Business Ethics
20152 - PHIL 4423 - L01
Eloquentia Perfecta Seminar #4

Instructor: Brian Johnson
E-Mail address: brjohnson@fordham.edu [best way to reach me]
Office Phone Number: 212-636-6394
Office: Lowenstein Building (LL), Room 921f
Office Hours: right after class on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays

Texts:
- So Good They Can’t Ignore You: Why Skills Trump Passion in the Quest for Work You Love, by Cal Newport

Course Requirements:
- Regular attendance. Attendance is taken at the beginning of class; students who arrive late should check in with the instructor in order to ensure that their presence is recorded. Students are allowed no more than two absences (either excused or unexcused) from classes that meet four days a week in summer session. Two classes is equivalent to two weeks of absences in the regular term. If you miss more than two classes, I dock your final course grade by one 1/3rd a letter grade per missed class: e.g. a final grade of B+ gets moved to a B, if you have missed 3 classes (including your two permitted absences). If you use up all two of your absences and then find you have none for a real emergency, you will still be docked. Thus, use your absences wisely!
- Reading Assignments – see the remainder of the syllabus.
- Course papers. There will be three papers. Each paper will be 5 pages (which works out to approximately 1,500 words) and each paper will count for 30% of your grade. I am happy to meet with students to discuss paper ideas and topics. As per the Eloquentia Perfecta requirements, these papers undergo one draft phase. These papers are arguments about the reading assignments and must demonstrate that you have done the reading and grasp the main arguments; I expect them to be concise and well-written. Here are two sample theses:
  - In “Business blah blah blah,” Joe Smith argues that businesses need not focus on diversity issues. However, his argument is mistaken because he fails to address X, Y, and Z.
  - In “Business blah blah blah,” Joe Smith argues that businesses need not focus on diversity issues. His argument is excellent but his proposed changes do not go far enough. I will argue that business should ....
- Individual Presentations. Students will each be assigned a portion of the Cal Newport book and summarize the content as a launching point for class discussion. Students will receive oral feedback on their presentations.
- Class participation counts for 10% of the final grade.
Paper Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>GPA Equivalent</th>
<th>Meaning of the Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Excellent. Honors-level work, outstanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Still excellent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Very good. High Level of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Good. Solid and above average level of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Good. Still above average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Average level of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Minimally acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Passing, but unsatisfactory. Below average performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Failure. Inferior performance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standards for Distinguishing between Excellent, Good, Average and Poor:

- **Professionalism:** Papers should demonstrate good grammar as well as good spelling. They should also be copy-edited to reduce or eliminate typos.

- **Writing Quality:** Writing should be clear and exhibit good structure. Paragraphs should be cohesive and build towards a complete essay with a substantial thesis (as opposed to a string of disconnected thoughts).

- **Accuracy and Understanding:** Papers should be able accurately to re-create an argument or a position. They should find the relevant issues and argument(s) worthy of analysis.

- **Argument:** Papers should argue for or against a position rather than merely exchange opinions. Is the argument for or against a position constructed persuasively within the confines of the paper? (Note: I am not looking for your argument to be true — there is no need to guess my opinion. What I want to see is persuasion.)

Late Papers:

- If you need an extension, just ask, but you must give 24 hours notice. If a late paper is not pre-approved, I dock 1/3" a grade for each day late (counting from the time that class has ended). The only time I make an exception to this policy is if the Dean calls me and orders me to make an exception. (Hint: the Dean almost never does this.)

- Extensions are only for an additional day from the deadline. Thus, for example, a paper due on Friday will be due on Saturday (24 hours from the end of class) and must be turned in by e-mail.

- If a paper is scheduled to be due on or immediately after a major religious holiday, please let me know and I will happily grant an extension.

- It is not an acceptable excuse to say that you did not do the paper because you were confused about the topic, about when it was due, etc. If you are confused, it is your responsibility to ask and find out within a reasonable amount of time before the paper becomes due.

