

Religious Ethics and Business

Spring 2015: March 30-June 5; MWF

Prerequisite: 88 units completed

This course fulfills Santa Clara University's Core Requirement for RTC 3: Religion & Society

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Class Times/Room: MWF 9:15-10:20 a.m./Room: Kenna Hall 111

Course Description

This course is an introduction to religious ethics in a business setting. Discussions include how one might live and apply their religious ethics at work without compartmentalizing their faith tradition from their business life, and, when religious ethics conflict with business ethics. The course units include an introduction to ethical thinking and argumentation; categories of ethical systems; comparative methods; religious ethics (Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Chinese); and an application of religious ethics to case studies presenting moral issues in business. Cases may include: deception in advertising and marketing; flawed products; affirmative action; environment and pollution; discrimination, and workplace issues.

Core Curriculum Goals and Learning Objectives for Religious Studies and Ethics

Religious Studies

1a. Students will be able to describe and compare the central religious ethical systems and practices from several traditions or within one, and from at least two globally distinct regions (Knowledge of Global Cultures; Complexity; Ambiguity).

1b. Students will be able to use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence in a business context (Critical thinking; Complexity; Reflection).

Ethics: SCU Core

- 1.1. Be able to reason ethically by drawing on major normative ethical theories and religious ethical systems; by normatively assessing individual, professional, and institutional decisions; and by articulating their personal, professional engagement with the meaning of the right and the good. (Arts & Humanities, Ethical Reasoning, Critical Thinking).
- 1.2. Be able to analyze, critically evaluate, and apply major ethical theories and religious ethical systems to significant personal, professional, and institutional decisions. As part of such efforts, students will be able to articulate how they understand some central concepts such as justice, happiness, the good, virtue, dignity, rights and equality. (Arts & Humanities, Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning).
- 1.3. Be able to demonstrate appreciation of nuance and ambiguity, as well as clarity and precision in their thinking and writing about moral problems, concepts, and ideals (Critical Thinking, Complexity).
- 1.4. Reflect on their own ethical decisions and actions, on their roles as morally responsible members of the human community, and on what it means to be a good person (Critical thinking, Complexity).

Course Goals

1. Students will be able to express a critical understanding of the theological and/or philosophical foundations of ethical systems in religious traditions.
2. Students will be able to compare and contrast at least two different cultural and/or theological expressions of religious ethics.
3. Students will be able to apply religious ethics to individual moral issues in business which may include discrimination in the workplace, deceptive advertising and marketing, bribes outside of the U.S., corporate tax evasion.

Religious Studies Department Goals

1. Students will probe and question religion for what it reveals about human beings, their diverse societies, traditions, convictions and aspirations.
2. Students use diverse materials and demonstrate formal postures of inquiry into religion and in order to go beyond a simple description of religion into a reflective engagement with it.
3. Students propose and investigate the “big questions” –that is, the meta-reflective questions that ask how and why we ask the questions that we do about religion.

Study Units

1. Ethics; Morality; Argumentation; Categories of ethical systems; Comparative methods
2. Religious ethical systems
3. Applied religious ethics to moral issues in business

Required texts and handouts

Capaldi, Nicholas. Ed. *Business and Religion: A Clash of Civilizations?* Salem, MA: M & M Scrivener Press, 2005.

Heidt, Mari Rapela. *Moral Traditions: An Introduction to World Religious Ethics*. Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2010.

Assessment and Grading: 100 point goal

10: Informed participation: means in-class participation based upon your reading of the assigned material. Also includes in-class sessions on the Mock Ethics Bowl. (Learning Objectives 1a; 1b; 1.2; 1.4)

30: Two exams. Exam 1 (10 points) covers units: The Nature of Morality, Normative ethical theories, and lectures (Heidt text), (Learning Objectives: 1a; 1.1; 1.3; 1.4). Exam 2 (20 points) covers religious ethical systems; applied ethics to a case using the students own religious system (Capaldi text), (LOs, 3.1; 3.2; 1.3; 1.4).

