



Ethical Dilemmas: Business and the World

[Faculty Contact Information](#)

Name:

Email:

Office Hour information:

[Course Information](#)

Course Description

Through an ethics lens, this course traces the rise of corporate social responsibility and, using the frameworks of shareholder and stakeholder models, it explores the evolving relationship between business practice and wider society. Through multiple case studies, students examine how businesses should, and do, respond to right versus right dilemmas – where desirable goals (such as controlling costs and protecting the environment) are mutually incompatible. In addition, the course explores the drivers of ethical business conduct, such as the emergence of international standards and regulatory frameworks, and examines how these drivers influence business practice.

Course Goals

This interdisciplinary course examines ethical dilemmas facing businesses given contemporary global challenges. In particular, it seeks to evaluate the effectiveness, or otherwise, of corporate social responsibility where companies integrate environmental, social and governance priorities into their business practices.

Some critics have argued that ethics has no place in running a company, whereas others have argued that the pursuit of goals in addition to profit-making is good for business. This course considers whether managers should be responsible not only to company shareholders, but also to other stakeholders. The course also evaluates the impact of ethical consumption, fair-trade initiatives, employee recruitment and retention, new technologies and climate change policy.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Undertake sophisticated analysis of the ethical choices facing businesses and other organisations using the frameworks of utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics;
2. Evaluate the rise and relevance of ethics as a guide to business behaviour, making use of Rushworth Kidder's structured approach to addressing right versus right dilemmas;
3. Analyse the extent to which business conduct is influenced by commitments to corporate social responsibility and global ethical standards;
4. Interpret the distinguishing features of the regulatory environment in Britain, other parts of Europe, and the US facing managers in relation to corporate governance, employee rights, and environmental sustainability.

Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

Assignment	Percentage	Grading Requirements
Attendance and Participation	20%	
Small Group Presentation	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Individual Presentation	10%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Reflection and Research Paper	25%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Written Exam	25%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

Brief Assessment Overview

Assessment 1: Small Group Presentation

Due:

The in-class small group presentations are contributions to the content of the course as well as a means of assessment. Students work together in small groups to address a range of themes that relate to corporate social responsibility and the work of international organisations.

Assessment 2: Individual Research Paper Presentation

Due:

Students will present their research paper to the rest of the class as a 'work in progress' and will receive feedback from their peers and from the class tutor before finalising their paper.

Assessment 3: Reflection and Research Paper

Due:

The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate your ability to analyse a specific right versus right ethical dilemma faced by a business. You will describe the issues clearly, examine competing arguments from different ethical perspectives and propose your own resolution of the issue. The strengths and weaknesses of each argument discussed must be addressed. The paper should demonstrate mastery of relevant ethical concepts. 2,500 words.

Assessment 4: Written Exam

Due:

The written exam is designed to assess understanding of concepts and material covered in the course and will include a case study for analysis.

Grading

Alternative formats of the FIE Grading Rubric are available in the Student Resources area of MyStudy@FIE.

	Relevance Questions are interpreted correctly; Argument/thesis is clear and developed throughout; Discussion is focused on topic of the questions; Irrelevant content and discussion are not included	Knowledge and Understanding Recommended literature and/or research guidelines are used and interpreted appropriately; Selection and use of evidence shows understanding and insight; There is evidence of study beyond the recommended literature and that introduced in the module	Analysis, Critical Thinking and Integration of Experiential Learning Approach shows evidence of analysis and independent reasoning; Originality in argument; Evidence of critical insight and reasoned questioning of assumptions; Integration of connections and experiences outside of the formal classroom	Scholarship and Style Conclusions are well justified and complete; Facts reported and statements made are accurate; Writing is clear and fluent; All sources are appropriate, accurately acknowledged and formatted in recognised style; All work is the student's own
A 93-100%	Totally appropriate interpretation and relevant; Excellent and thorough thesis development	Comprehensive understanding and mastery of core evidence and extensive wider reading	Excellent analytical skills, outstanding evaluation of evidence, independent and original critical insight; Meaningfully integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Exceptional fluency and accurate writing using appropriate language, conclusions are well-justified; Accurate and thorough referencing
A- 90-92%	Almost wholly appropriate interpretation and relevant; Very strong thesis	Very strong understanding of evidence and clear evidence of appropriate wider reading	Well-developed analytical skills, excellent evaluation of evidence, shows strong critical insight; Effectively integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Almost wholly accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language, conclusions are full and justified; Accurate referencing

