

BLE 215 - BUSINESS ETHICS & LAW (3 credits)

Course Description

Historical, ethical, social and governmental influences have helped shape the modern regulatory system in the United States and the European Community. This course is designed on the one hand to illustrate how modern civil legal systems struggle to find and maintain a balance between fundamental moral and ethical precepts on the one hand and workable social and commercial order on the other hand. Law is evaluated in historical and contemporary contexts. Class discussions will compare contemporary ethical issues arising in Spain, the European Community and the United States. On the other hand the course deals with the roles and responsibilities of business and teaches models of ethical decision-making, including diverse cultural worldviews and legal perspectives.

Course Format

Students should participate actively. Their questions, and even the doubts a few of them hold about the relevance of law to their futures, fuel my teaching. Classes will be conducted partially by lecture and partially by Socratic class discussion based on the assigned materials, mainly cases. Each case is a story. The stories I tell provide the framework on which students will hang everything they learn about the law because cases give the hook on which to hang the concepts

Course Objectives

1. Foster critical thinking skills and an appreciation of multiple perspectives on ethical issues, including diverse cultural worldviews and legal perspectives.
2. Appreciate the unique issues associated with globalization and working with others from different cultures and holding different values.

Course Evaluation-Grade breakup

Midterm exam 35%

Final exam 35%

Class Participation 30%

Homework and Participation

Regular attendance is required. Two unjustified absences will be allowed. Further **unjustified absences will lower the grade** half a point for each subsequent absence.

The course work will include papers, presentations, daily activities, assignments, etc.

Required Text

M.M. Jennings, Business Ethics: Case Studies and Selected Readings (latest edition)

Topics:

I. Introduction to Ethics and Law

- 1.1. Ethical dilemmas and decision making models
 - 1.1.1. Stakeholder analytical model
 - 1.1.2. Government intervention analytical model
- 1.2. Legal heritage and critical legal thinking
- 1.3. Court systems and jurisdiction
- 1.4. Litigation and alternative dispute resolution
- 1.5. Business crimes

II. Business and government

- 2.1. Government regulation
- 2.2. Government contracts
- 2.3. Government employees
- 2.4. Government responsibilities

III. Business and its competition

- 3.1. Advertising content
- 3.2. Appropriation of other's ideas
- 3.3. Whistle-blowing
- 3.4. Competitors, the playing field and competition
- 3.5. Business and its shareholders

IV. Agency

- 4.1. Agency formation and termination
- 4.2. Liability of principals and agents

V. Global environment

- 5.1. Adapting ethics to other cultural norms
- 5.2. International and World Trade Law
- 5.3. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act
- 5.4. Corporate social responsibility in the global environment
- 5.5. International Ethics Code