- I do not accept excuses (e.g. broken printer, e-mail problems, late trains, last-minute and conveniently sudden 12-hour sicknesses, etc.). If you pushed your paper to the last-minute such that any hurdles impede your timeliness, you will still be penalized.
• If you are sick on the day the paper is due and do not show up in class, it is your responsibility to e-mail the paper. It is not acceptable to show up after a paper is due on the expectation that you can give your excuse and your paper.
**Plagiarism:**
The course rule for plagiarism is simple: plagiarizers will receive an “F” for the entire course.

I. From Fordham’s student handbook:

**Violations of Academic Integrity:**

A. Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when individuals attempt to present as their own what has come from another source. Plagiarism takes place whether such theft is accidental or deliberate. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Failing to acknowledge the ideas of another person, whether or not such ideas are paraphrased, from whatever source including oral, print, broadcast or computer-mediated communication.
- Attempting to rewrite borrowed material by simply dropping a word here and there, substituting a few words for others, or moving around words or sentences.
- Failing to place quotation marks around borrowed material in the approved style. It is no defense to claim that one has “forgotten” to do so.
- Presenting as one’s own an assignment, paper or computer program partially or wholly prepared by another person, whether by another student, friend, or by a business or on-line service that sells or distributes such papers and programs.

II. Some advice on plagiarism and paraphrasing from Joe Williams and Larry McEnerney, "Writing in College," in Engaging the Humanities at the University of Chicago (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 206-207.

Here is a simple test for inadvertent plagiarism: be conscious of where your eyes are as you put words on paper or on a screen. If your eyes are on your source at the same moment your fingers are flying across the keyboard, you risk doing something that weeks, months, even years later could result in your public humiliation. Whenever you use a source extensively, compare your page with the original. If you think someone could run her finger along your sentences and find synonyms or synonymous phrases for words in the original in roughly the same order, try again. You are least likely to plagiarize inadvertently if as you write, you keep your eyes not on your source, but on the screen or on your own page, and you report what your source has to say after those words have filtered through your own understanding of them.

**Class Etiquette:**

- Please feel free to challenge me or the course material, but I insist that students be courteous to each other.
- Eating and drinking in class is allowed, but please keep it quiet.

- **Please turn off your computer and your cell phone!**
Class Participation Assessment Guidelines
Assistant Prof. John Tyler
Department of Education
Brown University

The following guidelines have been developed by Prof. Tyler to communicate to students his criteria for assessing the value of their participation in class. These guidelines assist students to understand grades are arrived at and how they relate to the quality of learning expected by the faculty member.

Class participation in this course: Class attendance is required and students are encouraged to contribute to class discussion. Participation is the key to a lively class. ... Class participation provides the opportunity to practice speaking and persuasive skills, as well as the ability to listen. Comments that are vague, repetitive, unrelated to the current topic, disrespectful of others, or without sufficient foundation will be evaluated negatively. What matters is the quality of one's contributions to the class discussion, not the number of times one speaks.

Guidelines for Evaluating Participation

Outstanding Contributor: Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive, provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and persuasively presented. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly.

Good Contributor: Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and often persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

Adequate Contributor: Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and are sometimes persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat.

Non-Participant: This person says little or nothing in class. Hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be changed.

Unsatisfactory Contributor: Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide few if any insights and never a constructive direction for the class. Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent. If this person were not a member of the class, valuable air-time would be saved.

* Note: Prof. Tyler obtained these guidelines from Prof. Richard J. Murnane at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Prof. Murnane, in turn, learned of them from someone else. Although the original attribution for the guidelines has been lost, they continue to be so useful to so many.
Readings:

So Good They Can’t Ignore You: Why Skills Trump Passion in the Quest for Work You Love

Introduction

RULE #1: Don’t Follow Your Passion
Chapter One: The “Passion” of Steve Jobs
Chapter Two: Passion is Rare
Chapter Three: Passion is Dangerous

RULE #2: Be So Good They Can’t Ignore You
(Or, the Importance of Skill)
Chapter Four: The Clarity of the Craftsman
Chapter Five: The Power of Career Capital
Chapter Six: The Career Capitalists
Chapter Seven: Becoming a Craftsman
SUMMARY OF RULE #2

