

BUSINESS ETHICS AND CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Area Corporate Development



Syllabus for the winter term 2017/18

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Times & Locations:	Lectures 1	Thu, 12-13:30, 100 / Hörsaal VI
	Lectures 2	Thu, 14-15:30, 100 / Hörsaal XII
	Classes 1	Tue, 16-17:30, 100 / Hörsaal VI
	Classes 2	Wed, 14-15:30, 100 / Hörsaal XVIII

COURSE OVERVIEW

New technologies, socio-economic dynamics, and cultural orientations have opened up new possibilities of how we live. Our environment today is increasingly challenging for the business world too. Traditionally, the central question for managers is how to grow revenues and profits. In line with this, they typically regard business ethics as an instrument to increase profitability. Business ethicists critically discuss the idea of profit and ask: under which circumstances is the maximization of profits valuable? This is one of the main questions of traditional business ethics. In this field, issues in the corporate world, such as fairness, justice, corporate social responsibility, whistle blowing, consequences of globalization are reflected by applying classical philosophical approaches of Aristotle, Kant, and Bentham. But given the challenges of the new environment today, additional insights are necessary. We need to apply contemporary ways of thinking about our life to the business realm. We will see that ethics is not primarily about answers and solutions but about questions, critical reflection and finding stringent argumentations. This does not mean that answers cannot emerge, but that they should always be subjected to a process of critical reasoning. We practice this critical way of reasoning by studying continental philosophers like Levinas, Nancy, Sloterdijk, Jonas, Caputo, Baumann, Žižek. Participating students will learn to challenge their own role in a company, to reflect the consequences of their actions and to justify their decisions. The course draws on students' active participation in presentations and discussions.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course comprises five distinct units:

- I) Agency in Organizations
- II) Globalization
- III) Corporate Social Responsibility
- IV) Organizational Justice
- V) Whistle Blowing

Each unit represents an ethical debate on a specific issue from the corporate world and contains an application of contemporary thinking to that issue. Each unit includes two blocks: Lecture 1 & 2 and Class 1 & 2. There will be required readings for each block. Readings must be done by the students before each block. In each block, students will interact and discuss with the instructors and other students. Each unit starts with Lecture 1 (Thursday, 12-13:30, HS VI) in which students learn about the standard business ethics debates in the field of the unit's topic. Furthermore, an applied case study is introduced by the instructors. In Lecture 2 (Thursday, 14-15:30, HS XII) students will reflect upon the ethical debate and discuss the presented case study. In Class 1 (Tuesday, 16-17:30, HS VI) students discuss the main arguments advocated by selected continental philosophers regarding the business ethics debate. In Class 2 (Wednesday, 14-15:30, HS XVIII) students will intensively reflect on the lessons that can be drawn from the continental philosophers' concepts and arguments.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Students are asked to prepare and present answers to a short list of assignment questions provided for each unit (see below) based on the selected readings. For that purpose students have to read and prepare selected material in advance. The assignment is expected to be handed in in form of a power point presentation (one slide per question). Slides must be uploaded (power point or pdf format) before Tuesday, 12:00 noon (before Class 1) via ILIAS (format: *last name_given name_unit name*). By providing slides students can earn up to 10 bonus points, i.e., a maximum of two bonus points per unit depending on the accuracy of their answers, to top up their points in the final exam of the course (the exam will have 60 points in total). The submission of prepared answers to the assigned questions is not mandatory – you will NOT receive negative points for the exam if you do not submit slides for a specific unit. Importantly, since this is bonus material, we are unable to give feedback on your submitted answers. You will only be informed of your total bonus points together with your final grade from the exam at the end of the course.

ATTENDANCE

It is highly recommended to hand in the assignments and to actively participate in the lectures and classes to earn a comprehensive understanding of the discussed issues. This is also an excellent preparation of your exam. Since it is impossible for you to participate in and benefit from class discussions when you are absent, your attendance at every lecture and class session is highly recommended. Note: you cannot earn bonus points for a specific assignment if you do not attend Class 2 (even though you might have submitted the assignment). There will be no exceptions to this rule.

PARTICIPATION

Given the format of this course, students are expected to play an active role in class discussions.

