



# Lincoln University

## Social Environment of Business

BA 331

**Credit:** 3 units (45 lecture hours)

**Instructor:** Alexander Anokhin

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**Office Hours:** By arrangement

**Required textbook:** Lawrence, A.; Weber, J. (2014). *Business and Society: Stakeholders, Ethics, Public Policy*. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin. 14th edition.

Previous editions are OK.

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### Catalog Description

In this course, the student will explore the relationship between the organization and its environment, including government, labor, public interest groups, various ideological constellations, the media, academia, and local communities. Ideas are reviewed as to what actions can be taken by corporations and by other organizations and/or individuals to improve relationships between business and its environment. (3 units)

### Course Objectives

Companies do not exist in vacuum: they are parts of elaborate global networks that tie together various stakeholders, political institutions, civil society organizations, influenced by numerous factors related to natural environment and technological progress. This course is designed to equip students with skills and knowledge needed to navigate these complex networks, making sense of the issues of the modern business world.

We will examine a number of urgent questions raised by globalization, and environmental challenges. We will investigate the role of political system in

the life of the company and analyze various ethical theories, philosophies and systems of values. Students are expected to develop a broad understanding of a business as a social institution, as well as acquire strategic vision and practical skills needed to manage the company in the modern world.

Upon the completion of the course students will be able to:

- 1) Provide coherent reasoning using major ethical theories;
- 2) Understand the stakeholder theory of the firm as well as its rights and obligations in relation to various stakeholders;
- 3) Assess the impact of political institutions in business world;
- 4) Analyze an impact of globalization on business and society;
- 5) Understand challenges to business posed by changes in the natural environment.

### **Procedures and methodology**

Core concepts identified from the textbook will be augmented through supplementary sources (made available to students on the class website) and applied to the real life situations through case studies, essays, and other assignments.

The coursework will include required reading followed by various assignments. The course consists of 3 modules. At the end of each module students have to submit all assignments for a given module as well as pass a written examination. At the end of the course students must submit a group research project.

All communication between students and instructor (including assignments submissions) has to be conducted through the course website.

## **Class Rules**

This list of rules is the product of experience and is designed to keep the course effective and convenient for everyone. Therefore the rules that are outlined here will be followed with no exceptions (in order to preserve fairness all exceptions would have to be offered to everyone, and this is neither feasible nor possible).

- Class attendance is required. Attendance will be taken each class at a time chosen by the instructor.
- Students are required to arrive to class on time. Showing up late disturbs the natural flow of the lecture and affects everyone's experience. Usually, up to 10 minutes of "grace period" is allowed. However, if students choose to show up 10 minutes into class on a regular basis, this rule will be reviewed and no one will be allowed in after the start of the class.
- Once you receive an invitation to the course website (or obtain the registration code), make sure to set up your profile in such a way that it would be possible for the instructor to identify you - use your name (as it is in the Lincoln University records) as your primary ID and your Lincoln University email as your secondary ID as well as a profile photo.
- Submissions of home assignments will be conducted via the course website only (Canvas Instructure). Absolutely no hard copy or email submissions will be accepted! The acceptable format for assignment submission is .txt, .doc, .docx, and .pdf.
- All quizzes, exams, assignments and projects must be completed and handed in on time. Late submissions will result in lower grade (each day of delay costs 2% points). This rule will be strictly enforced. Since all assignments are available on the website, the fact that you have not been in class when the assignment was given cannot be used as an excuse to submit it later.

\*For those joining the class later: all assignments have to be submitted within the first week of registering for the class. After that, not submitted assignments will result in F.

- Midterm exams and in-class assignments cannot be made up.
- No cheating and no plagiarism, please! Detected cheating/plagiarism will result in “F” for the assignment. (This rule is very strictly enforced, no exceptions!).
- All grades will be made available to students through the course website.

### **Exams**

The exams will consist of questions based on assigned chapters and supplementary reading.

### **Course Project**

Every student must complete a research paper for graded submission at the end of the course. In this research paper students are expected to conduct a case study of a real-world company, which has been accused of unethical conduct. The paper should study the effect such accusation had on the business, measures taken by the management to solve the problem at hand as well as the result of such measures.

Research paper must be formatted according to APA style guidelines.  
Research projects must comply with the Lincoln University requirements.

### **Assessment Criteria**

All assignments, projects and exams are evaluated using the indicated system:

|        |    |       |    |
|--------|----|-------|----|
| 94-100 | A  | 73-76 | C  |
| 90-93  | A- | 70-72 | C- |
| 87-89  | B+ | 67-69 | D+ |
| 83-86  | B  | 60-66 | D  |
| 80-82  | B- | 0-59  | F  |
| 77-79  | C+ |       |    |

### Tentative Weights

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Attendance    | 5%             |
| Group Project | 20%            |
| Assignments   | 20%            |
| Midterm exams | 30% (15% each) |
| Final exam    | 25%            |

### Course Outline:

- Module 1
1. Introduction. The Corporation. Stakeholder theory of the firm
  2. Business ethics: Normative ethical theories
  3. Business ethics: Descriptive ethical theories

#### Midterm Exam I

- Module 2
4. Business in a globalized world
  5. Business and the natural environment
  6. Business and technology

7. Business and public policy
8. Influence of business on political environment

Midterm Exam II

Module 3

9. Stockholder rights and corporate governance
10. Consumer rights and the corporation
11. Employees and the corporation
12. Business and civil society
13. Managing public relations
14. Project Presentations
  
15. Final Exam