

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. Using multiple case studies, the course identifies the motivations behind ethical business conduct, including the emergence of international standards and codes of conduct, 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 social and environmental concerns 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, regulatory frameworks 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;
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
Final Exam	25%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

Brief Assessment Overview

Assessment 1: 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.

Assessment 2: Mid-term Exam

Due:

The mid-term exam is designed to assess understanding of concepts and material covered in first part of the course.

Assessment 3: Reflection and Research Paper

Due:

The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate your ability to analyse a specific 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 must reflect grasp of relevant ethical concepts. 2,500 words.

Assessment 4: Reflection and Research Paper

Due:

The final exam covers material learned throughout the course. It will also include a question of self-reflection in the light of your personal learning experience on the course.

Grading

Grade	Knowledge & Content	Methodology & Structure, Language & Style	Understanding, Reflection & Critique	Integrative thinking & demonstration of experiential learning
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A (93- 100%) A- (90-92%)	Interesting topic handled with intelligence, originality, and depth; wealth of supporting material, smoothly integrated into the text; tone is evident and maintained throughout; no factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; organization is clear, logical and purposeful throughout the essay; well-chosen examples. Uses sophisticated sentences effectively; usually chooses words aptly; observes conventions of written English and manuscript format; makes few minor or technical errors	Well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently: uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident	Gives full insight into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves complete integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue. Shows clear understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
B+ (87-89%) B (83-86%) B- (80-82%)	Content is above average; worthwhile topic; satisfactory depth of development; supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences are specific, concrete, and plentiful; has only minor factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; pattern of organization is clear, logical, and well executed; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically. Some mechanical difficulties or stylistic problems; may make occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; a few spelling or punctuation errors or cliché; usually presents quotations effectively	Pursues thesis consistently: develops a main argument with clear major points and appropriate textual evidence and supporting detail; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically	Gives some insights into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves partial integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue; some understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
C+ (77-79%) C (73-76%) C- (70-72%)	Worthwhile topic; supporting material for thesis and topic sentences is general and abstract rather than specific and concrete; most information is correct	Organization is clear, logical, and coherent; some ideas unsupported; fails to integrate quotations appropriately. More frequent wordiness; several unclear or awkward sentences; imprecise use of words or over-reliance on passive voice; one or two major grammatical errors	Only partially develops the argument; shallow analysis; some ideas and generalizations undeveloped or unsupported; makes limited use of textual evidence; fails to integrate quotations appropriately	Able to explain to a limited extent, the quality of a performance, event, or artifact; gives few insights into event, experience; discusses few qualities of an experience; a limited understanding of cultural impact with few examples
D (60-69%)	Trivial subject; very few supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences; has some correct & incorrect information	Not logically organized; digresses from one topic to another; no clear organizational pattern. Some major grammatical or proofreading errors (subject-verb agreement; sentence fragments); language marred by clichés	Frequently only narrates; digresses from one topic to another without developing ideas or terms; makes insufficient or awkward use of textual evidence	Little integration of experience and narrative; limited insight of issues and insufficient understanding of cultural impact

F (0-59%)	Consists of unsupported generalities and/or the repetition of commonplace ideas; lacks originality and insight; information is inaccurate or absent	Does not follow the instructions; rambling, disorganized and incoherent. Numerous grammatical errors	Little or no development; may list incorrect facts or misinformation; uses no quotations or fails to cite sources or plagiarizes	Little or no integration experience and narrative; lack of insight and fails to understand cultural impact
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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 from the faculty. Credit is not given for work received late, except in exceptional circumstances of personal illness or similar (which must be made known to FIE at the time). Documentation of exceptional circumstances from a third party, such as a doctor's note, may be required. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be committed to writing and include information on the exceptional 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.
- **Trigger Warnings:** Some topics covered in class may expose students to past traumas and evoke a negative reaction. Sensitive topics can vary, such as sexual violence, death, racism, or xenophobia. I want this to be an inclusive space where every student feels comfortable; therefore, I will provide content warnings before lectures for sensitive subject matters. Content warnings are meant to give students a forewarning so they can prepare for their emotional safety. It is important to note that anything in the environment could be a trigger for someone's trauma, such as smell, sound, or texture; it is impossible to account for all possible triggers, and ask for grace as I do my best as an educator to warn students of potentially distressing content during lectures, assignments and/or discussions.

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

Review the BBC website on a regular basis to identify and reflect upon contemporary ethical challenges.

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

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.

Additional Policies and Resources

Mental Health and Stress Management Support

FIE's qualified and accredited counselor is Dr Deborah Hill, who offers appointments via video call and over the phone. The first three appointments are free of charge and ongoing sessions can be arranged directly with Dr Hill. To make an appointment with Dr Hill, 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.