

# IB9ZC-15 Behavioural Ethics

**23/24**

**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? (Lecture 1)

Week 2: Unethical Behaviour in the Lab and the Field (Lecture 2)

Evaluating Experimental Paradigms (Lecture 3)

Week 3: Unethical Behaviour and Incentives (Lecture 4)

Week 4: Bounded Ethicality I: Self-serving Biases, Motivated Beliefs, Attribution Error & Class Test #1 (Lecture 5)

Week 5: Bounded Ethicality II: Cognitive Errors, Framing, Loss Aversion, Moral Myopia (Lecture 6)

Seminar 1: Case-study

Group A: 2 hours

Group B: 2 hours

Week 6: The role of Social Norms, Culture and Institutions in Shaping Ethics (Lecture 7)

Week 7: Ethical decision making in groups: Diffusion of Responsibility, Pivotality, Complicity (Lecture 8)

Seminar 2: Debates

Group A: 3 hours

Group B: 3 hours

Week 8: Organizational Ethics: Corruption, Whistleblowing, Power, Leadership & Class Test #2 (Lecture 9)

Week 9: Ethics in CSR and Nudging (Lecture 10)

Seminar 3: Project Project Drop-in Session

Group A: 2 hours

Group B: 2 hours

## **Learning outcomes**

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

- Demonstrate comprehensive understanding of when and why people cross ethical boundaries
- Demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the cutting-edge experimental approaches to study ethics
- Demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the factors that lead to ethical choices not being made in isolation, but being part of social interaction
- Articulate reasoned arguments around ethics
- Use behavioural insights to create an environment which encourages more ethical behaviour

## **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.

## Research element

- Critically evaluate experimental data; assessing the external validity of lab findings
- Use experimental techniques appropriately for answering a research question and testing of specific hypotheses
- Critically evaluate research on behavioural ethics
- Explore and evaluate the degree to which empirical data can distinguish between competing theories

## Subject specific skills

- Critically analyse the basic assumptions built into specific psychological and economic models of ethical behaviour
- Critically evaluate experimental data; assessing the external validity of lab findings
- Use experimental techniques appropriately for answering a research question and testing of specific hypotheses
- Critically evaluate research on behavioural ethics
- Explore and evaluate the degree to which empirical data can distinguish between competing theories

## Transferable skills

- Demonstrate good communication skills when writing reports, presenting findings and structuring arguments

---

## Study

### Study time

| Type          | Required                     |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Lectures      | 10 sessions of 2 hours (27%) |
| Seminars      | 7 sessions of 1 hour (9%)    |
| Private study | 48 hours (64%)               |
| Total         | 75 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 A1

|  | Weighting | Study time |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Essay  | 50%       | 37 hours   |
| Essay on a topic related to ethics   |           |            |
| Class test   | 20%       | 15 hours   |
| Short answer questions based on topics covered during 4 weeks  |           |            |
| Class test   | 20%       | 15 hours   |
| Short answer questions based on topics covered during 4 weeks  |           |            |
| Group debate   | 10%       | 8 hours    |
| 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. |           |            |

### Feedback on assessment

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

---

## Availability

## Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 1 of TPSS-C803 Postgraduate Taught Behavioural and Data Science
- Year 1 of TPSS-C8P7 Postgraduate Taught Behavioural and Economic Science (Science Track)

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)

This module is Core option list A for:

- Year 1 of TPSS-C803 Postgraduate Taught Behavioural and Data Science