

BUSINESS ETHICS

COURSE OUTLINE

1. Introduction

In exercising leadership in business organizations there are crucial questions that demand an answer, at least implicitly, which cannot be given from a purely instrumental perspective, but demand a normative approach.

Some of these questions arise in front of negative events: Why incredibly intelligent people do incredibly stupid things? What are the most frequent dynamics associated with corporate fraud and corruption? What should be done to avoid mobbing or discrimination in organizations? And how organizational crises can be prevented and eventually resolved? Other questions are subtler but even more relevant: How can we integrate ethics in decision-making? What is the type of character that allows business leaders to excel in their role? How could companies create a culture that fosters personal and professional development? What norms, policies y procedures help in that process of change? How do companies contribute to the development of societies where they operate? How do they contribute to alleviate global problems and to promote a sustainable development, while not compromising their economic viability?

In this course, we will address those questions explicitly, and show their relevance in decision-making and strategic design. This expanded approach to business problems, will enhance the participants' skills in diagnosing business problems, and widen their instrumental toolkit for addressing business challenges, preventing ethical problems within organizations and fostering a culture of excellence that will contribute to social welfare and personal flourishing.

This course will address these questions through case discussions, lectures and the presentations of the guest speakers.

2. Objectives

This course has three main objectives:

- First, analyzing in detail organizational dynamics associated with ethically problematic situations such as corruption, mobbing, sexual harassment, etc.
- Second, learning how to design effective policies to prevent and eventually manage ethically problematic situations.
- Third, developing a critical and positive perspective of business activities, as well as managers' responsibilities and liabilities.

3. Learning Outcomes

- Understanding the mutual relationship between financial, relational and ethical drivers in managerial decision-making.
- Being able to address explicitly normative issues surrounding management and the role of business in society, as distinct from descriptive and instrumental, and understand its relevance.
- Become familiar with tools and procedures to prevent, identify and resolve corporate fraud and crime in organizations, and to foster a culture of excellence.
- Developing a personal understanding of the role of business in society, its purpose and the position of management tasks for organizations and in personal life

4. Competences

This is a course that intends to nurture a critical and alternative perspective of traditional managerial processes. Therefore, the competences I hope to nurture during this module are:

- Critical Thinking: not WHAT to think, but HOW to think.
- Attention to weak (but important) signals.
- Assessing the ethical dimension of business problems.
- Using specific tools for enhancing the ethical climate of organizations.

5. Content and Methodology

This course is divided in two parts:

During the first, we will discuss fundamental tools for addressing problematic situations such as corruption, fraud and corporate crises.

During the second, we will explore how stakeholders' ethical expectations and responsibility issues can be effectively implemented and integrated in organizational systems and strategic planning processes.

Most classes are taught through a series of cases and notes that represent real management decisions. Some classes are complemented with readings from prominent media resources, guest speakers and experimental exercises.

6. Evaluation

Students will be evaluated in the following manner:

- 50 % Individual class participation
- 50 % Team final project