

University of Cologne

**ADVANCED BUSINESS ETHICS**  
Area Corporate Development



**Syllabus (winter term 2012/2013)**

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Instructor:	Prof. Bernd Irlenbusch	office_codebe(at)uni-koeln.de
Team:	Julian Conrads Miriam Mezger Albena Neschen Tommaso Reggiani Rainer Michael Rilke Gari Walkowitz	Julian.Conrads(at)uni-koeln.de Miriam.Mezger(at)uni-koeln.de Albena.Neschen(at)uni-koeln.de Reggiani(at)wiso.uni-koeln.de Rainer.Rilke(at)uni-koeln.de Gari.Walkowitz(at)uni-koeln.de
Time & Location:	Lectures	Tue, 16-17:30, HS XXIII Thu, 12-13:30, HS XXIII
	Classes	Thu, 16-17:30, IBW 141 Fri, 10-11:30, HS XXI

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

New technologies, socio-economic dynamics, and cultural orientations have opened up new possibilities of how we can work and live. Our environment today is challenging for the world of commerce too. Often, for business people the central question is how to make business more profitable. In line with this, they regard business ethics as an instrument to increase profits. Business ethicists critically discuss the idea of profit and ask: Is the maximization of profits valuable in any circumstance? This is one of the main questions in traditional business ethics. In this field, issues in the corporate world, such as responsibility of corporate agents, fairness, justice, marketing practices, manager rewards, corporate social responsibility, etc. are reflected by applying classical philosophical approaches of Aristotle, Kant, and Bentham. But given the challenges of the new environment today, we have to go beyond. We need to apply contemporary ways of thinking about our life to the business realm. We will see that ethics is not primarily about answers and solutions but about questions and critical reflection. This does not mean that answers cannot emerge, but they should always be submitted to the process of critical reasoning. A great lesson in this process can be drawn from continental philosophers like Deleuze, Levinas, Foucault, Nietzsche, Sartre, Heidegger, etc.

Students choosing Advanced Business Ethics shall learn to challenge their own role in a company to reflect their determinations' consequences and to imply them in decision-making processes. During classes, students will be involved actively in presentations and discussions.

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## COURSE STRUCTURE

The course consists of five distinct units: I) Agency in corporations, II) Organizational justice, III) Reward, incentive, and compensation, IV) Marketing, bad faith, and responsibility, V) Corporate social responsibility. Each unit represents an ethical debate on a specific issue from the corporate world and contains an application of contemporary thinking to that issue. Each unit includes four blocks: two classes and two lectures. The unit starts with Class 1 (Thursday 16-17:30, IBW 141) where students have time to read the relevant chapter from the textbook (Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, by Mollie Painter-Morland & René Ten Bos) on the ethical debates about the unit's topic; discuss the content

with their peers; ask questions to the team. In the Class 2 (Friday, 10-11:30, HS XXI) students can read extracts from original philosophical texts for preparing the subsequent lectures; discuss the content with their peers; ask questions to the team. Lecture 1 (Tuesday, 16-17:30, HS XXII) gives an overview on the ethical debate on the unit's topic. For Lecture 2 (Thursday, 12-13:30, HS XXIII) students are asked to prepare an assignment with answers to a short list of crucial questions provided for each unit (see below) based on their previous readings. The preparation is expected to be executed in power point creating one slide per question. Slides must be uploaded (power point or pdf format) until Wednesday, 12:00 noon, before the lectures via ILIAS (format: *last name\_given name\_unit name*). By providing slides students can earn up to ten bonus points, i.e., two bonus point per unit, for the exam (the exam will have 60 points in total). During the lecture students have the opportunity to intensively discuss their answers in class and reflect on the lessons that can be drawn from continental philosophers regarding the business ethics debate.

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## ATTENDANCE

Since it is impossible for you to participate in and benefit from class discussions when you are absent, your attendance at every lecture and class session is recommended. The upload of your prepared answers to the provided questions is not mandatory – you will NOT receive negative points for the exam if you do not submit slides for a specific unit. However, it is highly recommended to participate to earn a comprehensive understanding of the discussed issues and for an excellent preparation of your exam.

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## GRADING

Grades are based on: 1. A written exam which lasts 60 minutes and is written at the end of the mid-term (30.11.2012).  
2. If you earn bonus points from the unit assignments they will be added to your points earned in the exam.

