Participant-led presentation of a case
- Sources of good ethical judgment
- Expansion of power and levelling of power in interpersonal relations
- Ethical investments - ideal and reality
- Ethical regulations in banking and insurance
- Special subjects for the insurance sector

Computer-based tools

Learning process and workload

Student s meet for two seminars of two days' duration each. The first seminar is held at the beginning of the semester, the second towards the end of the semester. There are two obligatory papers to be handed in during the course. The Banner codes for these are SFU 14892 and SFU 14893.

At the first seminar students will be introduced to the most central areas of the syllabus through lectures, group work and discussion. Focus will particularly be on ethical theories, ethical dilemmas in the world of finance, professional ethical guidelines, attitudes and values. Lectures will also be given on how students can solve practical tasks with the help of a toolkit.

The activities of the 1st seminar establish the foundation for meeting the demands of the work expected of students between the two seminars. In addition to working with the syllabus literature, each student will write two obligatory papers. Here ethical dilemmas from their own companies will be discussed. Students will be given counseling on the net and assessment of their papers will be a part of this. Through the grade assessment process, students will have an indication of their progress in the learning process.

The 2nd seminar will focus on central ethical challenges facing us in this day and time, especially with regard to the advisory process in the world of finance, individual responsibility, power, trust and dialogue. The learning process also involves student presentations of ethical dilemmas on which they will be counseled.

Student s' use of time. The two seminars are of two days' duration each for a total of 32 hours. Before the first seminar and between the two seminars, participants must put aside substantial time for self-study of the syllabus. They must also set aside time for close cooperation on the writing of the two papers through net-based counseling and to prepare for presentation of their own case.

Activity	***Hours***
Teaching and seminars	*32*
Self-study of the syllabus	*98*
Net-based papers and counseling	*46*
Take-home exam	*24*
Recommended total use of time	***200***

Examination
The course is concluded by a 72 hour take-home exam. The take-home exam can be taken individually or in groups of up to three students.

Examination code(s)
The SFU 14891 take-home exam counts for 100% of the grade in the course: SFU 1489, Ethical challenges in the world of finance, 7.5 credits.

Examination support materials
All support materials are allowed.

Re-sit examination
A re-sit examination is offered in connection with the next ordinary course

Additional information