



## **BUSINESS ETHICS**

Master in International and European Business Law  
Faculty of Social Sciences, Economics and Law

### **Course information**

Master Year 1                      20 HOURS

Fall Semester                      5 ECTS

Lectures (CM)

Professor: Bertrand MAZABRAUD, PhD in Philosophy, Poitiers University (France)

### **Course description**

Educational objectives :

- To know the contemporary issues of business ethics.
- Acquire basic knowledge of ethical theories.
- To become familiar with the application of ethical theories in the field of business.
- Reflect on business ethics issues in groups.
- To improve the method of presentation in the field of legal humanities and oral expression skills in an ethical debate.

I. From ethical business to business ethics (Lecture 12h).

Introduction.

- 1) Business ethics repressed by homo oeconomicus.
- 2) Welcome back business ethics: from gambling to the stakeholder theory.
- 3) Which ethics for business: consequentialism, deontology or virtue ethics.

I) Consequentialist ethics.

A) Presentation of consequentialist or utilitarian ethics

- 1) Consequentialism is based on an analytical truth
- 2) Utilitarianism and consequentialism.
- 3) Consequentialism and rational choice theory.

4) What kinds of consequences should be maximised?

B) Deontological criticism of consequentialism.

1) The excessive anthropological demands of consequentialism.

2) Consequentialism and the resolution of collective situations.

3) The indistinction of persons and the heterogeneity of goods.

4) The sacrificial dimension.

5) When everything is supererogatory, nothing is.

C) The amendments of consequentialist ethics.

a) The so-called "restrictive" consequentialism.

b) Rule consequentialism or "restricted" vs. action consequentialism.

c) "Graduated" consequentialism.

II) Deontological ethics.

A) Presentation of deontological ethics.

1) Kant's transcendental philosophy: from the foundation of morality to morality as foundation.

2) Contemporary deontological ethics.

B) Consequentialism's critique of deontologism.

1) The problem of unsolved moral dilemmas.

2) An ethics of respect incapable of promoting values.

3) The critique of "clean hands".

4) Criticisms embedded in deontologism: the rule up to a certain point.

III) Virtue ethics.

A) Presentation of virtue ethics.

1) The characteristics of virtues and vices.

a) The disposition

b) A relational anthropology.

c) Vices in business: example of the vices of commercial exchange in Aristotle.

2) A specific virtue: phronesis.

3) Virtue as integrity

4) Virtue ethics and community of life.

5) Care ethics as virtue ethics?

B) Critique of consequentialism and deontologism by virtue ethics.

1) Critique of the abstraction of consequentialism and deontologism

a) Against the impartiality and universality of the rule.

b) Against the disembodiment of the maximising state

2) Some problems of virtue ethics:

- a) How to evaluate an ethics of virtues?
- b) The vices of virtue ethics: from the act to the person.

## II. Contemporary issues in business ethics (Seminar 8h).

### A. Theme: Whistleblowing, obedience and loyalty in business.

- 1) Student presentation
- 2) Questions and answers with the class
- 3) Correction.

### B. Theme: Business and human rights.

- 1) Presentation by the students
- 2) Questions and answers with the class
- 3) Correction.

### C. Theme: Benevolence and business.

- 1) Presentation by the students
- 2) Questions and answers with the class
- 3) Correction.

### D. Theme: Codes of conduct and business.

- 1) Presentation by the students
- 2) Questions and answers with the class
- 3) Correction.

### E. Theme: Business ethics in the cognitive market

- 1) Presentation by the students
- 2) Questions/answers with the class
- 3) Correction.

## **Bibliography**

M. Sandel, *Justice*, éd. Champs Flammarion, 2017.

A. Anquetil, *Ethique des affaires. Marché, règles et responsabilité*, éd. Vrin, 2011.

A. Antequil, *Qu'est-ce que l'éthique des affaires*, éd. Vrin, 2008.

Norman E. Bowie, *Business ethics. A Kantian perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 2017 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)

Robert C. Solomon, *Ethics and Excellence. Cooperation and Integrity in Business*, Oxford University Press, 1992.