B+ 87-89%	Appropriate interpretation and relevant; Good thesis throughout	Strong understanding of evidence and appropriate wider reading	Very good analytical skills, strong evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing
B 83-86%	Largely appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is clear	Good understanding of evidence and some appropriate wider reading	Good analytical skills, good evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; Conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing
B- 80-82%	Mostly appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is underdeveloped but clear	Sound understanding of evidence and some wider reading	Sound analytical skills; Sound evaluation of data; Shows some critical judgement identifies experiential connections	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent; Sound use of referencing conventions
C+ 77-79%	Some appropriate interpretation and relevant;	Evidence is largely understood and some wider reading	Sometimes inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data;	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language;

	Thesis is underdeveloped and lacks clarity		Shows some critical judgement though often descriptive; Identifies experiential connections	Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported; Sound use of referencing conventions
C 73-76%	May contain some misinterpretation and/or irrelevant material; Thesis lacks clarity	Evidence is largely understood; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Scant critical judgement mostly descriptive; Identifies experiential connections	Some level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported; Sound use of referencing conventions
C- 70-72%	Limited interpretation and relevance; Thesis is inconsistent	Weak understanding of evidence; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Lacks critical judgement; Little integration experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency; Weak use of appropriate language; Weak justification for conclusions; Adequate use of referencing conventions
D 60-69%	Limited interpretation and relevance; Lacks thesis	Weak understanding of evidence and limited, inappropriate wider reading	Inconsistent and weak analytical skills, poor evaluation of evidence, lacks critical insight; Little integration of experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency; No justification for conclusions; Inaccurate use of referencing
F	Significant misinterpretation	Lacks understanding of evidence and	Lacks analytical skills, lacks	Poorly written with little fluency;

0-59%	and irrelevant material	inappropriate or no wider reading	evaluation of evidence, lacks critical judgement; Lacks integration of experiential learning	No justification for conclusions; Poor referencing; Evidence of plagiarism or inappropriate use of AI
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Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place during class time unless otherwise noted. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.
- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission in advance of the due date from the course instructor. Late work will receive a 5% reduction in points for each 24-hour period handed in past the deadline, including each weekend day. Work submitted a week late will be marked at a C or lower. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be requested in writing to the faculty and include any information on the circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.
- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.

Attendance and Participation

- Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.
- Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.
- In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.

- When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.
- If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.
- [See the full attendance policy here](#)

Required Readings

Kidder, R. M. (2009). *How Good People Make Tough Choices: Resolving the dilemmas of ethical living*. Harper Perennial.

Additional Resources and Readings

Blowfield, M., & Murray, A. (2019). *Corporate Social Responsibility*. (4th Ed.). Oxford University Press

Crane, A., Matten, D., Glozer, S., & Spence, L. (2019), *Business Ethics*. (5th Ed.) Oxford University Press

Freeman, R. E., (2010) *Strategic management: a stakeholder approach*. Cambridge University Press, New York

Friedman, M. (2002) *Capitalism and Freedom* (fortieth anniversary edition). The University of Chicago Press.

Giridharadas, A. (2019) *Winners Take All*. Allen Lane.

Luckerath-Rovers, M (2024) *Moral Dilemmas in the Boardroom*. Palgrave Macmillan.

MyStudy@FIE

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

FIE's Values in the Curriculum

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and 4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see [Our Values](#).

Topics

- What is ethics? Framework for thinking ethically; Ethics and moral leadership
- Shareholder and stakeholder models of business conduct

- Ethics in business; corporate social responsibility
- Management of corporate social responsibility; corporate governance
- Drivers of corporate social responsibility, including ethical consumerism, employees, regulation and certification/standards setting bodies
- Globalisation, developing economies and corporate social responsibility
- Social accounting and socially responsible investment
- Sustainability and governance
- The future of corporate social responsibility

Possible co-curricular activities

- Outside guest speakers on topics such as discrimination law or the B Corp model
- A relevant theatre performance or art exhibition exploring an ethical dilemma
- Sustainability walking tours, Cutting Edge Green Insider London Walking Tour
- Financial London Tour
- Science Museum

Academic Integrity

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

[Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.](#)

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

Writing and Language Support

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit www.fie.org.uk/wst.

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).

Accommodations for Students

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed. If you have further questions or need further support, please go to the front office of Foundation House or contact admin@fie.org.uk and the member of the team designated to support accessibility will be able to help you.

Additional Policies and Resources

Mental Health and Stress Management Support

FIE offers mental health support. If students wish to seek this support, including with FIE's counselor, simply email studentlife@fie.org.uk. If you have a counselor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

Diversity and Inclusivity

FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate, derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.