GRADING

Grades are based on: 1) A written exam which lasts 60 minutes and takes place at the end of the mid-term (Tentative date: 29th of November 2017, 14:30 – 15:30).
2) If you earn bonus points from the unit assignments they will be added to your points earned in the exam only if you pass the course with your exam grade.

COURSE LANGUAGE / CREDIT POINTS

English / 6 ETCS

LITERATURE

For each unit you will find a list with *required* readings. We expect you to read these texts thoroughly for classes, lectures and exam preparation. If you want to further your understanding of a specific topic you can refer to the additional readings, which provide a short list of insightful literature on the discussed topic. The most of the literature is available online. The main text book is

Painter-Morland, M. & R. Ten Bos. *Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Some exemplars are available at the university library. You can also assess the book in an ebook format from the campus network. To do so search for “Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy” in the library catalogue <https://www.ub.uni-koeln.de> (remember, for free access you need to login to the university network or be on campus). In addition, we will provide you with a hard copy folder wherein you can find copies of the texts used in the course and the materials for preparing the case studies. The folders are placed at the two following locations (please ask for them):

Seminar für Allgemeine Betriebswirtschaftslehre, Unternehmensentwicklung
und Wirtschaftsethik
Building 102, Office (Room 3.220)
Universitätsstraße 22a
50937 Köln
<http://www.codebe.uni-koeln.de/>

Copy-Star Druck und Werbung GmbH
Zülpicher Straße 184
50937 Köln
<http://www.copystar.de/>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit I – Agency in Organizations (12.10. - 18.10.2017)

In the first lecture, students will get to know the topics of the course and instructors will convey the structure of the course's units. Organizational issues will be discussed.

In the second lecture and classes, we will learn about the philosophical foundations of business ethics by discussing the notions of agency and moral responsibility and different arguments on whether they are applicable to organizations and corporations in particular. Based on a text by Boltanski and Chiapello, we will also discuss how norms of how individuals in different roles within corporations should behave have changed over time and how this is reflected by normative statements in management textbooks.

Assignments:

Based on Boltanski and Chiapello (2007/1999), please answer the following questions:

1. What are the functions of management literature and how is it in a dialectical relationship with agency in corporations?
2. Why is it important that firms create meaning?
3. What kinds of actors are cadres, managers, and leaders and how do they gain legitimacy according to the management discourses of the 1960s and the 1990s?
4. What is the relationship between networks, control, and trust?

Based on Risser (online), please discuss the following question:

5. Can formal organizations, like corporations, be morally responsible?

Required readings for Lecture 1 & 2:

- Painter-Morland, M. & R. Ten Bos (2011). Introduction: Critical Crossings. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland and R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-14.
- Painter-Morland, M. (2011). Agency in corporations. In: M. Painter-Morland and R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, section 1: pp. 16-23
- Volkswagen Sustainability and Responsibility Statement. Retrieved October 8, 2015. http://www.volkswagenag.com/content/vwcorp/content/en/sustainability_and_responsibility.html
- Gates, G., J. Ewing, K. Russell & D. Watkins (2016, September 12). Explaining Volkswagen's Emissions Scandal. Retrieved October 12, 2016, from <http://nyti.ms/1jQyOC6>

Required readings for Class 1 & 2:

- Boltanski, L. and E. Chiapello (2007/1999): Management Discourse in the 1990s, The New Spirit of Capitalism, London: Verso (excerpts)
- Risser, D. T.: 2. Moral Responsibility of Formal Organizations, Collective Moral Responsibility, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Retrieved October 10, 2016 from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/collecti/>

Optional readings:

- Fieser, J.: Ethics, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Retrieved October 10, 2016 from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/ethics/>
- Weber, M. (1947/1921): The Fundamental Concepts of Sociology, Theory of Social and Economic Organization, New York: Free Press (excerpts)

Schedule for Unit I:

Block	Time	Location	Content
Lecture 1	Thu, 12.10.2017, 12:00 – 13:30	HS VI	Introduction of the course
Lecture 2	Thu, 12.10.2017, 14:00 – 15:30	HS XII	Concepts on agency and Volkswagen case study
Class 1	Tue, 17.10.2017, 16:00 – 17:30	HS VI	Continental perspectives on agency and the role of managers: Max Weber and Boltanski/Chiapello Presentation slides upload until: Tue, 17.10.2017, 12:00
Class 2	Wed, 18.10.2017, 14:00 – 15:30	HS XVIII	Presentation and discussion of assignments and the Boltanski/Chiapello text

Unit II – Globalization (19.10. - 25.10.2017)

In this unit we will develop the idea that globalization is much more than just an economic issue. In our discussion, we will address different notions of defining and describing globalization. We will try to better understand how business ethicists deal with globalization and show that the issue of relativism plays an important role in their discussions. Using arguments of Zizek, Nancy and Sloterdijk, we reflect on how processes of globalization affect our life.