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## COURSE LANGUAGE

English

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## CREDIT POINTS

6 ECTS

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## LITERATURE

For each unit you will find a list with required readings. We expect you to read these texts for a thoroughly class and exam preparation. If you want to gain further knowledge in a specific topic you can refer to the additional readings which provide a short list of insightful literature on the discussed topic. You will find some copies of the main text book in the faculty's library. In addition, we will provide you with a hard copy folder wherein you find copies of the philosophical texts used in the course. The folders are placed at the two following locations (please ask for them):

Seminar für Allgemeine Betriebswirtschaftslehre,  
Unternehmensentwicklung und Wirtschaftsethik  
Office (Room 912)  
Venloer Str. 151-153  
50672 Köln  
<http://www.codebe.uni-koeln.de/>

Copy-Star Druck und Werbung GmbH  
Zülpicher Straße 184  
50937 Köln  
<http://www.copystar.de/>

## **COURSE PLAN**

### **Introduction to the module**

When: Tue, October, 9, 16:00 – 17:30; Where: HS XXIII

In this unit we will introduce the topics of the course and convey the structure of the units. Organizational issues will be discussed. The team will introduce itself and will welcome the students.

#### **Required reading:**

- Painter-Morland, M. and T. Ten Bos (2011). Introduction: Critical Crossings. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland and R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 15-36.
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## Unit I: Agency in Corporations

In this unit we learn about various positions in the debate on “Moral Agency” in business ethics. Can corporate agents be responsible for ethical failures or is it always the individual? We will question the assumptions of this debate by understanding the notions of “Identity” and “Multiplicity” in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.

### Assignments:

1. Explain the concept of ‘desiring production’ and how it shapes us by what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘passive syntheses’!
2. How do ‘rhizomes’ and ‘hierarchical structures’ relate to each other and what does their coexistence imply?
3. Why does ethics obscure the process of desiring production? Why may immoral behavior be insightful?
4. What are the criteria for ethical judgments of ‘assemblages’?
5. Why can agents (human individuals or corporations) not have an identity according to Deleuze and Guattari?
6. What might be an important drawback of attributing an identity to agents?

### Required readings:

- Painter-Morland, M. (2011). Agency in corporations. In: M. Painter-Morland and R. Ten Bos (Eds.), *Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 15-36.
- Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (1983). *Desiring Machines*. In: *Anti-Oedipus – Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1-8.
- Colman, F. J. (2005). Rhizome. In: Adrian Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary – Revised Edition*, 232-235.
- Roffe, J. (2005). Multiplicity. In: Adrian Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary – Revised Edition*, 181-182.
- Marks, J. (2005). Ethics. In: Adrian Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary – Revised Edition*, 87-89.
- Graham, L. (2005). Assemblage. In: Adrian Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary – Revised Edition*, 18-19.
- Buchanan, I. (2008). Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*, Chapter 3, 50-54.

### Optional readings:

- Painter-Morland, M. (2011). Rethinking Responsible Agency in Corporations: Perspectives from Deleuze and Guattari. In: *Journal of Business Ethics* 101, 83-95.

### Schedule:

Block	Time	Location	Content
Class 1	Thu, 11.10.2012, 16:00 – 17:30	IBW 141	Reading of textbook chapter 1, questions
Class 2	Fri, 12.10.2012, 10:00 – 11:30	HS XXI	Reading of philosophical texts, questions
Lecture 1	Tue, 16.10.2012, 16:00 – 17:30	HS XXIII	Debates on agency in organizations
Lecture 2	Thu, 18.10.2012, 12:00 – 13:30	HS XXIII	Discussion of continental philosophy perspectives
			Presentation slides upload until: Wed, 17.10.2012, 12:00

## **Unit II: Organizational Justice**

This unit aims to present all main concepts regarding the current debate on organizational justice within firms. We ask the question how to fairly treat the individual as such compared to the individual being a member of a group. Business practices in the area of organizational justice are analyzed and discussed at the light of Levinas' philosophical thought.

### **Assignments:**

1. Describe the ancient notion of "Pleonexia" and link it to the modern Levinas' concept of "Enjoyment".
2. Explain the main concepts that characterize Levinas' idea of ethics and describe the differences with respect to Aristotle's idea.
3. According to Levinas' thought, which is the spontaneous human attitude that individuals exercise encountering another human?
4. Describe the specific typology of interpersonal relation that Levinas considers the most relevant and that he uses to develop his philosophical approach.
5. Describe Levinas' idea of justice and discuss it in the light of the notion of ethics that he proposed.
6. If Levinas was a CEO, would he be more inclined to implement a wage scheme based on equality or based on the equity principle? Please, bring some arguments to justify your position.

