

ETHICS, BUSINESS AND SOCIETY (EMBA 682)
Warner Woodworth

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Thursdays: 6:00-9:00 pm
786 TNRB

ELECTIVE

For some two decades I have taught ethics to MBA students at BYU, Michigan, Brazil and elsewhere. It has always been an enlightening experience for me and it has enjoyed the highest ratings of any course I have taught. From 1985's *Business Week* characterization of Utah as the "fraud capital" of America, to 1999-2001's global media stories on the Salt Lake Olympic Committee's bribery scandal, the problems of Mormons, money and materialism are a never-ending source of concern—to BYU officials, to leaders in the LDS Church, and to the ethical managers who work in Utah. The national scene since 2001 is also examined since the flood of unethical/illegal managerial actions began to decimate the U.S. economy and diminish trust in the capitalist system.

This course is designed to provide the student an opportunity to explore the increasingly complex (and often suspicious) set of relationships between business and the larger society. At one level, this elective will focus on the interdependence between corporations and the external environment, addressing questions of social responsibility and the role of business in building a good society. Issues to be covered in this context range from the foundations of our free enterprise system to today's large bureaucracies. We will address questions such as, "In what ways has the corporation's interface with the socio-political world evolved?" "What ought to be the role of business in modern society?" Specific topics to be covered will include questions such as could a pro-consumer like Ralph Nader ever speak at BYU, the progressive policies of George Romney as CEO of American Motors, and the environmental toll on Utah by our most polluting companies.

On another more individual level, a theme undergirding the entire course will emphasize the need to move beyond the issue of efficiency alone to the problems of justice and personal ethics. Unfortunately, there is an all-too-casual approach to morality, an attitude that has had disastrous consequences in organizational America, both in business and politics. We will focus not only on the legal constraints facing managers but the higher value of doing the right things for the right reason. Cases to draw upon include Larry Miller's personal religious ethics about NBA Sundays, and the (un)ethics of Edith Green Waldholtz and William Jefferson Clinton.

This course will review current attempts at corporate reform and analyze changes in managerial ideology. It offers an understanding and appreciation for key ethical/philosophical, legal, economic, and social issues to be encountered in today's managerial world. It will also integrate historic and contemporary views of LDS prophets and others on the nature of society, leadership, organizations, and economics—featuring Joseph Smith's managerial ideas and Brigham Young's radical views about the economy.

Objectives

Through class discussions, cases, videos, and course readings, it is expected that students will strengthen their management ability in the following ways:

- X Broadened sense of critical debates regarding organizational life.
- X Heightened awareness of on-the-job ethical dilemmas which arise in one's career.
- X Increased open-mindedness toward value positions other than one's own or that of one's employer.
- X Ability to perceive the legitimacy and the capacity to articulate various sides of an issue.
- X Skill in divergent rather than convergent thinking—analysis which may be contemplative, philosophical, and speculative.
- X Greater awareness of the relevance of pioneer prophetic teachings for creating a gospel-based society.

Sources

The primary text will be *Working Toward Zion: The United Order and the Modern World* by J. Lucas and W. Woodworth (Aspen Books, 1999). Several short cases and articles will supplement the text.

Evaluation

The structure of this course will be that of a seminar format. Grading criteria will be 30% participation and 70% based on a research paper of the student's own interest in organizational ethics.

“We need to create a new paradigm for business, a form of human-centered economics.”
— Warner Woodworth

Schedule

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1.	The Nature of Organizational Control over the Individual. Jerry Harvey: Getting Eichmann Out of the Organization.
2.	Gandhi's Critique of Contemporary Society. Ken Andrews: Can the Best Corporations Be Made Moral?
3.	Stewardship and Corporate Mismanagement. Case: Bennett Association (A) & (B).
4.	Codes of Ethics in Today's Business World. Saul Gellerman: Why Good Managers Make Bad Ethical Choices.
5.	Historical Capitalism—The Good, Bad and Ugly (from Adam Smith to Bill Gates).
6.	The World's Search for Economic Utopia (Cases include Christian Socialism, the Israeli Kibbutz and the Mondragon Cooperatives).
7.	United Order Paradigms of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young: Structure, Systems, Management and the Economics of Zion.
8.	Organizational Teachings and Values of Today's Prophets: Money, Materialism and Mormonism. How to Build a Cooperative Commonwealth in the Modern World.

“There is no more fatal blunderer than he who consumes the greater part of his life getting his living.”
— Henry David Thoreau