Assignments:

1. Explain the notion of “destructured masses” as a potential addressee of future politics or business ethics considerations put forward by Zizek.
2. What does Nancy describe as “globalization”?
3. What does Nancy describe as “mondialization”? How is this term related to his notion of “globalization”?
4. Explain Sloterdijk’s concept of “spheres”.
5. What describes Sloterdijk as the “crisis of spheres”?
6. Describe the notion of “responsibility” in a globalized world according to Sloterdijk.

Required readings for Lecture 1 & 2:

- Ten Bos, R. (2011). Globalization. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland & R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, section 1: pp. 306-315.
- Case study: Frost, S., & Burnett, M. (2007). Case study: the Apple iPod in China. Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, 14(2), 103-113.

Required readings for Class 1 & 2:

- Ten Bos, R. (2011). Globalization. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland & R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, section 2: pp. 315-329.
- Zizek, S. (2008). Nature and its Discontents, SubStance, 117(37,3), 40-42.
- Nancy, J.-L. (2007). The creation of the world, State University of New York Press, New York, 34-53 (excerpts).
- Sloterdijk, P. (2011). Bubbles, Semiotext (e), 25-75 (excerpts).
- Sloterdijk, P. (2013). In the World Interior of Capital, Polity Press, Cambridge, 177-192.

Optional readings:

- Morin, M.E. (2009). Cohabitating in the globalised world: Peter Sloterdijk's global foams and Bruno Latour's cosmopolitics. Environment and planning. D, Society and space, 27(1), 58-72.
- Meurs, P., N. Note, & D. Aerts (2009). This world without another. On Jean-Luc Nancy and la mondialisation, Journal of Critical Globalization Studies, 1, 31-46.

Schedule for Unit II:

Block	Time	Location	Content
Lecture 1	Thu, 19.10.2017, 12:00 – 13:30	HS VI	Debates on globalization and Apple case study
Lecture 2	Thu, 19.10.2017, 14:00 – 15:30	HS XII	Debates on globalization
Class 1	Tue, 24.10.2017, 16:00 – 17:30	HS VI	Globalization in the eyes of Zizek, Nancy, and Sloterdijk Presentation slides upload until: Tue, 24.10.2017, 12:00
Class 2	Wed, 25.10.2017, 14:00 – 15:30	HS XVIII	Presentation and discussion of assignments and continental philosophy perspectives of Sloterdijk and Zizek

Unit III – Organizational Justice (02.11. - 08.11.2017)

In this unit, we will discuss about the idea of 'organizational justice' in organization and business area, and also the three dimensions of it. Then we will turn to continental philosophy, and understand the concept of 'justice' in Emmanuel Levinas's theories and its relationship to 'ethics'. It will also be discussed that how the 'justice' in philosophy can be applied in organizations based on the ideas of Jacques Derrida.

Assignments:

1. Describe the ancient notion of "Pleonexia" and link it to the modern Levinas' concept of "Enjoyment"
2. Explain the main concepts that characterize Levinas's idea of ethics and justice. Discuss the justice in the light of his notion of ethics.
3. Describe the main differences between Levinas' idea of justice and "justice" in this definition: "Organization justice is concerned with people's fairness perceptions in their employment relationships."
4. According to Levinas' thought, what is the spontaneous human attitude that individuals exercise encountering another human?
5. Describe the specific typology of interpersonal relation that Levinas considers the most relevant and that he uses to develop his philosophical approach.
6. If Levinas was a CEO, would he be more inclined to implement a wage scheme based on equality or based on the equity principle? Please, bring some arguments to justify your position.