### **Required readings:**

- Rhodes (2011). Organizational Justice. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland and R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 141-161.
- Critchley & Bernasconi (2004), The Cambridge Companion to Levinas, CUP, 2004, [pp. XV-XXX, 1-32]
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, entry on Emmanuel Levinas, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/levinas/>, [sections: 1/4/5/6]
- Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, [extract pp. 85-101]
- Levinas, Otherwise than Being, [extracts: Intro; Chapter 1; pp. 72-74]
- Levinas, Totality and Infinity, [extract pp. 72-81]

### **Optional readings:**

- Abeler et al. (2010), Gift Exchange and Workers' Fairness Concerns: When Equality is Unfair, Journal of the European Economic Association, 2010, 8:6, pp. 1299-1324.
- Cropanzano & Stein (2009), Organizational Justice and Behavioral Ethics, Business Ethics Quarterly, 2009, 19:2, [extract pp. 193-200]
- Fortin (2008), Perspective on Organizational Justice, International Journal of Management Reviews, 2008, 10:2 [extract pp. 93-102]

### **Schedule:**

<b>Block</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Content</b>
Class 1	Thu, 18.10.2012, 16:00 – 17:30	IBW 141	Reading of textbook chapter 6, questions
Class 2	Fri, 19.10.2012, 10:00 – 11:30	HS XXI	Reading of philosophical texts, questions
Lecture 1	Tue, 23.10.2012, 16:00 – 17:30	HS XXIII	Debates on organizational justice
Lecture 2	Thu, 25.10.2012, 12:00 – 13:30	HS XXIII	Discussion of continental philosophy perspectives Presentation slides upload until: Wed, 24.10.2012, 12:00

### Unit III: Reward, incentive, and compensation

In this unit we ask whether it is justifiable from a moral point of view that managers often receive enormous rewards. What are the ethical issues? Can fairness-based arguments provide an answer? We will discuss the 'agreement view', the 'desert view' and the 'efficiency view'. Going one step further we will apply approaches by Nietzsche and Foucault to the issue of manager rewards and we will discuss their ways of questioning well established practices.

#### **Assignments:**

1. Explain Nietzsche's concept of resentment and apply it to the material success of managers.
2. What are "metaphors" and "concepts" and according to Nietzsche how do they help us to procure what we need to flourish?
3. According to Nietzsche why can "moral truth" never be fixed, in which sense is it used as a form of social manipulation, and how is it sustained by conventionalized lying?
4. Describe Foucault's ethics as 'care of the self and the practice of freedom'.
5. What does Foucault's appeal for an 'ethics of questioning' involve and how can this notion of ethics be applied to the remuneration of executives?
6. What does the 'capacity to recoil' mean for Nietzsche and for Foucault? How does this capacity relate to "truth"?

#### **Required readings:**

- Painter-Morland, M. (2011). Reward, incentive and compensation. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, M. Painter-Morland and R. Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 162-180.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic*, M. Clark and A.J. Swenses (trans.). Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing Company (1998), pp. 11, 19, 46-47, 70-71
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 'On truth and lie in the extramoral sense', In: W. Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 42-47
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Will to Power*, W.Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (trans./eds.) New York: Vintage Press (1968), p. 1,067
- Heidegger, Martin, *Nietzsche Volumes III and IV: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics and Nihilism*, D.F. Kneel (eds.). San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins (1987), pp. 57, 66
- Foucault, Michel, *Ethics: The Essential Works*. London: The Penguin Press (1994), pp. xviii, 284, 287

#### **Optional readings:**

- Moriarty, Jeffrey (2009) How Much Compensation Can CEOs Permissibly Accept? *Business Ethics Quarterly* 19(2), 235-250.
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, entry on Friedrich Nietzsche  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche/>
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, entry on Michel Foucault  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/foucault/>

#### **Schedule:**

Block	Time	Location	Content
Class 1	Thu, 25.10.2012, 16:00 – 17:30	IBW 141	Reading of textbook chapter 7, questions
Class 2	Fri, 26.10.2012, 10:00 – 11:30	HS XXI	Reading of philosophical texts, questions
Lecture 1	Tue, 06.11.2012, 16:00 – 17:30	HS XXIII	Debates on reward, incentive, and compensation
Lecture 2	Thu, 08.11.2012, 12:00 – 13:30	HS XXIII	Discussion of continental philosophy perspectives Presentation slides upload until: Wed, 07.11.2012, 12:00

## **Unit IV: Marketing, Bad Faith, and Responsibility**

We discuss standard ethical concerns in marketing related to the four Ps (product, price, place, promotion) with a special focus on the use of checklists, targeting, and image appropriateness. As marketing changes it lacks a new frame for marketing ethics. Insights from contemporary philosophy can help to fill this gap. How do we perceive ourselves? And what can marketing learn from this about the image of people that marketing should convey? We relate basic themes from Sartre's existential phenomenology to current marketing practices.

