

IB9ZC-15 Behavioural Ethics

20/21

Department

Warwick Business School

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Despoina Alempaki

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

The aim of this module is to provide students with insights into human behaviour that can be easily translated into actions they can take to create more ethical environments.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

Building on theoretical models and empirical evidence from philosophy, economics and psychology, the module will explore various methods of measuring and evaluating ethical behaviour as well as show how people are often influenced, subconsciously, by psychological biases, organizational and social pressures, and situation factors that impact decision making and can lead to unethical action. It will familiarise students with recent research developments in behavioural ethics and the possible implications for theory and policy raised by these developments.

The module is aimed at both those who wish to follow the MSc in Behavioural and Economic Science (Economics Track) as well as those who wish to follow the MSc in Behavioural and Economic Science (Science Track).

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1: Introduction to Behavioural Ethics: Why ethics?

Week 2: Unethical Behaviour in the Lab and the Field

Seminar: Evaluating Experimental Paradigms

Group A: 2 hours Group B: 2 hours

Week 3: Unethical Behaviour and Incentives

Week 4: Bounded Ethicality I: Self-serving Biases, Motivated Beliefs, Attribution Error & Class Test #1

Week 5: Bounded Ethicality II: Cognitive Errors, Framing, Loss Aversion, Moral Myopia

Seminar: Debates

Group A: 2 hours Group B: 2 hours

Week 6: The role of Social Norms, Culture and Institutions in Shaping Ethics

Week 7: Ethical decision making in groups: Diffusion of Responsibility, Pivotality, Complicity

Seminar: Project Drop-in Session

Group A: 2 hours Group B: 2 hours

Week 8: Organizational Ethics: Corruption, Whistleblowing, Power, Leadership & Class Test #2

Week 9: Ethics in CSR and Nudging

Seminar: Project Presentations

Group A: 2 hours Group B: 2 hours

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Understand when and why people cross ethical boundaries
- Acquire an in-depth account of the cutting-edge experimental approaches to study ethics
- Understand that ethical choices are not made in isolation, but are part of social interaction
- Critically evaluate research on behavioural ethics
- Explore the degree to which empirical data can distinguish between competing theories
- Demonstrate good communication skills when writing reports, presenting findings and structuring arguments

Indicative reading list

Much of the reading will be in the form of published papers or working papers, but several texts/collections of readings will be used:

Abeler, J., Nosenzo, D., & Raymond, C. (2019). Preferences for truth-telling. *Econometrica*, 87(4), 1115-1153.

Bazerman, M. H., & Gino, F. (2012). Behavioral ethics: Toward a deeper understanding of moral

judgment and dishonesty. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 8, 85-104.

Bazerman, M. H., & Tenbrunsel, A. E. (2011). *Blind spots: Why we fail to do what's right and what to do about it*. Princeton University Press.

Bowles, S. (2016). *The moral economy: Why good incentives are no substitute for good citizens*. Yale University Press.

Drumwright, M., Prentice, R., & Biasucci, C. (2015). Behavioral ethics and teaching ethical decision making. *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, 13(3), 431-458.

Gerlach, P., Teodorescu, K., & Hertwig, R. (2019). The truth about lies: A meta-analysis on dishonest behavior. *Psychological bulletin*, 145(1), 1.

Meibauer, J. (Ed.). (2018). *The Oxford Handbook of Lying*. Oxford Handbooks.

Harvard Business School Cases. Catalog. Use the search window to find ethics cases.

Subject specific skills

- Critically analyse the basic assumptions built into specific psychological and economic models of ethical behaviour
- Critical evaluation of experimental data; assessing the external validity of lab findings
- Show an ability to use experimental techniques appropriately for answering a research question and testing of specific hypotheses

Transferable skills

- Articulating reasoned arguments around ethics
- Use behavioural insights to create an environment which encourages more ethical behaviour

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Seminars	4 sessions of 2 hours (5%)
Private study	49 hours (33%)
Assessment	75 hours (50%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

To include preparation for lectures and seminars and assessment

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time
Essay Essay on a topic related to ethics	50%	37 hours
Class test Short answer questions based on topics covered during 4 weeks	20%	15 hours
Class test Short answer questions based on topics covered during 4 weeks	20%	15 hours
Group debate Students will debate a controversial ethical issue in teams. Details of the format will be discussed in class. Assessment will be based on the quality of the moral arguments provided by each team.	10%	8 hours

Feedback on assessment

Feedback will be provided both in-class during case discussion plus written feedback.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of TPSS-C8P7 Postgraduate Taught Behavioural and Economic Science (Science Track)
- Year 1 of TECS-C8P8 Postgraduate Taught Behavioural and Economics Science (Economics Track)