

ACCOUNTING ETHICS
CLASS CODE: AG422
2016/17 SEMESTER 1

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CLASS DESCRIPTION

The class will provide students with a set of techniques with which to explore the accounting ethical dilemmas that will be introduced. These are necessarily philosophical in nature and cannot be regarded as objective or beyond challenge, but they do offer the means to subject a course of action to a rigorous analysis.

CLASS AIMS

The aim of this class is to deepen understanding of and to stimulate discussion on the vital topic of accounting ethics. This aim will be pursued in class through the discussion of the nature of ethics and the manner in which ethical dilemmas can be identified and resolved. It will explore a number of specific themes that can be used to clarify the nature of ethical dilemmas affecting accountants. These will include aspects of financial accounting (e.g. the pressures associated with creative accounting), auditing (e.g. the need to report findings honestly), management accounting (e.g. the implications of setting unattainable budgets) and taxation (e.g. the extent to which tax avoidance can be justified).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The following learning outcomes will contribute to your self-analysis and reflection in your Student's Personal Development Planning (SPDP).

Subject specific knowledge and skills

On completing the class you will

- A1 Understand the normative perspectives on accounting ethics.
- A2 Be able to identify the factors that influence the ways in which accountants respond to ethical dilemmas.

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- A3 Be able to relate the rules in the accountancy profession's ethical guidance to the broader situations in which ethical decisions must be made.
- A4 Be able to explain the interrelationship of ethics and law, including the relationship between laws, regulations, and the public interest.
- A5 be able to compare the consequences of unethical behaviour to the individual, to the profession, and to society at large

Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills

During the class you will

- B1 Develop intellectual and professional competencies by analysing and evaluating evidence, logical reasoning and practical applications.
- B2 Develop communication skills – explaining, listening, discussion, questioning, presenting and defending a position, giving feedback, writing.
- B3 Develop intellectual understandings, clarifying concepts and theories by thinking, discussion, doing, observing and constructing connections.
- B4 Develop a mature learning stance by accepting personal responsibility for progress and direction of learning
- B5 Learn to link professional judgements to their associated economic impacts on markets and stakeholders.

ASSESSMENT

50% coursework

50% exam

The pass mark is 40%

Modes of Assessment

Essay (40%)

Each student will be required to submit a 2,000 words essay on a topic which will be provided in Week 2.

Group Presentation (10%)

Students will be required to make a group presentation on a topic which will be provided in Week 2

End of Year Exam (50%).

The main assessment of this class will take the form of a two hour examination. Students will be required to answer two out of choice of six questions.

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Reassessment

This is an honours class and so there are no resits.

All coursework should be submitted via the class Myplace page. The criteria for assessment can be found at the end of this outline.

Late submission of required work will normally result in a penalty (see next section about the penalties for late submission). Compelling reasons for late submission, such as illness or bereavement, must be documented and will be submitted to the honours board of examiners who will determine whether the penalty should be applied.

Informal assessment and feedback will be provided via class discussion and comments on students outlined plan of proposed course work (see the section of this outline about the feedback). You will be expected to take note of this feedback and use the experience as a basis for improving your skills.

During the class there will be opportunities for you to assess your own progress in an informal manner (sometimes called 'formative' assessment) and there will be opportunities for you to receive formal assessment of your achievements, which will also contribute to your result for the class (this is sometimes called 'summative' assessment). The criteria used in assessment are provided at the end of this class outline.

PENALTIES FOR LATE SUBMISSION

The Business School has agreed the following penalty scheme for the late submission of assessed work:

- 1 day late deduct 5% of mark allocated
- 2 days late deduct 10% of mark allocated
- 3 days late deduct 20% of mark allocated
- 4 days late deduct 40% of mark allocated
- 5 days late deduct 80% of mark allocated
- After 5 days deduct 100% of mark allocated

This applies only to weekdays where students submit in hard copy, but includes Saturdays and Sundays where students submit electronically.

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FEEDBACK

The standard turnaround time for all feedback and marking within SBS is 15 working days from assessment submission.

The University policy on Assessment and Feedback is available here:

[http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/cs/gmap/academicaffairs/policies/assessment_and_feedback_policy - Effective Sep 14.pdf](http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/cs/gmap/academicaffairs/policies/assessment_and_feedback_policy_-_Effective_Sep_14.pdf)

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching methods will rely on a combination of formal lectures and student participation in class discussion on issues arising. The assigned readings provide an essential background to classes and all students are responsible for reading these in advance of the class in which they are scheduled for discussion.

ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The achievement of learning outcomes is necessary to successfully complete the class, both in terms of your learning development and in your class assessment. It is important, therefore, that you are confident about achieving these outcomes as the class progresses. Opportunities will be given for you to reflect upon what you have achieved during this class.

PRE-REQUISITES

You have to meet the pre-requisites required to be in this course.

REQUIRED READINGS

Set text

McPhail, K & Walters, D (2009), Accounting and Business Ethics (Routledge: London).

Class readings

Additional reading for each topic will be provided throughout the course. All students are responsible for reading these in advance of the class and bringing a copy to the class in which they are scheduled for discussion.

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PLAGIARISM

In submitting coursework, you are affirming that any and all sentences, graphs, charts, tables, figures etc. not specifically attributed to a source are your own creation.

It is essential that you make sure to provide complete citations for all statements or analyses presented in your literature review that are derived wholly or in part from the work of others. To do otherwise is to present as your own any ideas, evidence or analysis produced by others and published in sources consulted by you, including any and all materials published (posted) on the internet. This especially includes working papers posted on author(s)' websites, departmental websites, special interest group websites and so forth.

Some students object that this will require a citation of a source after every sentence. This objection has no substance. If a citation is required and you supply it, this is taken as evidence of good scholarship and will be rewarded. If, however, a citation is required and you do not supply it, this will be considered poor scholarship (and points deducted) or plagiarism (the paper will be returned and you will be expected to offer an explanation). If the entire essay is composed of materials copied entirely from sources found in the course of your research (including materials downloaded from the internet) and presented as if said materials are of your own creation, you will fail this class and place your degree in jeopardy.

It is good record-keeping practice to maintain an evidence file for all written work submitted; this will enable you to support your usage of sources if this is questioned after the work has been submitted. Since many students now rely heavily on the internet for their searches, you might find it wise to keep records of the path of those searches.

LECTURE PROGRAMME

Week	Lecture/ seminar	Required Readings
1	Introduction	McPhail & Walters Chap 1
2	Descriptive perspectives on accounting ethics	McPhail & Walters Chap 2
3	Normative perspectives on accounting ethics	McPhail & Walters Chap 3
4	Political moral philosophy and accounting ethics	McPhail & Walters Chap 4
5	Postmodern perspectives on accounting ethics	McPhail & Walters Chap 5
6	Accounting and the morality of the "market" 1	McPhail & Walters Chap 6
7	Accounting and the morality of the "market" 2	McPhail & Walters Chap 6
8	The ethics of being a professional accountant	McPhail & Walters Chap 7
9	The ethics of international accounting	McPhail & Walters Chap 8
10	Ethics, intellectual capital and reporting	McPhail & Walters Chap 9
11	Revision	

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Table 1.1. Criteria used in Assessment

	First class (70+)	Upper second (60-69)	Lower second (50-59)	Third (40-49)	Fail (below 40)
Overall Learning Outcomes	Demonstration of Excellent understanding of subject as evidenced by written discussion reflecting a clear plan, including relevant examples.	Demonstration of Very Good, understanding of subject reflecting a clear plan including relevant examples.	Work shows good understanding including some relevant examples but is somewhat poorly planned.	Work demonstrates a somewhat superficial understanding, is poorly organised with limited use of examples.	Work is poorly structured and is quite superficial. Examples, if any, show no evidence of selection for relevance.
Subject Specific Learning Outcomes	Excellent understanding of concepts applied to required readings and evidence of use of suggested readings.	Very Good understanding of concepts applied to required readings and some evidence of use of suggested readings.	Good understanding of concepts applied to the required readings.	Basic understanding of applied to required readings.	Substantial gaps in understanding of concepts as applied to required readings.
Quality of Analysis	High quality of conceptual understanding Logical formulation of an argument.	Good standard of analysis, with evidence to support the argument	Shows analytical skill but with some gaps in critical evaluation.	Analytical skill is limited and heavily derived from the work of others.	No analytical skill shown.
Learning outcomes: Cognitive Skills	Candidate's own opinion is very well developed and logically argued.	Candidate's own opinion is logically argued.	Candidate's opinion limited and derived from a limited set of required readings.	Some evidence of ability form an opinion based on logical argument. Independent thought limited.	No evidence of ability to form an opinion.

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