

COURSE OUTLINE

BUSINESS DECISION MAKING AND BUSINESS ETHICS

This course introduces students to a variety of decision making techniques used in business, and examines their usefulness and limitations. Students will explore the differences between quantitative and qualitative data, and the relative weighting given to qualitative data in business decisions. The focus is then broadened to examine the concept of business ethics, trace the pressures which have required businesses to develop ethical policies, and confront the question: are profit and ethics mutually exclusive concepts?

Topics to be covered include:

1. Comparison of business objectives versus stakeholder desires.
2. Examination of traditional business methods of data research and decision making techniques.
3. Reliability, risk and uncertainty. Legal considerations.
4. Business matrix models as a basis for decision making.
5. Approaches of the theorists. Distributive justice.
6. Corporate governance versus pressure groups.
7. Evaluation of the usefulness of environmental audits and social responsibility.
8. Consideration of merits of whistle-blowing in cases of malpractice.
9. Practical examples of business approaches to ethics. Analysing a set of case studies to form a solution to varying ethical problems.

Course Aims

- To enable students to become familiar with the more common business decision making techniques and to assess their value.
- To develop an understanding of the theoretical and practical issues relating to business ethics.

Objectives

- To develop the knowledge and skills necessary to use decision making techniques.
- To understand the theoretical approaches to business ethics and to apply them to practical situations.
- To evaluate the ethical policies of a range of businesses.
- To research topics and to present findings and conclusions in written and oral presentations.

Outcomes

- An ability to use decision making techniques and to evaluate the results.
- To demonstrate an understanding of theory and to apply it in a variety of ways to varied business situations.
- To show through individual and group research an understanding of the subject, and to develop this understanding through appropriate application.
- To have completed regular assignments on each aspect of the course and to deliver this acquired knowledge through a range of visual, oral and written material.

Assessment Process

Students will be expected to attend all classes and to be active participants. They will be expected to complete essays, case studies, perform oral presentations and research projects. The breakdown of marks awarded for the course is as follows:

- 40% Essays
- 30% Research assignment
- 20% Class participation
- 10% Attendance

Sample Essay Titles

1. Do you believe that money is the reward for taking risk. Do you believe that investors should consider the common good, when they are making a choice amongst alternative investments.
2. Give an argument for and an argument against acceptance of a contract to buy materials from a company notorious for its poor treatment of workers in third world countries.

Assessment Criteria

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| DISTINCTION Grade A+ | Student understands broad range of ideological concepts, has excellent understanding of their impact in relation to given situations, and shows excellent communication skills in constructing an original and persuasive argument, with reference to a broad range of evidence. |
| CREDIT Grade A- | Student understands core concepts clearly, has advanced understanding of their impact in relation to given situations, and can construct a sound argument to reflect that with persuasive use of evidence. |
| MERIT Grade B | Student understands core concepts, has clear understanding of their impact in relation to given situations, and can construct an argument to reflect that knowledge accurately, with reference to a range of evidence. |
| PASS Grade C+ Grade C- or D | Student understands basic concepts, has some understanding of their impact in relation to given situations, and some ability to communicate that information both verbally and in written form. |
| FAIL | None of the criteria listed above followed |

Essential Purchase and Reading

Business Ethics - Chryssides and Kaler *ISBN 1861523564.*

Recommended Reading

Business Ethics - Crane and Matten. *ISBN 0199255156.*

Perspectives in Business Ethics - Hartman. ISBN 0071158340.

For specific decision making techniques a variety of sources will be used, and material provided. Use will also be made of current newspapers and journals, and the published statements of businesses.

If you are unable to obtain books locally, they may be ordered from

<http://www.bookshop.blackwell.co.uk> or www.Amazon.co.uk