### **Assignments:**

1. Explain how Sartre conceptualizes consciousness.
2. How can facticity and transcendence be distinguished?
3. Explain the three aspects of temporality.
4. What is (the faith of) bad faith?
5. Why might the waiter in Sartre's example be in bad faith and why not?
6. Relate the concept of bad faith to an example from marketing.
7. How does Claudia Card differentiate "having" and "taking" responsibility?
8. Explain the four senses of "taking responsibility" and provide examples for each of them for marketing decisions.

### **Required reading:**

- Bernasconi, Robert (2006) *How to Read Sartre*. London: Granta Books, 35-42.
- Borgerson, Janet (2011) *Marketing, Bad faith, and Responsibility*. In: *Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy*, Mollie Painter-Morland and René Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 220-241.
- Flynn, Thomas R. (2006) *Existentialism. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 65-74.
- Gordon, Lewis R. (1999) *Bad Faith and Antiracist Racism*. New York: Humanity Books, 16-17.

### **Optional reading:**

- Sartre, Jean-Paul (1992) *Being and Nothingness A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. Trans. Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 147.

### **Schedule:**

<b>Block</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Content</b>
Class 1	Thu, 08.11.2012, 16:00 – 17:30	IBW 141	Reading of textbook chapter 10, questions
Class 2	Fri, 09.11.2012, 10:00 – 11:30	HS XXI	Reading of philosophical texts, questions
Lecture 1	Tue, 13.11.2012, 16:00 – 17:30	HS XXIII	Debates on marketing, bad faith, and responsibility
Lecture 2	Thu, 15.11.2012, 12:00 – 13:30	HS XXIII	Discussion of continental philosophy perspectives Presentation slides upload until: Wed, 14.11.2012

## **Unit V: Corporate social responsibility**

This unit's aim is to understand what Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is and how its meaning has been historically developed. In doing so we will review how complex discussions about responsibility in business are. Heidegger's way of (destructive) questioning will thereby serve us as a means to find out what the social responsibility of the corporation might be.

### **Assignments:**

1. Explain the three structural items of Heidegger's way of questioning.
2. What is the "Gefragte" in the question "what is the social responsibility of the corporation"?
3. What is the "Befragte" in the question "what is the social responsibility of the corporation"? What do Ten Bos and Dunne consider to be the "Befragte"?
4. What is the "Erfragte" in the question "what is the social responsibility of the corporation"?
5. What do Ten Bos' & Dunne's find in asking the question "what is the social responsibility of the corporation"?

### **Required readings:**

- Ten Bos, René & Dunne, Stephen (2011) Corporate Social Responsibility. In: Business Ethics and Continental Philosophy, Mollie Painter-Morland and René Ten Bos (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 220-241.
- Heidegger, Martin (2005) Being and Time. (esp. §2. *The Formal Structure of the Question of being*) Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

### **Optional reading:**

- Carroll, Archie B. (1979) A Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Performance, *Academy of Management Review* 4, 497-505.
- Frederick, William C. (1994) From CSR<sub>1</sub> to CSR<sub>2</sub> - The Maturing of Business-and Society Thought, *Business and Society* 33(2), 150-164.
- Tirole, Jean and Bénabou, Roland (2010) Individual and Corporate Social Responsibility, *Economia* Issue 305 (77), 1-19.

### **Schedule:**

<b>Block</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Content</b>
Class 1	Thu, 15.11.2012, 16:00 – 17:30	IBW 141	Reading of textbook chapter 12, questions
Class 2	Fri, 16.10.2012, 10:00 – 11:30	HS XXI	Reading of philosophical texts, questions
Lecture 1	Tue, 20.11.2012, 16:00 – 17:30	HS XXIII	Debates on corporate responsibility
Lecture 2	Thu, 22.11.2012, 12:00 – 13:30	HS XXIII	Discussion of continental philosophy perspectives Presentation slides upload until: Wed, 21.11.2012, 12:00



## IMPORTANT DATES

Date	Event
Thu, 11.10.2012	No lecture
Tue, 30.10.2012	Reading week! No lecture
Thu, 01.11.2012	No lecture, no class
Fri, 02.11.2012	Reading week! No class
Thu, 22.11.2012	No class
Fri, 23.11.2012	No class
Tue, 27.11.2012	Question time, 16:00 – 17:30, HS XXIII
Thu, 29.11.2012	No class, no lecture
Fri, 30.11.2012	Exam: 10:00 - 11:00, location may change (presumably HS XXI)
Fri, 01.03.2013	Retake exam: 10:00 - 11:00, location may change (presumably HS XXI)

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