

BHM301 Business, Ethics, Responsibility & Human Rights

Academic Year 2012/13

Number of Aston Credits: 15

Number of ECTS Credits: 7.5

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

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Availability: See 'office hours'

Or contact the Work & Organisational Psychology Group Administrator:

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Pre-requisites for the Module:

Module available on MSc Social Responsibility & Sustainability and as an elective for other courses. No pre-requisite module required.

Mode of Attendance:

Full time or part time (on and off campus)

Module Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

- > To distinguish between ethics, morals, codes of conduct and the law.
- > To explore ethical theory and related concepts
- > Be aware of different philosophies, perspectives and their implications
- > To understand corporate social responsibility and philanthropy
- > To understand ethical dilemmas facing individuals and organisations
- > To explore models that support ethical decision-making and their limitations.
- > To understand Human Rights principles and approaches
- > To be aware of Millennium Development Goals and role of Business & Poverty
- > To explore the nature of individual and organisational values

- > To understand the role of ethical codes, policies, practices including whistle blowing.
- > To study a series of cases focusing on contemporary issues
- > To apply Ethics, Responsibility and Human Rights approaches to business and organisational contexts

On completion of the module, students should be able to:

- > Understand theories, concepts and approaches relating to ethics, human rights and social responsibility A3
- > Understand ethical components of managerial decision making B3/B4
- > Be sensitive to the influence of culture on ethics.A1
- > Understand the nature of Social Responsibility and Philanthropy A3
- > Understand the role of personal & organisational values and ethical codes
- > Demonstrate knowledge of Human Rights and Labour Standards A4
- > Apply Human Rights approaches to organisational contexts C2
- > Demonstrate knowledge of approaches to fighting poverty and inclusive business
- > Develop skills of synthesis evaluation and analysis using ethical, responsibility and human rights frameworks C3
- > Draw upon a range of models to aid ethical decision-making C1/B3
- > Apply knowledge of ethics to some of the great international ethical debates, organisational dilemmas and everyday individual issues A1
- > Use skills of self reflection and reflexivity D4
- > Demonstrate communication and self presentation skills D3
- > Apply research skills D6

Module Content:

- Week 1:** Introduction to the module.
The nature of ethics, responsibility and values. Why are they important and why now? Perspectives on ethics; models, concepts and frameworks
- Week 2:** Corporate Social Responsibility and philanthropy - why bother?
- Week 3:** Business and Human Rights. The UN Global Compact and Labour Standards. What is the role of business?
- Week 4:** The challenge of fighting poverty for business & management. Different models and approaches to business and poverty.
- Week 5:** Social inclusion and entrepreneurship

- Week 6:** Individual influences on ethical decision-making. Personal & organisational values, their origin, development and integration. Reflective learning
- Week 7:** Ethical issues and the role of ethical codes, policies and practices. Whistle blowing – Corporate citizen or subversive?
- Week 8:** Exploring issues and applying concepts/ theories through practical examples Reflections and ‘real life’ exploration of issues.
- Week 9:** Tutorials
- Week 10:** **Assessments**

Corporate Connections:

The recent banking crisis and the collapse of economic markets have brought questions about the ethics and responsibilities of organisations sharply into focus. The module draws on the experience of individuals and organisations that work with staff at Aston. For example; The Birmingham Centre for Business Ethics works with business organisations in the West Midlands. Drawing members from the corporate world and local businesses. The UN Global Compact covers organisations locally and globally.

International Dimensions:

The foundation of ethics goes beyond national borders. The interconnectedness between global events and the impact they have on peoples lives has given further impetus to calls for a re examination of the role of business in society. Many of the dilemmas facing managers occur because of developing world issues, such as the globalisation of trade and climate change. International issues become central when comparing Eastern and Western cultures and the module will use case studies and speakers that highlight international issues. The module will also draw upon the experiences of students to explore comparative issues from different cultures.

Contribution of Research:

The module draws on the research of the module leader and the research of other academics locally and globally to underpin this module. Carole Parkes’ research explores issues of ethics, values and human rights, their impacts on social responsibility and sustainability and links to HRM in organisations.

Ethics, Responsibility & Sustainability:

This module is designed for the MSc in Social Responsibility and Sustainability. The module content is wholly within the areas of ethics and responsibility. It is also open as an option module for other courses.

Method of Teaching:

- > Directed reading will present a range of views on issues covered
- > Highly interactive teaching methods are used to explore the main concepts with syndicate work and plenary sessions using topical business based examples.
- > Reflexivity is also an important part of the learning process

Method of Assessment and Feedback:

Formative discussion groups to assist with planning and preparation of coursework.

Individual written course work in 2 parts 1. Academic essay 2. Reflective Piece.

Learning Hours:

Lectures	30
Self study and directed learning	80
Assessment preparation	40
Total	150

The following essential and recommended readings are subject to change. Students should not therefore purchase textbooks prior to commencing their course. If students wish to undertake background reading before starting the course, many of the chapters/readings are available in electronic form via on-line library catalogues and other resources.

Essential Reading:

Crane A. & Matten D. (2010) Business Ethics. Managing Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability in the Age of Globalization, 3rd Edition. Oxford University Press.

Other Reading:

The following texts provide additional material for the areas to be studied. Readings (including journal articles) are suggested under topic headings on a weekly basis and available via Blackboard

Blowfield, M. & Murray, A. (2008) *Corporate Responsibility – a critical introduction* Oxford University Press.

Burchell, J. (2008) *The Corporate Social Responsibility Reader*. Routledge

Campbell, T. Miller, S. (2004) *Human rights and the moral responsibilities of corporate and public sector organisations*, Kluwer Academic Publishing, Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

Crane, A; Matten, D; & Spence, L; (2007) *Corporate Social Responsibility: Readings and Cases in a Global Context*. Routledge

Ferrell O.C., Fraedrich J., & Ferrell L., (2000) *Business Ethics, Ethical Decision Making and Cases*. Houghton Mifflin

Fisher, C. and Lovell, A. (2006) (Second Edition) *Business, Ethics and Values. Individual, Corporate and International Perspectives*. Pearson Education Ltd

Gentile, M. (2010) *Giving Voice to Values: How to Speak Your Mind When You Know What's Right* Yale University Press MA

Hendry J., & Sorrell T., (2000) *Business Ethics*, Butterworth-Heinemann.

Pinnington, A, Macklin, R & Campbell, T. (2007) *Human Resource Management. Ethics and Employment*. Oxford University Press.

Smith R K.M.& van den Anker C (2005) *The Essentials of Human Rights* Hodder Arnold

Sullivan, R. (2003) *Business & Human Rights Dilemmas & Solutions* Greenleaf Publishing

There are also a number of academic journals in the area of Business Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Human Rights available through electronic resources of the Library.