Required readings for Lecture 1&2:

- Rhodes, C. (2011). Organizational Justice. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland & R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press – Organizational Justice, section 1: pp.141-149.
- Case study: Apple – Foxconn and working conditions in Chinese factories [collection of newspaper articles].

Required readings for Class 1&2:

- Rhodes, C. (2011). Organizational Justice. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland & R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, section 2: pp. 149-161.
- E. Levinas, Ethics and Infinity. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press (1985), 85-101

Optional readings:

- Abeler, J. et al. (2010). Gift Exchange and Workers' Fairness Concerns: When Equality is Unfair, Journal of the European Economic Association, 2010, 8:6, 1299-1324.
- Shao, R. et al. (2013). Employee Justice Across Cultures A Meta-Analytic Review, Journal of Management, 2013, 39, 263-301.
- E. Levinas, Totality and Infinity. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press (1969), 67-69 (excerpts).
- J. Derrida (2002), 'Force of law: the "mystical foundation of authority"'. In Gil Anidjar Editor (Ed.), Acts of Religion, p.p 230-299. 244-245 (excerpts)
- Byers and Rhodes, 'Ethics, alterity, and organizational justice'

Schedule for Unit IV:

Block	Time	Location	Content
Lecture 1	Thu, 02.11.2017, 12:00 – 13:30	HS VI	Concepts on organizational justice and Apple case study
Lecture 2	Thu, 02.11.2017, 14:00 – 15:30	HS XII	Debate on organizational justice
Class 1	Tue, 07.11.2017, 16:00 – 17:30	HS VI	Organizational Justice and the continental philosophy perspective: Ethics and Justice in Levinas' thought Presentation slides upload until: Tue, 07.11.2017, 12:00
Class 2	Wed, 08.11.2017, 14:00 – 15:30	HS XVIII	Presentation and discussion of continental philosophy perspectives of Levinas

Unit IV – Corporate Social Responsibility (09.11. - 15.11.2017)

This unit's aim is to understand what Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is and how its meaning has been historically developed. In doing so we will review how complex discussions about responsibility in business are. Heidegger's way of (destructive) questioning will thereby serve us as a means to find out what the social responsibility of the corporation might be.

Assignments:

1. Explain the three structural items of Heidegger's way of questioning.
2. What is the "Gefragte" in the question "what is the social responsibility of the corporation"?
3. What is the "Befragte" in the question "what is the social responsibility of the corporation"? What do Ten Bos and Dunne consider to be the "Befragte"?
4. What is the "Erfragte" in the question "what is the social responsibility of the corporation"?
5. What do Ten Bos' & Dunne's find in asking the question "what is the social responsibility of the corporation"?

Required readings for Lecture 1 & 2:

- Ten Bos, R. & S. Dunne (2011). Corporate Social Responsibility. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland & R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, section 1: pp. 242-253.
- Friedman, M. (1970). The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits. *The New York Times Magazine* (September 13).
- Case study: Rethinking the Social Responsibility of Business. The positions of John Mackey (Whole Foods) and Million Friedman's reply (<http://reason.com/archives/2005/10/01/rethinking-the-social-responsibility/print>)

Required readings for Class 1 & 2:

- Ten Bos, R. & S. Dunne (2011). Corporate Social Responsibility. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland & R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, section 2: pp. 254-262.
- Porter, M. E., & Kramer, M. R. (2006). The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility. *Harvard business review*, 84(12), 78-92.

Optional readings:

- Porter, M. E. & Kramer, M. R. (2011). Creating shared value. *Harvard business review*, 89(1/2), 62-77.
- Carroll, A. B. (1991). The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders. *Business Horizons*, (34), 39-48.
- Freeman, R. E. & SR Velamuri (2006), A New Approach to CSR: Company Stakeholder Responsibility. A. Kakabadse & M. Morsing (Eds.), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Reconciling Aspiration with Application, New York, 9-23.
- Frederick, W.C. (1994). From CSR₁ to CSR₂ - The Maturing of Business-and Society Thought, *Business and Society* 33(2), 150-164.

- Tirole, J. & R. Bénabou (2010). Individual and Corporate Social Responsibility, *Economica* Issue 305 (77), 1-19.
- United Nations (2015). Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015.