30: Response 2-page papers: Homework, 6 papers: the student will respond to moral issues as presented in the Capaldi text, and discuss the issue in light of each religious ethical system(Learning Objectives: 1a; 1b; 1.1; 1.2; 1.3).

30: Research and applied religious ethics paper and presentation (20 pts paper/10 pts presentation). The student will present a case which they have researched; they will choose and apply one religious ethical system to the case demonstrating an understanding of the religious, theological or philosophical history and development of the ethical framework; how it can be applied to the moral issues of the case; and a critical evaluation of the application and its outcome(s). (Learning Objectives: 1a; 1.1; 1.3)

- “A” work is excellent. An “A” paper follows the directive completely, has no writing or format transgressions.
- No late papers will be accepted in this course. In a business setting you must meet deadlines. So in this setting as well.
- All papers will follow MLA Writing Style and Guidelines (7th edition).
- A finish paper is a final draft, which means you have edited your work and stapled the paper if necessary. Unstapled papers are not accepted.
- Grading is on a 5-point scale. Example: 96-100 = A.

*In fulfillment of **Core learning goal 1a**, papers and quizzes will ask you to demonstrate a grasp of central religious ideas that developed ethical frameworks in 5 religious traditions. Each Applied Religious Ethics paper will ask you to demonstrate an understanding of the ethical framework from respective global regions. These Applied Religious Ethics papers include:*

Five (5) religious ethics: Apply an ethical framework to a moral issue in business from a Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu system. The student will have to demonstrate an understanding and respect for each ethical system.

Research paper: This paper is the culmination of the quarter study in applied religious ethics and business. The student will research and consider a moral issue in business (current) and apply one religious ethical system to the case, analyzing and critically examining the potential outcomes and possible conflicts the system presents.

Exams: Both exams will not only evaluate student knowledge and understanding of course materials, but will include questions that challenge critical thinking and evaluation.

*In fulfillment of **Core learning goal 1b**, Informed participation, the Mock Ethics Bowl in-class assignment, and quiz questions will also ask you to reflect critically on your own religious ethical system and about the religious dimension of human existence that are raised by the various religious ethical systems.(1a; 1b; 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4)*

Mock Ethics Bowl, in-class group debates: Two groups will argue the same case using religious ethical systems from each student's own tradition. E.g. one student might apply Catholic ethics and another Buddhist ethics (each from their respective tradition). This group effort will allow the student to be able to "reflect on their own ethical decisions and actions and what it means to be morally responsible for one's actions in the human community, and on what it means to be a good person." 1.4)

Informed participation will include discussions on student's own religious ethical systems as they come to have a deeper understanding of and grasp how to apply their respective systems to their own lives and to their professional goals.(1.b; 1.4)

Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance is paramount to your success in this course and its learning environment. Arguing cases is an essential part of the course and you must be in class to participate. Two unexcused absences will not reduce your grade. A third and each subsequent absence will reduce your grade one level: A- to B+ and so on. Four or more absences completely deduct the 10 points from the participation grade and you may need to drop the course based on overall performance.

Generally, legitimate excuses for an absence are illness or family emergencies. You will be asked to document either so you will not lose points or have a grade reduction for these excuses.

Tardy/Coming to class late

This behavior is disruptive to your fellow students and the professor. Please do not be late. Two (2) late arrivals will prompt a warning; more than 2 will result in a grade reduction. Three = reduced ½ grade and each additional will result in the same.

Disability Policy

To receive academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in Benson 216. The phone number is 408-554-4109 or inquiries can be emailed to Robin Cole at rcole@scu.edu. Students must register with DR and provide documentation of a disability to DR prior to receiving academic accommodations. Your instructor will work with you and support your efforts in this regard.

Laptops and other devices may not be used in class.

No taping of any kind may occur without explicit written permission from the professor or Disability Resources.