

EC 435 (Cross Listed as UN 535)
Capstone: Business as a Calling
Spring, 2003
Carney 308, T, Th 10:30

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Syllabus

This seminar explores the question of business as a calling, as an activity that yields great personal satisfaction quite apart from the money it brings. Is business a noble activity or is it a rather crass but necessary pursuit? How does the economist's model view business? How is it viewed by society at large? Does a view of business as a calling help us to bridge the spiritual and the temporal? Does it have a positive impact on relationships with family and with community? For an economy to work, do we need moral and political capital as well as economic capital? If so, how do we sustain our moral and political capital, or rebuild it if it is eroding, or develop it where it is missing? Does how we look at business make a difference? Can we reconcile the recent corporate scandals with a view that business is a noble pursuit? Finally, how do the events of September 11 impact our view of business and of capitalism.

Format:

A good deal of reading and discussion of the readings. Seminar format, with professor as facilitator and students taking turns leading the discussion. Five short reflective papers and a final summary paper. The grade will be based on participation in class (30%), the short reflective papers (40%), and on the final summary paper (30%).

Readings and Video (to be taken up in the order listed):

Novak, Michael. Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life, 1996.

Sennett, Richard. The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism, 1998.

Plato. The Republic

Lewis, Michael. Liar's Poker, 1989.

Video: Andrew Carnegie: The Richest Man in the World

Helgesen, Sally. The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership, 1995.

Coelho, Paul. The Alchemist: A Fable About Following your Dream, 1988.

What are We? An Introduction to Boston College and its Jesuit Tradition, 2000.

The Autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola, Fordham University Press, 1992.

Gardner, John. "Redemption," from The Art of Living and Other Stories.

Plus additional works to be selected by the class as we go along.