I. Course Schedule.

Course Introduction (January 15)

First topic: The Moral Community in Business Ethics
Moral philosophers talk about 'The Moral Community', the group of people (and any other beings) who have special moral status. Members of the Moral Community come in two varieties: agents and patients. Moral agents are the ones whose actions are subject to moral evaluation. Their actions can be morally right and wrong; we hold them morally responsible. Moral patients are beings who deserve moral consideration, or special moral treatment: moral agents are morally responsible for how they treat moral patients. Our first investigation aims to help us understand who the members of the moral community are when we consider the actions of businesses. We shall consider whether businesses are moral agents, and whether they have moral obligations only to their shareholders, or some broader chunk of society. Next we turn to related issues of what moral responsibility businesses have to their workers, and what share of moral responsibility belongs to consumers.

The Corporation, a Moral Agent? (Jan 22-29)
- What is a Corporation? Werhane Chapter 1
- Corporations Are Moral Agents: French 1979
- Corporations Are Not Moral Agents: Velasquez 1983

Who Are The Patients of Corporate Moral Obligation? (February 5-12)
First short essay due February 5!
- Mainly Just Shareholders: Carson 1993
- All Stakeholders: Freeman and Evan 1990

Are Some Worker Contracts Morally Wrong? (Feb 19)
- Contract at Will: Epstein 1984
- Problems with At Will Contracts? Autor 2003

Is The Consumer for the Producer's Behavior? (Feb 26)
- Not so responsible: Akenji 2008
- Pretty responsible: Brinkmann 2004

Second Topic: Exploitation and the Free Market
Some moral philosophers think economic systems such as our own, which involve relatively unregulated markets, open the door to morally egregious forms of exploitation. They reason that if a few people are allowed to accumulate vast wealth, these people will be able to force others who have little or no money to do their bidding. Our second investigation aims to make sense of this critique of exploitation. We begin by considering a traditional Marxist version of the critique and a response that defends exploitation. Then we turn to a contemporary critique of exploitation and consider its force against a two present-day practices: payday loans and sweatshop labor.
The Traditional Marxist Critique of Exploitation (March 5 & 19)
Spring Break: March 8-16
Second short essay due March 19!
  Marxist Critique: Holmstrom 1977
  More Marxist Critique: Arneson 1981
  Limited Defense of Exploitation: Wood 1995

A Modern Critique of Exploitation (March 26)
  Modern Critique: Mayer 2007
  Payday Loans: Mayer 2003
  Sweatshops: Mayer 2007b

Third Topic: What Shouldn't Be Sold?
The free market isn't completely free. There are prohibitions against the sale of sex, recreational drugs, bodily organs, and other things. Are these prohibitions morally defensible? Our third investigation aims to make sense of whether they are. We begin by considering Dworkin's argument that paternalistic state intervention – legislation that prevents us from doing things that will harm us even when we want to do them – is permissible in certain cases. We then move on to consider whether state prevention of sales is warranted in the cases of recreational marijuana, living kidneys, and sex.

Paternalism and Marijuana Sales (April 2)
  Paternalism: Dworkin
  Marijuana Prohibition: Blumenson and Nilson 2009

Living Kidneys (April 9)
Third short essay due April 9!
  Pro: Matas 2004
  Anti: Caplan 2004

Sex (April 16)
  Pro: Nussbaum 1998
  Anti: Anderson 2002

Catch-up or Review (April 23)
Final essay due April 30 by email.

II. Procedure
Every few weeks is devoted to a problem; for each problem we shall read various texts. The readings are listed above on the day they will be discussed.

In the study: Do the reading, making the best sense of it you can. Bring questions about the rest. There will be various obstacles to completely understanding what we read, but inquisitive reading and discussion will help us get a lot out of each assignment. You may find it helpful to outline or summarize the reading in your own words: organizing it in your own thoughts just is what it is to understand someone else's idea. Rereading is helpful too, if time permits.
At the computer: University College has set up this course as a 3-hour course that has 2 hours in the classroom and 1 hour of online effort per week. For each reading, I will set up a 'Discussion' forum on the Blackboard Website. You are assigned to complete one of several tasks that will help us to understand the readings and to evaluation the arguments.

