Course Abstract

This course explores the philosophical foundation of ethical theory and its applications to business situations. Professional codes of ethics, such as those promulgated by educational, managerial, engineering, scientific, medical and legal professional societies, are discussed. Corporate policies relating to ethical concerns are presented. Examples of the application of ethical theory to ethical audits in the workplace conclude the lecture part of the course.

Student teams of two or three are organized to present ethical tradeoff issues such as: workplace safety vs. gender discrimination; workplace safety vs. privacy; drug regulation vs. choice of risk; drug and medical treatment regulations vs. affordability to pay; downsizing vs. strategic repositioning; downsizing vs. shared sacrifice; employee ranking vs. job security; privacy vs. office romances; privacy vs. public safety; bribery vs. business acquisition; bribery vs. fee-for-service; freedom to innovate vs. conflicts of interest; personal development vs. conflicts of interest; volunteer activities vs. conflicts of interest.

Each student will participate in one oral presentation on an ethical issue of interest. The grade, which will be an S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory), will be based upon class participation and the oral presentation. The times allocated to student presentations and class discussions will be tailored to the size of the class.

Schedule of Topics

Feb. 6th - Philosophical foundations of ethics; professional codes of ethics.

Feb. 13th - Ethic audits, corporate policies on ethics, ethics controls.

Feb. 20th – Student presentations on ethic topics, class discussion.

Feb. 27th, - Student presentations on ethic topics, class discussions.


Lecture Notes: J.J. Suran, Winter Quarter 2012