Schedule for Unit III:

Block	Time	Location	Content
Lecture 1	Thu, 09.11.2017, 12:00 – 13:30	HS VI	Development of CSR-concept and Friedman's interview
Lecture 2	Thu, 09.11.2017, 14:00 – 15:30	HS XII	BP case in light of the development of CSR
Class 1	Tue, 14.11.2017, 16:00 – 17:30	HS VI	Introduction of Heidegger and his way of questioning; introduction of the Whole Foods corporation Presentation slides upload until: Tue, 14.11.2017, 12:00
Class 2	Wed, 15.11.2017, 14:00 – 15:30	HS XVIII	Presentation and discussion of assignments and controversy between John Mackey (Whole Foods) and Milton Friedman

Unit V – Whistle Blowing (16.11. - 22.11.2017)

We discuss the moral dilemma and the motives of whistle blowers. Since reporting violations at the work place is not the only duty that employees have, we will discuss how whistle-blowers are perceived by their colleagues in Europe and in the US. What are the cultural and institutional reasons for the different perceptions of whistle-blowers in various countries? How can we explain the actions of whistle-blowers? Drawing on the thoughts of Caputo, Baumann, and Jonas we will shed light on an individual's obligation and decision to blow the whistle when becoming a witness of wrongdoing by others in the company.

Assignments:

1. Why is whistle-blowing a controversial issue?
2. What are the main differences in the perception of whistle-blowers in Europe and in the USA?
3. Explain what describes an obligation according to Caputo's understanding of how moral behavior emerges.
4. How does the moral demand to blow the whistle emerge according to Baumann?
5. Explain how emotions lead employees to blow the whistle according to Jonas?
6. What does the "heuristic of fear" mean for Jonas? How does this heuristic relate to whistle-blowing?

Required readings for Lecture 1 & 2:

- Painter-Morland, M. & Ten Bos, R. (2011). Whistle-Blowing. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland & R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, section 1: pp. 199-208.
- Case study: Swartz, M. & Watkins, S. (2003): Power Failure. The Inside Story of the Collapse of Enron. Currency Doubleday: New York et al., 2-6 and 273-282

Required readings for Class 1 & 2:

- Painter-Morland, M. & Ten Bos, R. (2011). Whistle-Blowing. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland & R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, section 2: pp. 208-219.
- Jonas, H. (1976). Responsibility today: The Ethics of an Endangered Future, in: Social Research, Vol. 43, No.1, 87-91.
- Caputo, J. (1993). Against Ethics. Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis, 5-8; 27-30.
- Baumann, Z. (2009). Postmodern Ethics. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 74-81.

Optional readings:

- Dandekar, N. (1991): Can whistle-blowing be FULLY legitimized? A theoretical discussion, in: Business & Professional Ethics Journal, Vol. 10, No. 1, 89-108.
- Miceli, M. P.; Near J. P.; Dworkin, T. M. (2008): Whistle-blowing in Organizations. New York: Routledge.
- Carozza, D. (2007): Constant Warning. Interview with Sherron Watkins. In: Fraud Magazine, January/February 2007, <http://www.fraud-magazine.com/article.aspx?id=583>

Schedule for Unit V:

Block	Time	Location	Content
Lecture 1	Thu, 16.11.2017, 12:00 – 13:30	HS VI	Whistleblowing in USA and Europe. Introduction of the case Enron
Lecture 2	Thu, 16.11.2017, 14:00 – 15:30	HS XII	Motives and influencing factors of whistle-blowers
Class 1	Tue, 21.11.2017, 16:00 – 17:30	HS VI	The philosophical concepts of ç Presentation slides upload until: Tue, 21.11.2017, 12:00
Class 2	Wed, 22.11.2017, 14:00 – 15:30	HS XVIII	Presentation and discussion of continental philosophy perspectives of The philosophical concepts of Caputo, Bauman and Jonas

IMPORTANT DATES

Date	Event
Thu, 12.10.2017	Opening lecture
Tue, 17.10.2017	First class
26.10.-01.11.2017	No lecture or class due to public holiday on 31.10. and 1.11.2017
Wed, 22.11.2017	Last class
Thu, 23.11.2017	Question time
Wed, 29.11.2017	Exam: 14:30 - 15:30, location may change (presumably HS XVIII)
Tue, 06.02.2018	Retake exam: 10:30 - 11:30, location may change (presumably VI)