In class: We shall discuss the readings with two obvious goals in mind. One is to understand. We’ll do our best to ferret out the underlying structure of the arguments and the philosophers' motivations. The other goal is to assess these arguments – do they provide good reasons or not? Don't be afraid to ask strange questions or raise tangential issues! The more ideas and concerns we get on the table, the better are our chances of finding everything relevant to achieving our aims. Also, trying your ideas out in class will get you started on the thinking that will become an essay, or help you eliminate dead-end ideas that you might otherwise spend time trying with frustration to write about.

Writing: The last thing we will do is write. Well, you write, and I give comments, suggestions, criticisms, objections, and encouragement. For this course, the aim of writing is to figure out how to present arguments (your own and others') clearly and concisely, how to make arguments based on relevant and convincing evidence, and how to anticipate and respond to the objections of those who disagree.

III. Assignments
(1) Online work (Blackboard Discussion Posts, up to 3 pts each, maximum of 135 points)
The online portion of the class is at https://bb.wustl.edu/. Log in using your Wustl Key and navigate to the course page, then click on 'Discussions' to enter the forum. Throughout the semester you can complete any of the following tasks for credit. You can post as many times as you want in any forum, and you do not have to post in every forum. Here are the tasks you should focus on:

(i) Explain what the reading establishes. (2-3pts) This task should be completed first. If nobody has completed this task for a reading, do this before some other task. The aim is to say what is the point of the reading and how the reading makes that point. Usually this means explaining what claim the reading is making and what argument it uses to establish this claim. If someone else has already explained a reading, but you believe you can give a different explanation, you may do this task even if someone else has already done it.

(ii) Ask a question about something in the reading that you find difficult to understand (1pt).

(iii) Try to help someone work out something in the reading that they have asked about (1-3pts).

(iv) Present an objection the author considers in response to the argument he or she offers in the reading. (1-2pts) When a philosopher makes an argument, she usually considers likely objections to her argument. The aim of this task is to explain in detail some objection that the author considers and how it is supposed to undermine her argument.

(v) Present a novel objection to something in the reading. (1-3pts) The aim of this task is to explore an objection of your own, or one you have encountered somewhere, that the author has not considered. You must explain the objection in some detail and say how it is supposed to undermine the point the author is trying to make.

(vi) Present a novel argument for the point that the author is trying to make. (1-3pts) The aim of
this task is to offer a different line of reasoning than the one the author offers for the point she is trying to make.

(vii) Engage your fellow students in friendly argument and discussion. (1-3pts) That is, you may respond to any argument or objections that are developed in the discussion board with your own objections or replies.

(viii) Do anything else that advances the discussion, or helps us figure out whether the claim the reading makes is true, or helps us to understand the reading or something about the problem it deals with. (1-3pts) (For instance, you might post a link to an interesting, well-sourced, relevant article for 1pt.)

(2) Three short essays. (Due February 5, March 19 and April 9.) You will write three short (2-3 page) essays throughout the course of the semester. The point of these essays is to practice explaining and evaluating arguments as philosophers explain and evaluate them. The first assignment simply asks you to explain an argument. The second asks you to explain an argument and explain how an objection is supposed to undermine that argument. The third asks you to explain an argument, explain how an objection is supposed to undermine it, and then evaluate whether the objection succeeds. I will give you specific assignments one week before each is due.

(3) Final essay. (Due April 30 by email.) The final essay is of the same format as the third short essay, but will require a bit more creativity and thought on your part.

(4) Discussion. Intellectual progress, for the individual and for philosophy, depends on discussion and argument. This class requires you to join the debate and discussion at every meeting by listening when others speak, asking questions when you have them, and speaking up when you disagree with what's being said.

IV. Grading

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online work:</td>
<td>1 X 10%  =  10% (up to 13.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little essays:</td>
<td>3 X 15%  =  45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final essay:</td>
<td>1 X 30%  =  30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion:</td>
<td>1 X 15%  =  15%</td>
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Policy on Late Work: If something besides mismanaging your time makes meeting a deadline impossible, let me know as soon as you can and we'll work out a reasonable extension – possibly one that increases the difficulty of the assignment. I will not give last minute extensions if there is not a last minute emergency. Late essays will be penalized 5 points per day past due. No late homework will be accepted.

V. Texts
All of the readings are available at the following web address:
https://www.dropbox.com/l/OKHPPjPDBS3DYgZ263Vab
VI. Other Resources
For pointers on philosophical writing, go here:
http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html

VII. Contact Information
Jason Gardner
116 Wilson Hall, second aisle on right.
jsgardne@wustl.edu