

Please note that this syllabus should be regarded as only a general guide to the course. The instructor may have changed specific course content and requirements subsequent to posting this syllabus. Last Modified: 12:23:26 01/30/2009

EC 435 (Cross Listed as UN 535)
Capstone: Business as a Calling
Spring, 2009
Wed., 3-5:20

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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? Do we need spiritual and social capital? If so, how do we sustain these, or rebuild them if they are eroding, or develop them if missing? Does how we look at business make a difference? Can we reconcile corporate scandals and vast inequality with a view that business is a noble pursuit? Finally, does the recent financial meltdown force us to rethink our understanding of the virtues 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 (40%), the short reflective papers (30%), and on the final summary paper (30%). Participation in class includes attendance, leadership of discussions, and interaction when others are leading discussions.

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

Novak, Michael. Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life, 1996. Intro., Chs.1-6.

Video: Andrew Carnegie: The Richest Man in the World.

Morris, Tom. If Aristotle Ran General Motors.

Lewis, Michael. Liar's Poker, 1989.

Plato. The Republic, Books I, II, III(last 4 pages), IV, V, VII (first 8 pages)

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

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. Good Business: Leadership, Flow, and Making of Meaning, 2003, Chs. 2-5, 8-9.

Frankl, Viktor. Man's Search for Meaning.

Strickland, Bill. Make the Impossible Possible.

Shore, Bill. The Cathedral Within, 1999, Chs. I and IV.

Coles, Robert. The Call of Service: A Witness to Idealism, 1993, Ch. 7 (On Dorothy Day).

Pink, Daniel. A Whole New Mind, 2005.

What are We? An Introduction to Boston College and its Jesuit and Catholic Tradition, 2nd ed.,2002.

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

Oliver, Mary. Thirst.

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