C40.0012 Professional Responsibility and Leadership  
Spring 2006  
Wednesday, 4:55 p.m. – 6:10 p.m.

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**Description**

This course asks the student to reflect on several themes:

1. the role of business in society, beginning with its historic-religious-philosophical background, and its position in national and international trade
2. economic and ethical aspects of the business professional, including the associated responsibilities
3. approaches to “leadership” and the role of leadership in business

The course also asks the student to see the relationships among these three themes. The course also explores the relationship between these themes and meaningful human life. This course aims to make connections.

Course materials will be drawn simultaneously from two sources, which we identify as *texts* and *subtexts*.

*The texts* will consist of current business cases, dealing with business practices and also issues of law. Most of these will be read before the class sessions, but some will be short readings provided in class on the day of the discussion.

*The subtexts* will be classic works, usually outside of business, that explore related themes from the perspective of philosophy, psychology, religion, law, or the arts.

In discussions and analyses, students and instructors will synthesize the subtexts with the texts to arrive at an integrative point of view.

This is an interdisciplinary capstone course, building on all prior core coursework, both at the Stern School and in the other colleges. Its goal is to help the student develop a personal sense of business professionalism and leadership, and of how such a person should behave in ambiguous, uncertain situations, balancing self-interests and those of the firm within the larger context of society, ethics, and law.

Class sessions will include discussion, in-class analyses, and one or two guest speakers.
tentative (additional changes coming…)

Grading

Each student will prepare a summary document for each class. Each document will consist of

(a) A short summary of the information presented in class.
(b) Opinions about the major issues, including agreement and disagreement.
(c) [optional] Points on which there are anticipated difficulties with applying the ideas and principles.

With regard to (b), honest disagreements are encouraged. We only learn from each other when we disagree.

The summary for a single class should be about two double-spaced printed pages. The material can be kept completely electronically, of course.

The class papers can be submitted at any time, but must be up-to-date after each set of three classes. That is, the papers for classes 1, 2, and 3 are due before class 4. The papers for classes 4, 5, and 6 are due before class 7. And so on. Papers may be submitted electronically.

Class participation is encouraged, and such participation makes a positive contribution to the final grade.

Course schedule

This is subject to revision. Guest speakers may change schedules, new materials may become available, and there are uncertainties on permissions to use certain materials. Items marked  are to be read before the class; these items will either be available on the Blackboard site or will have been distributed.

Class 1, 18 JAN 2006
Question: Why do we love the free market?
Ron Smithies, Monday 9:10 AM
Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations (excerpt) 
John Ruskin, Unto This Last (excerpt)
tentative (additional changes coming…)

Class 2, 25 JAN 2006

Questions: Can anything go wrong with a free market? What is the religious perspective on economic activity?
The Price of Lobster Thermidor
Gandhi, *Economics and Ethics* (excerpt) ◆
Gospel of Luke (excerpt) ◆
Dalai Lama, *Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech* ◆
Market Failures

Class 3, 1 FEB 2006

Questions: How did religion come to terms with capitalism? What are our guides to ethical thinking?
John Wesley, *Sermon on Money* (excerpts) ◆
*Rerum Novarum*
*Ethical Methods*
Phineas Gage Websites
Stages of Ethical Thinking

Class 4, 8 FEB 2006

Questions: Does the free market produce big losers?
Slaves of Chocolate (***CHECK IF AVAILABLE ON BB***) (check all)
For Cruise Worker Life Is No Love Boat ◆
Lives Held Cheap in Bangladesh SweatShop ◆
Triangle Shirtwaist Fire websites ◆

Class 5, 15 FEB 2006

Question: What happens if personal and professional objectives collide?
Buynow Stores
Confucious, *Analects* (excerpts)

Class 6, 22 FEB 2006

Question: What are the major issues related to whistleblowing?
Ace Greenberg memos
<other articles on whistleblowing>

Class 7, 1 MAR 2006

Question: What’s a trade secret?
Stockbroker’s Story ◆
New York Times, *Pizza Plot* ◆
Trade Secrets Defined ◆
tentative (additional changes coming…)

Class 8, 8 MAR 2006
*Question*: What constitutes professional behavior?
Wall Street Journal, Today’s Analyst Wears Two Hats 🌟
It Takes a Village, The Alibi Agency 🌟
Cicero, *De Officiis* (excerpts) 🌟
Harry Frankfurt, *On Bullshit* (excerpts) 🌟
Fiduciary Duties 🌟

Class 9, 22 MAR 2006
*Question*: What do we want out of a professional career?
Chekhov, *Gooseberries* 🌟
Ulysses S. Grant, *Memoirs* (excerpts) 🌟
Aristotle, *Nicomachaean Ethics*, Book 1 (excerpts) 🌟

Class 10, 1 APR 2006
*Question*: Is there any meaning to a career?
Crossing Brooklyn Ferry – Walt Whitman 🌟
Book of Ecclesiastes (excerpts) 🌟
Plato, *Callicles* (from The Gorgias) 🌟

Class 11, 8 APR 2006
*Question*: Can my professional activities get me in legal trouble? 🌟
Pollution Case Highlights Trend to Let Employees Take the Rap 🌟
When the Company Becomes a Cop 🌟
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapter 7 (excerpt) 🌟

Class 12, 15 APR 2006
*Question*: What are the implications of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines?
Web site www.ussc.gov 🌟
It is anticipated that we will have a guest speaker for this topic.

Class 13, 22 APR 2006
*Question*: How is leadership developed?
Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address* 🌟
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chapter 15 🌟
Aristotle, *Rhetoric* (excerpts) 🌟
Shakespeare, *Band of Brothers* (Henry IV) 🌟

Class 14, 29 APR 2006
*Question*: Where does all this take us?
Tao te Ching 🌟