RULE #3: Turn Down a Promotion
(Or, the Importance of Control)
Chapter Eight: The Dream-Job Elixir
Chapter Nine: The First Control Trap
Chapter Ten: The Second Control Trap
Chapter Eleven: Avoiding the Control Traps
SUMMARY OF RULE #3

Rule #4: Think Small, Act Big
(Or, the Importance of Mission)
Chapter Twelve: The Meaningful Life of Pardis Sabeti
Chapter Thirteen: Missions Require Capital
Chapter Fourteen: Missions Require Little Bets
Chapter Fifteen: Missions Require Marketing
SUMMARY OF RULE #4

Conclusion
Pages 199-207
Pages 207-215
Pages 215-220
Pages 220-230

The Ethics of Leadership (part I). Read:
- Joanne B. Ciulla, “What is Good Leadership?”, pp. 523-527
- Niccolo Machiavelli, “Is It Better to Be Loved Than Feared?”, pp. 528-530
- Dean C. Ludwig and Clinton O. Longenecker, “The Bathsheba Syndrome: The Ethical Failure of Successful Leaders”, pp. 531-536
- George Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant”, pp. 542-546

The Ethics of Leadership (part II). Read:
What is a Company For? Read:
- Milton Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits", pp. 218-222
- Christopher D. Stone, "Why Shouldn’t Corporations Be Socially Responsible?", pp. 223-226
- R. Edward Freeman, "A Stakeholder Theory of the Modern Corporation", 232-238
- Thomas I. White, "Beech-Nut’s Imitation Apple Juice", pp. 248-249

Hiring, Firing and Work Expectations. Read:
- Arlie Hochschild, "Exploring the Managed Heart", pp. 7-10
- Anita M. Superson, "The Employer-Employee Relationship and the Right to Know", pp. 11-15
- John Orlando, "The Ethics of Corporate Downsizing", pp. 17-24
- Joanne B. Ciulla, "Does Home Life Matter at Work?", p. 30

Corporate and Financial Scandals. Read:
- The Democratic Policy Committee, "A Modern History of ‘Creative’ Accounting", pp. 154-156
- Carol J. Loomis, "Lies, Damned Lies, and Managed Earnings", pp. 115-122
- Ed Cohen, "Arthur Andersen Refugees Reflect on What Went Wrong", 123-124

The Ethics of Sales and Advertising. Read:
- Albert Carr, "Is Business Bluffing Ethical?", pp. 38-42
- G. Richard Shell and Mario Moussa, "Woo with Integrity", pp. 309-316
- Manuel G. Velasquez, "Toy Wars", pp. 316-319

Classic View of Capitalism. Read:
- Adam Smith, "On Human Exchange and Human Differences", pp. 167-169
- Adam Smith, "The Benefits of Capitalism", pp. 623-625

Contemporary Proponents of Capitalism. Read:
- Irving Kristol, “A Capitalist Conception of Justice”, pp. 190-195
- Friedrich von Hayek, “Justice Ruins the Market”, pp. 196-198

**The Mixed Economy. Read:**
- John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness”, pp. 174-175
- Aristotle, “Two Kinds of Commerce”, pp. 621-623

**Variations on Egalitarianism. Read:**
- Karl Marx, “Commodity Fetishism”, pp. 625-628

**Business in the Global Marketplace. Read:**
- Mary Midgley, “Trying Out One’s New Sword”, pp. 413-416
- Thomas Dunfee and Diana Robertson, “Foreign Assignment”, pp. 442-443
- William Stanton, “Dancing with the Dragon: Google Goes to China”, pp. 446-452
Paper Topics

For our three papers, you may select from any of the following bullet-points (of which there are 9). Ideally, you will select a topic on a set of readings already discussed in class, but you may work ahead if you wish. My only requirement is that you do not write on the same topic twice.

So Good They Can't Ignore You

- Pick any major thesis of the book (such as the claim that passion is dangerous) and either (a) argue against it or (b) defend it against potential objections. You may also propose your own alternative revisions of Newport’s view.

The Ethics of Leadership

- What counts as ethical leadership? Should we hold business leaders to the same ethical standards as the rest of us, to high standards, or to different standards altogether? What rationale can you give for choosing one over the other? Should a good business leader be a transforming leader or a servant leader or merely a financially effective leader? Is there a tension or even an outright conflict between being an ethical leader and being an effective leader? Confront Machiavelli’s argument that an effective leader must be dishonest. At the same time, consider the problem of whether or not leadership includes its own pressures that lure us to be immoral (e.g. the essays by Orwell and Ludwig / Longnecker). How do the case examples fare under your preferred model of leadership?
- Is power a corrupting influence? If so, why does it corrupt us? Take as your point of reference the article on the Bathsheba Syndrome and the sad case of shooting the elephant. If power is not a corrupting influence, what explains the extreme moral failures on the part of some leaders? If power is corrupting, how might a leader resist the corrosive nature of power?

What is a Company For?

- What is the purpose of a company? Should it exist for the benefit of its shareholders / stockholders / owners? Or, should it exist to benefit the shareholders, from the consumers to the suppliers? Evaluate the arguments of Milton Friedman, Christopher Stone, R. Edward Freeman, and Kenneth Arrow. Which argument is the most effective? Confront, too, the Beech-Nut case study where a company must choose between survival and honesty to its stakeholders.

Hiring, Firing and Work Expectations

- What does a company owe to its employees beyond wages? Must a firm do more for its employees, such as respect them as ends-in-themselves? Do firms have the right to expect employees to act as though “the customer is always right,” even at the expense of their own dignity? (See the Arlie Hochschild essay for discussion.) Do employees have the right to know things about their company and their workplace? If so, what rights does Anita Superson think they have? Does she make a good argument? Do employees have rights about whether / how a company downsizes its workforce? In this connection, examine the essay by John Orlando.
The Ethics of Sales and Advertising

- Is bluffing ethical in business in general? Is it ethical in sales? Should there be any limits on what advertisers can say to the public beyond a prohibition on outright lying? Should the ethic of the marketplace simply be “Let the buyer beware”? Is “puffery” a form of lying? Can advertising manipulate buyers into making rash or unnecessary purchases? If so, is it wrong? Is it improper to advertise to children?

Capitalism, The Mixed Economy, Egalitarianism

- Capitalism versus Socialism versus the Mixed Economy: What is the ideal form of government? How do Adam Smith, Irving Kristol, and Freidrich von Hayek argue for Capitalism and against Socialism? What is strong about their argument? What is weak? How might Plato be a response to Adam Smith’s use of self-interest? How does Peter Singer argue for Socialism? Is his argument good? Why or why not? How does John Rawls defend a mixed economy? Does he have a good argument? Which argument is the best of this group and why?
- Is the free market (capitalism) a fair system? Does it require an unhealthy relationship to money? How does Aristotle criticize and curtail money-making? Does Marx agree with Aristotle? If so, how? How does Thorstein Veblen further raise doubts about money? What is strong or weak about their arguments? How can Adam Smith respond to the Aristotle, Marx, and Veblen-type positions? If you think Smith is right, does Smith have to concede to Robert Heilbroner that there are internal problems to capitalism, even if capitalism is a successful system? If you think Adam Smith is wrong, do you agree with Amartya Sen and John Stuart Mill that there are crisis situations or urgent needs in which we ought not to rely on capitalism? If you disagree with both Marx and Adam Smith, do you agree with Schumacher that “Buddhist Economics” is the best alternative? Why or why not?

Business in the Global Marketplace

- In so far as business does business abroad, they have to confront cultures with competing values. What should a business do under those circumstances? Are all values relative? Are they absolute? Can we take a middle ground in which we compromise on some values but hold others as too important to be compromised? Try to come up with a tough example about values in tension and explain what you would do.